

# Rate My Landlord

COSC 341 - Group 40

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## Introduction

Rate My Landlord is the “Rate My Professor” of the rental industry. We hope that in providing a platform for renters to discuss their experience with different landlords and property management companies, they will be empowered to hold landlords accountable.

Renters can use Rate My Landlord to explore properties by the experiences of fellow renters. Landlords can use Rate My Landlord to increase transparency of their operations and to facilitate communication between themselves, their companies, and the people who rent their properties.

# Tasks

## Task 1 – Locating a property geographically

**Description:** The user presses the map button from the main page and is brought to a map. They can then select a pin corresponding to a particular property, which pulls up that property's page

**Changes:** No significant changes

## Task 2 – Locating a property by address

**Description:** The user is presented with a search field from the main page. As they type into this field, options will be visible in a drop down as predictive-search. Having sufficiently refined their search, they can select an available option to be brought to that property's page

**Changes:** We dropped the “advanced search” route, as it felt out of the scope of this task.

## Task 3 – User Verification

**Description:** The landlord states they will be using the app as a landlord, and is invited to email supporting documentation to the account verification team. Once they have composed and sent an email, they are returned to the app and asked to wait while the team reviews their documents. Once the team has reviewed their documents, they are finally told whether their application has been accepted.

**Changes:** Originally, they would upload their documents and they could start using the platform immediately with some restrictions. We decided against this and expanded the interface to include more feedback, more documentation, and more direct involvement in the process.

## Task 4 – Leaving a review

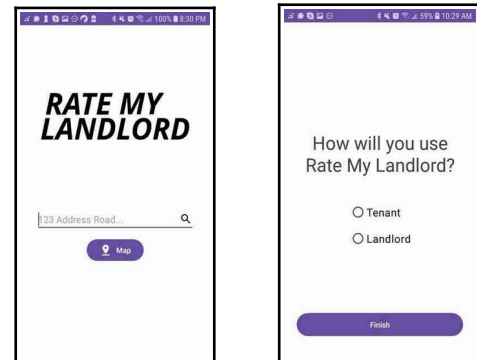
**Description:** The user can select 1-5 stars and write about their experience living on the selected property. After they hit publish, they are asked to review and confirm that they want the review published. If they press publish again, the review is published.

**Changes:** We dropped an intermediary screen where the user can attach refined tags to make their review more searchable. We decided this was too complicated, and that this information could be gleaned from the text of their review automatically

# Application of Design Principles

## Visibility

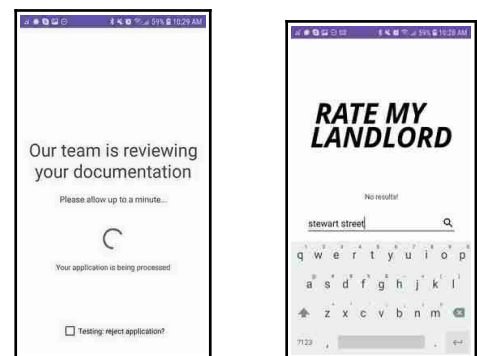
We sought to make important artifacts visible by maintaining an uncluttered interface where key artifacts are the focal point



## Feedback

During the landlord verification process, we ensured the user was constantly aware of how the process was going on the backend.

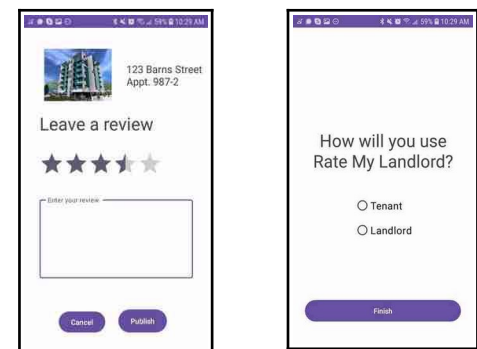
While a user is searching, if their query doesn't match any known results, they are promptly notified by a text view stating "No results!"



## Constraints

Review ratings are constrained to 1-5 stars

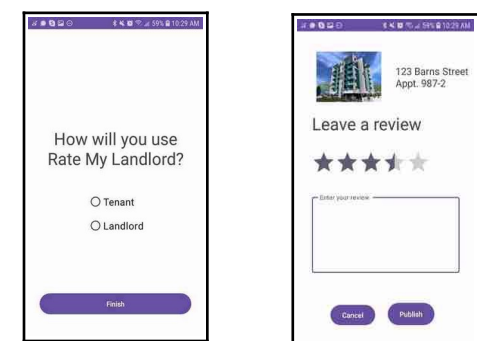
During "registration" (i.e. the user verification task), a user must be either a tenant or a landlord. This choice is constrained through the use of radio buttons.



