Waze Heuristic Evaluation

Graphic Communication Department, Cal Poly SLO

Professor Hocheol Yang

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Overview

Waze is a community-driven map app designed by an Isreali company that was acquired by Google back in 2013. Waze uses data from app users to provide quicker navigation routes. The data is submitted both automatically as users drive around using speeds determined by GPS signals and can be manually entered on the app. Users can report speed traps, accidents, traffic jams, and other things that could slow down drivers. In the latest update, it app has become much more colorful, and also foregrounds the ability for individual users to share their current emotions with Moods, a set of user-selectable icons that can reflect how you're feeling as you're driving. With that said, I'm curious to take a second look into these new features along with the other updates to determine just how simple they are to use and the benefits we can gain through a heuristic evaluation.

Heuristics

Simple and natural dialogue

.   Often taken for granted, maps quite literally allow us to navigate our environments. Without maps, humans would have trouble interacting with others as well as interacting with the physical environment (Lynch, 2019, p.2) Since maps serve us such an important role, it must be capable of being interpreted by the masses. An important new feature of Waze is the updated graphics and color scheme on the app. The main page has become much more presentable, and has gained the advantage of being more visually appealing. This could serve to boost its engagement among the Waze user community, and for a newly joined member as well. Along with adding the Moods feature, this simple yet personalized emoji creates a sentiment measure connected to the current navigation details that can ultimately help enrich the Waze data.

Speak the users' language

          As a driver, you want to be able to focus your entire attention while on the road, but also be able to navigate your GPS apps when new traffic updates come. What's great about Waze is having the visualizations be large and bright enough to help the user immediately direct to what they want to see or look up. Allowing for easy access to the emojis display, as well as to the emojis posts that other drivers are contributing to the platform to let others know what they're feeling in the current traffic situation. A dozen drivers could all feel different in the exact same situation, which is critical

because Moods act as a visual reminder of all of us out there, working together (Etherington, 2020). All this easy navigating with the help of the visualizations display promotes safety to users as their driving, and puts them more at ease when being able to deal with an easy interface in the midst of caught up traffic.

Consistency

From personal experience, what's great about Waze is more often than not, the app currently reflects on what is going on in real-time. Whenever there is heavy traffic present, a discussion pole emerges onto the screen of the application, and allows users who are parked in traffic to communicate with one another on what's going up ahead. We've all been in those traffic situations where everyone parks and starts to slowly get out of their cars to see what's going on. Here, Waze eliminates the need for that by simply allowing drivers to communicate through the platform on what's up ahead. This can help ease anxiety caused during these situations, and create some sort of handle on the situation for the user. The consistency in real-time traffic updates by other drivers nearby as well as by the application itself, makes Waze the most reliable tool when on the road.

Shortcuts

While on the road, you want to minimize distraction and overhead when needing to look up your navigation system. With that in mind, Waze's notifications can be used as shortcuts for when needing to get quick updates without the need of opening up the application. These notifications can range from real-time traffic updates/changes, messages from other drivers on the status of traffic, and Moods notifications on how drivers feel currently in on-going traffic. Keeping up with the community theme, Waze lets users add their friends so that groups of friends can keep track of each other on a trip, and facilitate chance encounters if a friend appears in a Waze user's vicinity (Page, 2020). These features allow users to communicate directly on the app, minimizing the need to use multiple platforms, and allows you not only to use Waze as a navigation system, but as a common platform for all parties to keep track of one another while on the road. This minimizes the need to call or text, when you can all solely rely on the app. This allows feasibility and an increase in safety, when you only have to deal with one active application while driving.

Conclusion

Waze continues to improve and create personalized experience through their use of Moods personalization tool, and driver communication during real-time traffic. This embodies the idea behind Waze, who's mission has always been to embody a community setting, which in this case, connects drivers who are on the same route to look out for each other, and help along the way.

References

Lynch, M. (2019, January 1). *WAZE'S IMPACT ON WAYS. - Document - Gale Academic OneFile*. WAZE'S IMPACT ON WAYS. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from https://go.gale.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA657389734&sid=googleScholar&v=2.1 &it=r&linkaccess=abs&issn=0014164X&p=AONE&sw=w&userGroupName=anon %7E50902456

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Link to portfolio page: https://github.com/pvolnuhi/Waze-Heuristic-Eval