

Heuristic Evaluation Group Report for Los Ninos

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Overall Impressions

We think that the idea of having one platform for searching listings by map, searching for compatible roommates, and communication is worthwhile.

Our group ran into two major points of confusion:

- 1) The app seems to be made for an active place searcher, as opposed to a place lister. But if this is the case, why is there a “Drop area pin” option in the advanced profile? If that’s the input used to specify a search area for where the searcher would like to look at listings, wouldn’t a neighborhood input be better? An area pin seems unnecessarily specific and limiting. If the “drop area pin” was for listing purposes (i.e. for other searchers), we seem to be missing a lot of UI from a place lister’s perspective.
- 2) The badges in this App have an ambiguous purpose. Our best guess is that the badges resemble verifications from Airbnb, but only one of the members of our HE group was familiar with this, and it may be unreasonable to expect users to require specific knowledge from other home-related applications to use your App. Are badges supposed to reassure users about their potential housemates and listings? Are there only “good” badges, or are there both good and bad badges? The Los Ninos App interface should explain/guide the user on how to understand badges attached to people/listings. Maybe the user’s first interaction with obtaining and understanding badges could be during the account creation process (right now the first interaction with badges is looking at listings on the map page).

Table of Heuristic Violations

See individual HEs in the appendix for more details and explanation.

Issue description	Heuristic category	Severity	# of People
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Human factors not incorporated (timeline, accessibility, pets, allergies, religion, etc)	Match between system and the real world	4	1
User should be able to undo anything with a remove option (e.g. group invites).	Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors	4	2
Filter search feedback and editing. "I don't see the results of my filters fast enough, and I want each individual filter to be x-able"	Visibility of system status	3	1
Direct map feedback "When I click on something on the map, please highlight it on the map"	Visibility of system status	3	1
Consistency of cleanliness & noise - slider vs. numbers	Consistency and standards	3	4
Sign in navigation is confusing- it doesn't take me where I expect to go. There additionally should not be a navbar in the sign in page. Why are users able to access pages without logging in?	Help and documentation/ Error prevention	3	2
The process of filtering takes a long time because I have to manually adjust and update filters every time I want to change something.	Flexibility and efficiency of use	3	1
Why is there a basic and advanced profile? Note: There should just be required and optional fields in one profile	Consistency and standards	3	1
Why does a person looking for a place to live have a location (location pin)? Aren't they looking for a new location?	Match between system and the real world	3	1
Currently the system searches people and places at the same time. Want separation of the results. Is there a specific overlap between people and place that you'd need to implement both simultaneously?	User control and freedom	3	1
There should be clearer communication how to exit dialogs using a clear exit button.	Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors/ user control and freedom	3	1
There shouldn't separation between contacts and group chat - it would be simpler and more intuitive to have them in the same place.	Match between system and the real world/ Aesthetic and minimalist design	3	1
There's no "save" on profile page. Register vs. make account? Link it please?	Error prevention/ Visibility of system status	3	1

Why is there a Google search bar that isn't operational?	Consistency and standards	2	1
Dots should be replaced - people should have people symbols	Match between system and the real world	2	1
Did not even consider hovering over badges	Visibility of system status	2	3
There should be easier access to info about others who are interested (under search and groups).	Recognition rather than recall	2	2
Scale consistency between people. Would a standard label/ category description in app help? e.g. mark what 1 and 10 mean for cleanliness and loudness, so person A's 10 is the same as person's B 10.	Match between system and the real world	2	1
Users should be able to preview own profile as if somebody else was viewing it	Visibility of system status	2	1
After login switch page, and get logged back out (login doesn't stick).	Match between system and the real world	2	1
Registration form doesn't have confirmation.	Visibility of system status	2	1
In general, filter should not give impossible options (e.g. filter with age goes <0)	Error prevention	2	1
More info on maps please. The exit button should have an 'X' in it. This is also inconsistent with other modals.	Consistency and standards	2	1
Cursor standardization - hand with pointer for links, etc.	Consistency and standards	1	1
Profile split between 2 columns, but there didn't seem to be a clear reason for things to be in one column versus the other	Aesthetic and minimalist design	1	1
There shouldn't be a dropdown calendar for DOB.	Flexibility and efficiency of use	1	1
Arrow input method completely unnecessary. Typing is faster	Flexibility and efficiency of use	1	1
Need to be consistent about filter generality vs specificity (Are there really places with 5 baths? How detailed do you want to get? what about half baths?)	Match between system and the real world	1	1
User may want to contact people without going through many steps to the more info dialog box. Where is redundancy good for which parts of the app?	Flexibility and efficiency of use	1	1

