







# Mini-project W07 Report: Evaluation Report and Requirements

Topic: Yelp Interface

		
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## Summary of Evaluation and Results

### a) *Evaluation Goals:*

1. What are the typical processes users go through while using the interface and what kind of problems or critical points they encounter?
2. How important is secondary information like images, reviews and ratings to the user for making a decision?
3. How accessible are the features to users?

### b) *Evaluation Summary:*

Our targeted participants were all UBC students who are typically looking for new places to eat around the city. We created an online survey to collect demographic information of UBC students who are Yelp users. We received a total of 51 responses from our survey. Also, we recruited 10 students for a think-aloud observation and a brief semi-structured interview based on their experience of using Yelp.

#### Protocol:

- Created a small questionnaire and distribute it to UBC students
- Sent out survey to generate basic data
- Performed observation on 10 participants individually
- The participants were asked where they usually go out to eat. Then they were asked to use Yelp to find a new, different place to dine out
- Recorded their actions for later coding purpose
- After observation, we interviewed the participants based on their past experience and thoughts during the observation.
- Coded observation data using coding sheet.
- Analyzed all responses and data for evaluation.

### c) *Evaluation Rationale:*

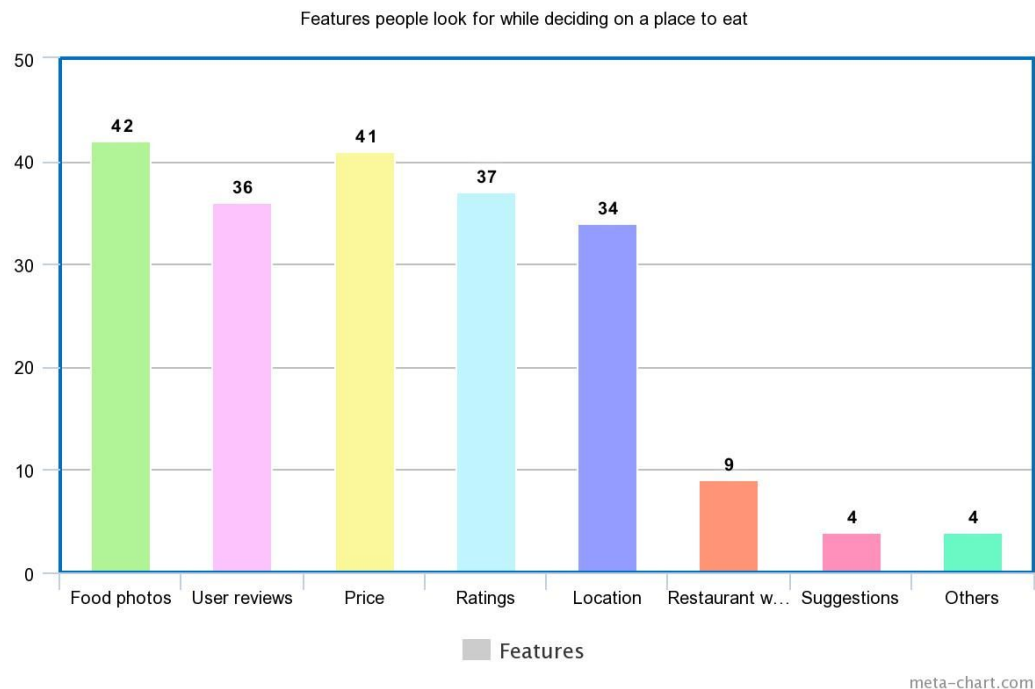
We first used a short survey to generate some simple data which includes demographic information and user's attitude towards Yelp. We believe this data can help us understand and further analyze our observation and interview results. We were also able to gather a much larger data using an online survey as it is much easier to fill out and distribute.

As for the think-aloud observation method, we think it can provide us accurate responses of what difficulties usually arise when using the Yelp interface. Last but not least, we interviewed our participants for a deeper analysis on Yelp interface. We believe our 10 participants provided us their real thoughts, satisfaction level and difficulties they have

encountered for us during the interviews. Also, we collected useful suggestion from them to help improve the current interface.

