

Heuristic Analysis of Hifi Prototype

The first of the heuristics is “Visibility of System Status.” This is regarding feedback about the state of the program while it is running. In the case of the hifi prototype, the phone that the app is running on will still display its own time, battery life, wifi and cellular strength. Since the prototype at this stage does not require any intense data loading, there should be no period spent waiting for the app to do something after inputting an appropriate command.

The second heuristic is “Match between system and the real world.” In this case, the language used by the app is in plain terms that would be familiar to anyone who uses phone apps. The “yes/no” system for choosing someone to meet up with are represented with green checkmarks and red X’s, which too is standard. The map section of the app that appears when a match is accepted is also similar in style to many other GPS apps and should be just as easy to use.

The third heuristic is “User Control and Freedom.” Much of this prototype is built with this heuristic in mind. Every menu selection is available from anywhere in the map, and all actions and inputs can be easily undone. The exception to this however is that the prototype doesn’t allow you to re-evaluate a hang-out choice without starting over from the main menu. This is an aspect that can easily be improved on in the next prototype.

The fourth heuristic is “Consistency and Standards.” The app in its final version is intended to be used primarily on iOS devices. However, the tool that I primarily used to build the prototype, Adobe XD, did not have an up-to-date iOS UI package (or even a compatible out of date one for that matter). Thus, I had to improvise with respect to commonly used icons, images, and fonts. Despite this, I believe that the icons that were used still communicate the intended user controls that will feel familiar. The “Yes/No” options of the matching portion of the prototype should also be familiar to any who has used similar apps before, with reject on the left side and accept on the right. The prototype is also consistent in its own internal style as all buttons made to look like one another as to make it obvious what their use is. One aspect that may need to be addressed is the presence of a log-in screen at all. In the case with most apps, your account data is local to your phone. There may be little value in utilizing an additional layer of user authentication if it slows down the experience.

The fifth heuristic is “Error Prevention.” This prototype generally passes this heuristic. Nearly all choices made within the app are cancellable or easily changed. Matches can be rejected if the user changes their mind, and even the meet-up map can be cancelled out of. The one aspect that this prototype misses would be to ask for confirmation after a user selects “Log Out.” In the current build, the user will be logged out as soon as they press the button, which could make user mistakes costly to the experience.

The sixth heuristic is “Recognition rather than recall.” In essence, this heuristic checks if all relevant information for each screen is available in that screen. This prototype passes this heuristic easily, as it is relatively simple to use in the first place, and each screen only asks for a small number of decisions to be made, none of which requires information from other screens.

The seventh heuristic is “Flexibility and efficiency of use.” Because this prototype was intentionally built to keep user interaction simple, there are not many opportunities for experienced

users to speed up their interaction. It could be possible to include a “remember me” option for logging in that could cut down on some wasted time. Perhaps there could also be an option to automatically connect yourself with matches at the expense of losing the decline option.

The eighth heuristic is “Aesthetic and minimalist design.” I feel that the hifi prototype passes this heuristic most strongly out of all of them. The design is kept very minimal, using monotone greys to contrast the brighter pastel colors of the apps important options and features. Symbols are kept very minimal, only using a single color and thus intentionally lacking a border. To maintain a subtle distinction, many panels and buttons use a faint drop shadow to appear separate from the backgrounds and suggest their importance to the user.

The ninth heuristic is “Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors.” Since there is no actual functionality in this prototype, just the appearance of it, there are very few errors that need recognizing or diagnosing. The minimalist design of the app prevents many Mistakes from happening, and even then, nearly everything in the prototype is reversible. There is a section in the prototype that will eventually allow users to submit bug reports, which will be important for addressing unknown errors in the future.

The tenth heuristic is “Help and Documentation.” The prototype handles both within the user menu. There is a “Help” section that will eventually link to a web page containing tips and instructions on using the app as well as an email address that can be contacted for support. Additionally, there is a copy of the Terms & Conditions that the user would have to have agreed to to use the app. I believe these menus sufficiently addresses this heuristic.

Overall this build of the prototype addresses most of the heuristics. Some, such as heuristic #1, #9, and #10 don’t apply very strongly to this version of the prototype since it only contains the interface. I would say that it most strongly passes heuristic #8 in its minimalist design approach. Areas that could be improved based on the heuristics is allowing users to backpedal on previously made “hangout” choices more easily. Additionally, when Adobe XD updates the iOS UI support, a future prototype could make use of even more recognizable icons to improve the user experience. An additional warning/confirmation notice could also be added to the log-out button to prevent accidentally being kicked out to the log-in screen. Another option would be to remove the log-in screen altogether and simply base the apps accounts off of the phone locally.