Pressing notifications takes you back to the registration page (we assume you know about this and just haven't implemented it)	Visibility of system status	1	1
On the map/more info dialog - What does the star mean? Why is it present on every listing, bookmarked and not bookmarked? Why is it not giving feedback?	Visibility of system status	1	1
There are unnecessary scroll bars (basically, pages are bigger than the browser)	Aesthetic and minimalist design	0	1
input field of phone number - no real world constraints	Match between system and the real world	0	1

Summary of Recommendations

We have several recommendations for you all, broken down by which part of the workflow they belong to:

- Login/Registration Flow
 - Make sure that logging in or registering takes people to the right place that makes sense as the next thing they would need to do (e.g. profile creation, notifications).
 - Registering should require the basic profile information up front so it's harder to make fake accounts.
 - There should be a logout button after the user had been logged in and a login page without a navigation bar at the top.
 - We didn't get a great sense of the flow for people listing rooms using your service, but we think they may want a different workflow overall, starting with how they register.
- Profile
 - We see no reason to separate the basic information from the advanced information - it makes more sense to us to edit or view all information about a person from a central page.
 - We are not convinced by the two-column layout and would rather see a single, scrollable page, broken up into sections such as contact information, living preferences, personality, etc.
 - We also are a little unclear on what value badges provide, to the extent that we just don't know what to recommend. It seems like your team needs to brainstorm more on how you want to convey badges to your users. If this is a verification/security thing, perhaps being more forthright about what you're doing for your users. For example, the first time a user clicks on a badge, a dialog box pops up to explain what badges are.
- Maps

- We think the maps page in general needs to provide better feedback to the user. Clicking on a point of interest should highlight that as the selected point in addition to updating the listing information.
- Filters should update on the fly rather than needing to be applied. Applied filters should also be listed and x-able at the top of the map (or a similar way to quickly see they exist and remove them)
- Filters also should avoid error conditions by not allowing filters that have 0 results to be applied.
- We think that there should be a distinct workflow for looking at places versus people, as we do not think there is a use case where you need to search for a place to live and people in general to live with at the same time, rather than just finding a place and seeing who else is interested. We think that somebody looking for a room would either look for a group of people and then find a place or look for a place in a good location and see what other people are interested.
- **Contacts**
 - We are not sure why contacts and groups are listed separately, as they both feel like they belong in the same category to us. If I want to contact somebody, I should do it from the same central place regardless of whether they are a group versus an individual.

Appendix

Josh's heuristic evaluation:

1. [H1 Visibility of system status] (Severity 3)

I need more feedback from applying a filter. Sometimes I filter out everything and I don't know why - I need to be able to see each individual filter I applied and then x them out one by one to unfilter and see more options appear.

2. [H1 Visibility of system status] (Severity 3)

When I click on a house or dot in the map, I need to be able to identify that I clicked it and also which thing I clicked. Changing the icon should do that, either a new color or a highlight or both. Just having the listings on the side change doesn't draw my eye to it, I had to look around before I realized anything changed, and I clicked a few times thinking I hadn't done it.

3. [H3 Consistency and standards] (Severity 1)

There are many clickable items throughout the site, but I do not get the cursor I expect (hand with a figure pointing at what I am about to click on), so it's not clear to me whether it's clickable or not, especially given that some of your clickable items are clearly not yet implemented.

4. [H3 Consistency and standards] (Severity 2)

Cleanliness and Noise in filters are sliders, but in Profile they are numbers on a scale. I can't tell based on the slider what number I'm filtering on - the slider needs to match the expectations of a numeric value that you set up when I added my profile information.

5. [H5 Recognition rather than recall] (Severity 4)

I get 'more info' as an option for people and places on maps, bookmarks, and contacts, but not on the group page. I certainly will not remember who the people inviting me to a group are, and I need to be able to access their information from this page. I don't want to go back to my bookmarks to find the person, or worse yet have to search on the map, in order to figure out who they are and if I want to accept their group request. Having a name for the group may also help me recognize the situation in which I first contacted them.