**d) Analysis (outcome of Step 9):**

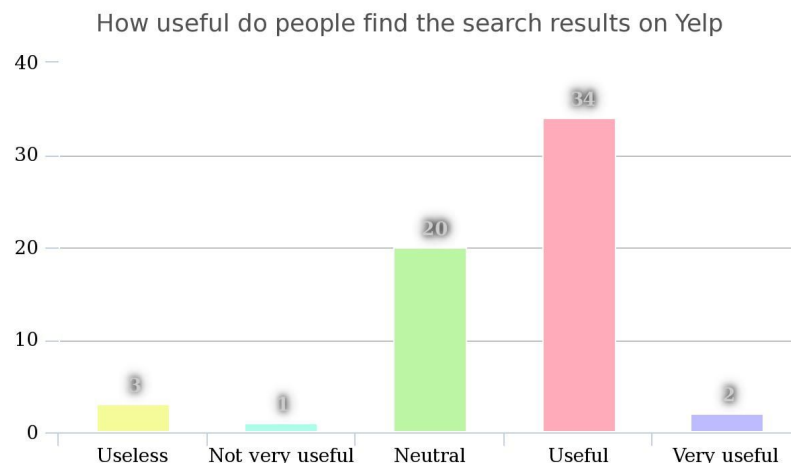
Based on the one-to-one observations, the first step that every participants took was to search for the keywords including type of cuisine and locations in the search bar at the top of the interface. The interface was designed as one search bar showing on the opening page, and when a user click on it, the interface will switch to another page which has two search bars on top, where the first is used as general searching, and the second specifically for location searching. From the participants we observed, only one of them used the second search bar, however, they performed the searching process by typing both of the food and location keywords in the first search bar. In terms of the actual search, half of the participants tilted towards using the suggestion provided by Yelp according to their keywords, and generally the suggestions have little differences comparing to their typed words.



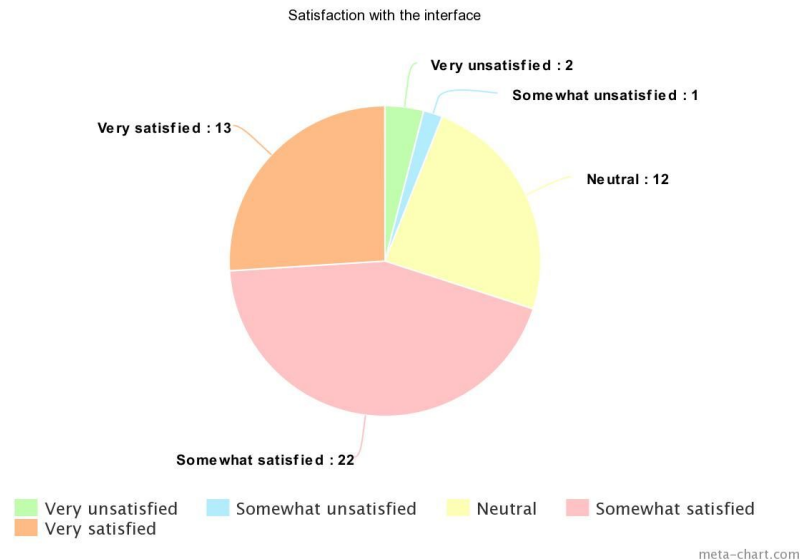
We found that while deciding on a place to eat, most people give more attention to pricing and food photos. This is perhaps because visual information, in contrast to other information, is more trustworthy to users while looking to explore new places. As most of our research demographic was university students, budget constraints are always a deciding factor and that is why pricing is also one of the most commonly used features. Apart from these, other features like reviews, ratings and locations are also pretty commonly used. We also found that some users look for some other features, that we initially did not believe were important deciding factors on the interface. From our observations, some of these were restaurant menu and opening times.

From the one-to-one observation, after getting all the results, only 3 out of 10 participants used the filter function provided by Yelp at their first try, and 1 participant used the filter function after his first run. Combining this finding with the interview afterwards, we found that the participants tend to focus more on the listed search results, and using the filter functions may not have occurred to them. Moreover, one of the participant suggested that if a user has been spending some time browsing through the results, it may be really helpful that a reminder of using the filter functions shows up, which implies that some of the features may not be accessible enough for the users who do not use the interface often.

When participants are in a restaurant page, the location, photo, review features are most picked. This conforms with the results we got from the questionnaire. 3 out of 10 participants chose the restaurants based on their prior knowledge instead of the secondary information. For people who are exploring new type of restaurants, their decisions were mainly reliant on the photos and reviews submitted by others. However, for people who are more conservative, their decisions were mainly based on the location of a restaurant or a place they already know. Even people looking for a new place to eat were not willing to explore new features in the interface. We also found that users looked for the same features while picking a restaurant from the search results.