## Consistency

When a task requires you to move forward, we've consistently used one button at the bottom-center of the screen

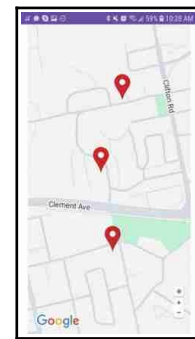
When a task is cancellable, the left button is always the negative option and the right is always the positive option. This is consistent with how English-speakers read, and how most Western UIs work.



## Affordance

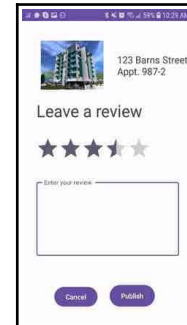
We've chosen to create fewer branching paths through our interface so that what matters is always readily available and obvious to the user

The map gives users a more natural way to select a property (i.e. spatially)



## Simplicity

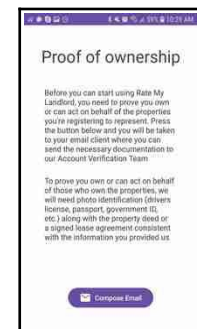
We've applied simplicity in all major tasks by focusing on maintaining only a few key interactable artifacts on each screen.



## Matching

We made use of meaningful icons in several places (map button, compose email button, etc.)

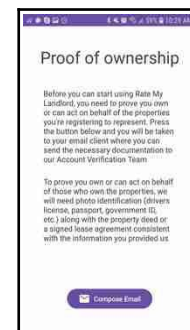
We revised the “Proof of ownership” explanation to use natural, familiar language to explain the procedure



## Providing Help

The interface provides a detailed explanation of how a landlord can have their identity verified.

The documentation is context sensitive; the information you receive depends on what kind of user you are and what you will likely use the app for. Users aren't forced to read information irrelevant to them.



# Heuristic Evaluation Summary

Some issues were reported more than once. This list contains all the unique issues reported

**Problem:** You cannot cancel creating a review  
**Location:** "Leave a review" main page  
**Heuristic:** User Control & Freedom  
**Severity:** 4  
**Solution:** Add a cancel button

**Problem:** Unable to retry rejected application  
**Location:** "Verify user" final page  
**Heuristic:** User Control & Freedom  
**Severity:** 4  
**Solution:** Add a retry button

**Problem:** No feedback while awaiting approval  
**Location:** "Verify user" waiting page  
**Heuristic:** Visibility of System Status  
**Severity:** 2  
**Solution:** I should receive updates while waiting

**Problem:** No feedback when no results found  
**Location:** "Locate a property by address"  
**Heuristic:** Visibility of System Status  
**Severity:** 2  
**Solution:** Show a "not found" message

**Problem:** No matches for less than 3 characters  
**Location:** "Locate a property by address"  
**Heuristic:** Visibility of System Status  
**Severity:** 3  
**Solution:** Show predictive results immediately

**Problem:** Technical language while "verifying"  
**Location:** "Verify user" documentation page  
**Heuristic:** Matching  
**Severity:** 1  
**Solution:** Speak of "proof of ownership" instead

**Problem:** Unclear what documentation is needed  
**Location:** "Verify user" documentation page  
**Heuristic:** Help and documentation  
**Severity:** 3  
**Solution:** Give explicit examples

**Problem:** Missing iconography for email  
**Location:** "Verify user" documentation page  
**Heuristic:** Consistency & Standards  
**Severity:** 1  
**Solution:** Add mail icon to button

## Adjustments following the Heuristic Evaluation

We accepted all of the feedback we recieved from the Heuristic Evaluation and implemented it as suggested, except for one case.

Instead of adding another button to the “application rejection” page at the end of the verification flow, we decided to change the “Finish” button to a “Retry” button. Originally, we thought that a landlord may be able to use their account without having been verified with certain functionality limited, but later decided that it would make more sense to forbid them from using the app until they are verified.

## Video Demonstration

[Click here to watch the video demonstration on YouTube](#)