6. [H7 Aesthetic and minimalist design] (Severity 1)

There's an unnecessary horizontal scroll in the more info popup.

7. [H9 Help and documentation] (Severity 1)

When I first sign in, I feel directionless- I'd like to be taken to the profile page to set things up when I create my account, and maybe on a return visit jump straight into the map or my bookmarks.

8. [H3 Consistency and standards] (Severity 2)

The Google maps search is confusing, as it doesn't do anything and you aren't Google. I can't quite tell if you are actually going to have a search there eventually, but if you aren't I'd just stick a blank rectangle over it for now.

9. [H6 Flexibility and efficiency of use] (Severity 2)

Filters seem hard to use well now - I'd like to see them update live or at least know what range of values will actually give results, so I don't need to keep adjusting my filters until I get a range of places and people that I want.

10. [H2 Match between system and the real world] (Severity 1)

I'd like people to be represented as stick-figures, rather than dots. For a while I wasn't sure what the dots were for, and there was confusion about having people and places on the same map and not quite being sure what the distinction between the icons was for a little bit.

11. [H7 Aesthetic and minimalist design] (Severity 1)

I'm not sure how I feel about the 2 column profile. It feels a bit cluttered, I wouldn't mind 1 scrolling column, and I'm not sure what differentiates items on the left from those on the right and it feels like something should.

Elena's:

1. Task 1, issue 1 [7 Flexibility and efficiency of use] (1)
 - a. In the registration process, there is a dropdown calendar to put in date of birth. This UI makes no sense. There is enough variability in user's DOB you don't need that option at all. Calendars are good for matching weeks to dates, such as when searching for flights or travel dates that happen in a short period of time, which isn't the case here.
2. Task 1, issue 2 [7 Flexibility and efficiency of use] (1)
 - a. This is a general comment about the UI for inputting numerical fields. Having the up and down arrow buttons in numerical fields are inefficient and cumbersome for the users. There is no reason why users can't just type in the # faster than they can click the arrows. If you think this is a good interface to keep, make sure you have a good reason to do so.
3. Task 1, issue 3 [2/4 matching system with real world/ consistency standard] (0)
 - a. The input field for phone # is not restricted/ controlled as it actually is in the real world. This is probably not so much a problem until you have a backend database that has to store and keep track of this information.
4. Task 1, issue 4 [4 consistency standards] (1-1.5)
 - a. I don't understand the difference between a basic and an advanced profile. Wouldn't a user need to have an advanced profile anyway to actually contact people? Is a basic profile just useful to have for someone who is interested, but not invested, and just find of wants to see what results they might get? But I think security is more important in this case, so you'd probably want everyone to fill the advanced profile anyway.
5. Task 2, issue 1 [4 consistency standards] (2/3, depending on what it means)
 - a. I don't understand the concept of badges. At all.
6. Task 2, issue 2 [4 consistency standards](2)
 - a. What is an area pin? Is this my search location? Why would someone want to be so specific about where they want to live if they're searching? Shouldn't a neighborhood be good enough? The pin seems like it's a better UI for people listing their space.
 - b. ** speaking of which, are you concerned about the other side of the search? What about people who want to list?
7. Task 2, issue 3 [1/7 System status visibility/ Flexibility and efficiency of use] (2)

- a. While I understand that conceptually, cleanliness and nosiness are on a spectrum, however, if we entered integer numbers for these fields in our profile, why would we search with a scale? Especially one that doesn't show what integer that maps to?
- 8. Task 2, issue 4 [2 Matching system with real world] (1)
 - a. Are there actually places that have 5 baths? Your search allows search refinement for up to 5 baths. What about half baths?
- 9. Task 2, issue 5 [3 User control and freedom] (3)
 - a. In the search, I get to search by people or by places, but they are displayed in order on with minimal distinction between the two. I mean this in the search field, but especially in the results. If I'm going to search by both, I want to see both results in 2 columns. Otherwise visually, I don't see the distinction.
- 10. Task 3, issue 1 [10 Recognize, diagnose, and recover from error] (4)
 - a. There's no way for me to exit the "More info" pop up screen under the bookmarked section
- 11. Task 3, issue 2 [10 Recognize, diagnose, and recover from error] (3)
 - a. I want to be able to undo any things I delete. This is both for bookmarked things as well as for contacted people
- 12. Task 3, issue 3 [7 Flexibility and efficiency of use] (1)
 - a. I want to be able to contact people without having to open the "More info" dialog box
- 13. Task 4, issue 1 [1 System Status visibility] (2)
 - a. Pressing notifications took me back to the registration page. Shouldn't this yield a "you have no notifications page"?
- 14. Task 4, issue 2 [2 Matching system with real world] (3)
 - Why is the group chat under contacts? Shouldn't I have all conversation related things under contact and then have group one duplicated in the groups section?