Also, from the questionnaire, we observed a normal distribution of users in the aspect of usefulness of search results. While not many people find the search results superb in helping them find a restaurant to eat, not many find them unhelpful either. Most people lie in the middle range, with more people who find them useful than not. We collected this information using a questionnaire filled up by over 50 people, out of which 34 do find the Yelp search results helpful in deciding on a new place to eat. The result matches what we observed from the observation, and in spite of people having desired restaurant in mind. Most of our participants did not hesitate about choosing their final restaurant based on the search results, and all of them made their decision through browsing the first page of the results.



As a final question to everyone after their experience with using the Yelp app interface. We found that most people are satisfied with the interface of the application with more than 60% being satisfied. Out of the remaining, very few people were unsatisfied with it, while a majority had a neutral opinion. This could be correlated with our survey about the search results, where a similar number of people found the search results unhelpful in trying to find a new restaurant. It is likely that poor search results that might not be relevant or helpful to the user are a deciding factor in their satisfaction with using the Yelp interface. Based on feedback from interviews, the major problems people have are being overwhelmed with information and not knowing where to find the information they need.

We also asked the users to specify on a scale of 0-100 how much they trust restaurant ratings on Yelp. We obtained a mean value of 67.90 with a standard deviation of 16.30. So a lot of people do not trust the ratings a lot, even though they do consider them while deciding on a place to eat. This was an interesting observation. It's possible that this relates to personal experiences of people contrasting with the ratings of the restaurants.

#### e) **Conclusions (outcome of Step 10):**

Based on the evaluation goals we have set up for Yelp, we conducted an adequate number of in-person interviews and online surveys to help us analyze the existing mobile features of this interface in regards to how they support Yelp's user experience. With the implementation of these three major approaches, we are allowed to analyze the received data from multiple perspectives.

First of all, the online survey we created had reached out to 51 users and the results we received from them were put into different visualizations like bar chart and pie graph. In this way, we acquired a clear view on how users with similar backgrounds feel about their overall

experience with Yelp. By looking into the visualizations, we are able to compare the popularity of different features in how they help users to make decisions, how useful and reliable our participants feel about the search results and restaurant ratings they obtained, and how satisfied do users feels about Yelp in general.

However, we believe that there are still some things that could have been done better to further expand our observations. For example, the questions designed for this online survey are considered disconnected from each other and it would have been better to include more detailed background information about the interface and create sequential and correlated questions to guide our participants when reminiscing about their user experience.

Secondly, the approach of one-to-one interviews based on think-aloud observations has provided us a more detailed insight into the effectiveness of different features and the ways in which they function to help users to decide on where to eat. During the process of interviewing, we observed that some of the designed questions are too general, which made the perceived results incomprehensive and broad. Also, we found out that a couple of our interview questions are sometimes not applicable to interviewees who are new to Yelp and made it impossible for them to provide input. Besides, we discovered one of the interview questions that asks for our interviewee's preferred type of restaurants is not relevant or helpful in supporting our analysis on the evaluation goals.

In correspondence to our evaluation goals, we conclude that the typical processes that our participants went through were the search engine and other secondary information like photos, ratings, and reviews. According to the think-aloud observations, most participants relied on secondary information to help them make decisions, which means that photos, ratings and reviews are considered indispensable and necessary during the process of comparing different restaurants. Overall, Yelp does help people find restaurants faster. It lists out all the options in a specific category and also helps to discover new restaurants.

Despite the use of these basic features, some of the problems that were encountered by our participants are the inaccessibility of other features like bookmark and filter due to Yelp's inconspicuous visibility design. Some people also find there are too many ads and options which can make it hard for them to make a decision. We believe that the Yelp interface could be improved by tackling these user problems in a more efficient and effective way.

## **Task examples and Requirements**

### **f) *Task Requirements:***

**Task Example #1: Jorge**

*Background:*

- 20 year old male UBC student
- International student from Mexico
- Rents a suite with his sister in Point Grey

*Motivations:*

- When it comes to food, he's very conservative and traditional
- Sister is always the adventurous one
- Loves Tacos

*Frustrations:*

- Always homesick
- Hates the rain

Wakes up at 7:30AM, and quickly gets ready for school, grabs an apple, prepares his lunch, and bikes to his 8:00AM class. Jorge finishes his class at 4:00 PM and usually by that time, he's starving.