Emily's Heuristic Evaluation

1. [Visibility of system status] (Severity 2) @map page: Users may want to learn more about the interested people before joining a group - is there a way to provide a quick preview or link to the interested people's profile pages?
2. [Visibility of system status] (Severity 1) @map page - more info dialog: Star appears whether or not it has been bookmarked.
3. [Help and documentation] (Severity 3) Badges - Unsure what badges are for or what they communicate about the person. The account creation flow does not include anything about the user setting up badges and requires them to dig into the advanced page before knowing anything about how to get them. These badges cannot be used to "validate" someone without any explanation...
4. [Recognition rather than recall] (Severity 2) @bookmarks page - Users may want a link back to the info about a bookmarked place from their bookmarks page. This would allow easier access and less work than having to go back to the map and dig for their bookmarked listing "more info" link there.
5. [User control and freedom] (Severity 3) @adv profile page - Users need a save button to save their profile...
6. [Match between system and real world] (Severity 2) @adv profile page - Cleanliness and noise scale are vague. Each user will have a different impression and scaling for their habits and behavior - user A's level 2 could be very different from user B's level 2. Please provide more details in the available options to ensure happy roommate relationships.
7. [Consistency and standards] (Severity 3) @basic profile page - The title on this page is "Registration" - didn't the user already set up an account at this point??
8. [User control and freedom] (Severity 2) @group - Users may accidentally reject a group invite they actually wanted - ability to undo a 'Decline' would be convenient.
9. [Visibility of system status] (Severity 2) Users should be able to preview their own profile (or whatever gets displayed to others).
10. [Visibility of system status] (Severity 3) The other pages should not be available if the user is not currently logged in.
11. [Match between system and real world] (Severity 4) I am not convinced that this app facilitates good roommate matching. It is a platform for searching for housing and gaining contacts, but there is little help from the interface to ensure things go smoothly. For example, other human factors seem necessary in house + roommate finding, such as timeline, length of stay in the area, pets, accessibility concerns, allergies, etc. etc. While these may come up in the group chat, it would be nice if some of these ideas were also built into the interface.

Tenzin's

[H2 Match between system and the real world] (Severity 3)

After logging in, when a button other than "Home" is clicked in the navigation bar and the user returns to "Home" again, the user gets logged out. It is unclear how pressing on "Home" could logout the user.

[H5 Error Prevention] (Severity 2)

The login page has a navigation bar at the top which is not needed in this page. Features such as profile information and notifications pertaining to a specific user can only be available after the user had logged in. Having the buttons there can lead to users attempting to interact with them before they have logged in or signed up.

[H6 Recognition rather than recall] (Severity 2)

There is no indication that the user has registered after pressing "Register" button in the "registration form" page. Some kind of "you have been registered" message would have been helpful.

[H5 Error Prevention] (Severity 2)

Option of providing negative age numbers is not needed for inputs in "min age" and "max age" under "Filter by" in Maps. You can minimize the possibility of user error by starting the age from zero or even higher.

[H2 Match between system and the real world] (Severity 2)

Unsure what badges are and their purpose.

[H5 Visibility of system status] (Severity 2)

Hover cursor over badges and pictures of contacts makes the user think that those are buttons and the user can interact with them by clicking on them.

[H5 Error Prevention] (Severity 2)

There are no labels on or under the sliders for cleanliness and noise in "Filter by", so it is unclear as to what I have ranked myself for those sections.

[H5 Consistency and Standards] (Severity 2)

"More info" in Maps opens up a "generic person dialog". While there is a button at the top that exits you out of the pop up. It is unclear at first whether that button is an exit button which could be made more intuitive by making the button red or labeling it as "exit".