*Few times a week, he meets up with his sister for dinner. Because they're both awful cooks, they usually go out to eat. Jorge always likes to go to same Taco place to eat, however his sister loves trying new things and gets really frustrated with Jorge. Jorge loves eating Tacos and eating them reminds him of home, luckily his sister always compromises because she too loves tacos.*

*Task Example #2: **Feng***

*Background:*

- 19 year old male UBC student
- Domestic student from Vancouver
- Commutes to school from Surrey

*Motivations:*

- Loves hanging out with friends
- His drive in life is being as sociable as possible
- Went to UBC because he heard it was a party school

*Frustrations:*

- Travelling long distances and commuting
- Making plans with a large group of friends

He drives to school everyday because the bus takes too long. He's also taking some easy courses so he has a lot of free time and devotes some of his time to his other hobbies.

*On Fridays, he likes to make plans to go out and eat with a dozen of his good friends. He's rarely successful because everyone has different tastes, schedules, and accommodating large groups is difficult. He keeps trying anyway because loves spending time with them.*

**g) Requirements (Step 12):**

*Must Include:*

- Filter functionality should be intuitive enough to use so that it wouldn't be an afterthought for a user
- The filter and bookmark function should be accessible and be given prominence by the interface to let the user know it is there
- The price option filter should be unambiguous for a user (they shouldn't have to guess what's cheap and what's expensive)

*Should Include:*

- Suggest new restaurants that individuals would want to go to, instead of the same restaurants every time (for example, searching sushi and the same sushi restaurants is on the first page)
- When suggesting a restaurant, the signature dishes and most popular dishes should be a feature that is accessible in the interface

*Could Include:*

- Could include a planning feature for group dining (integrating Facebook or other social media platforms)

**h) Justification:**

The filter and price option functionalities are the most basic aspects of a food review site. Therefore, it is important to highlight the need for these functionalities to be fixed. Furthermore, it was indicated through the observations and interviews that these features were critical for users. However, the use of these features were absent in the observations because of the lack of accessibility. The important price option filter was ambiguous to most users because instead of using dollar amounts, the interface used dollar sign amounts (\$\$\$) to indicate the cost of a meal.

Other less crucial suggestions in the "should include" category were minor inconveniences expressed by interviewees. They were not important enough to be influential when using the interface and picking a restaurant. Lastly, although a group dining feature would be practical, it was not a concern for most users to justify a definite inclusion in the interface.





## **Appendix A**

### **A.1) Interview Questions**

1. Why do you choose this restaurant?
2. What types of restaurants do you usually look for?
3. How often are you willing to experiment and discover new cuisines?
4. How useful do you find the reviews submitted by other users to help you find what you're looking for?
5. How do you generally go about deciding on places to eat without the use of Yelp?
6. How does Yelp help/not help you in that process?
7. I observed that you got stuck/confused while using the app. Why do you think that happened? How do you think the interface could have been better to avoid such a situation?
8. Which feature on the interface best helped you decide on what to eat?
9. How satisfied do you feel about using the interface? What do you think could be improved with the interface based on your interactions?

## A.2) Questionnaire

(<https://survey.ubc.ca/surveys/37-14e615a1815fccc0659d625ba2d/yelp-user-experience-questionnaire/>)

Please read the consent form below. Please select Yes if you agree. Otherwise you can select No and exit the survey.

[Link to Consent Form.](#)

Yes No

### Full Name

Your name and personal contact information is totally private and will not be shared with anyone else. It will only be used to contact you if we require any further information based on your responses in the questionnaire.

Type here

### E-mail Address

Type here

How often do you usually go out to eat?

☐ Never ☐ Once a week ☐ 2-3 times a week ☐ 3-5 times a week ☐ Almost every day

How often do you use the Yelp app while deciding where to eat?

☐ Always ☐ More often than not ☐ Rarely ☐ Never

Do you usually trust the restaurant ratings on Yelp?

Not trustworthy

50

Very trustworthy

What features do you look for while deciding on a place to eat?

- ☐ Food photos
- ☐ User reviews
- ☐ Price
- ☐ Ratings
- ☐ Location
- ☐ Restaurant website
- ☐ Similar restaurant suggestions
- ☐ Anything else:

Type here

I find the search results on Yelp helpful in regards to deciding on a restaurant.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

Please rate your level of satisfaction in regard to your user experience with Yelp.

- ☐ Very Unsatisfied
- ☐ Somewhat Unsatisfied
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Somewhat Satisfied
- ☐ Very Satisfied
- ☐ Doesn't Apply

Do you think there are any ways the Yelp app could be improved in helping you decide on a place to eat?

Type here

Would you be interested in being part of a small study for analyzing and improving the User Interface of the Yelp application?

Participation is totally voluntary and will involve a brief interview and a think out-loud session involving the use of the Yelp app.

Yes No

Submit



