

## Heuristic Evaluation of Flow

### 1. Problem

We evaluated the interface for Flow, a mobile phone-based idea and project management application.

### 2. Violations Found

#### H2-1

1. [H2-1] [S: 1] [A] The text dividing sections on the home screen is small and gray... along with a lot of the other text, so it does not do an effective job dividing sections. Add some color, break lines, and change the size – or make sections banded/give each section a different background hue.
2. [H2-1] [S: 3] [A, B] There should be a way to attach ideas to a project, or transform them into one.
3. [H2-1] [S: 4] [A, B, C] The main screen for a project should be just another view—*it's really unclear actually what the main screen is supposed to be for a project*—it's nice to have the summary page for the project, but it is unclear how to just quickly switch to the web view – hard to tell the value, couldn't tell what to edit or how.
4. [H2-1] [S: 2] [A] Editing using the project “web” is difficult, with small buttons and unclear function. It would be most intuitive to have most editing occur by tapping on the square, opening the project summary page (or some component of it) that is editable

#### H2-3

5. [H2-3] [S: 4] [A, B, C] No immediately obvious “back” function after tapping on a project on the start screen (this isn't as bad as another situation below, perhaps because the menu button implies return to home – there are only two actions required to get back to the previous screen, i.e., tap on the menu button and tap “home.” Also, can't go directly back to an individual project screen from something like the ‘share project’ screen—it makes more sense to the user to execute a function and return to the same screen (or be able to cancel and go back to the immediately previous screen), unless the project is deleted—then just return to the home screen.
6. [H2-3] [S:4] [A] No way to exit the ‘comments’ screen on the web-style overview, not even through tapping through a menu again

#### H 2-4

7. [H2-4] [S: 2] [A] Where there are comments, I should be able to add them—whether on an individual project page or on the overview web
8. [H2-4] [S: 3] [A, B, C] The “+” symbol perpetually in the upper RH corner could be interpreted as a prompt to create several different things—until after the user taps on it. Creating a project uses a very different methodology (via the slide-out menu), and while it's necessary to keep the two distinct, it would be helpful to make the process more similar.
9. [H2-4][S: 2] [A, B, C] Is it an ‘inspiration’ or an ‘idea’? The “ideaboard” (or “inspirationboard”?) should match the items it contains.

10. [H2-4] [S:1] [B, C] In Project page, seems like discard and delete are on the very left, but usually the options that the user is most likely to click on are on the left. Try changing the order to have Save and Share on the left instead

**H 2-5**

11. [H2-5] [S: 1] [A] “+” and “menu” buttons on start screen are small and difficult to tap accurately without looking at the screen carefully

12. [H2-5] [S:2] [B] It was unexpected for me that clicking on the deadline made it go away

**H 2-6**

13. [H2-6] [S:1] [B, C] In project page, delete and discard have images which could be interchangeable, so I could easily make a mistake and delete project instead of discard... maybe make delete project less prominent?

**H 2-7**

14. [H2-7] [S:1] [B] Don't really understand the Share project page based on where I came from

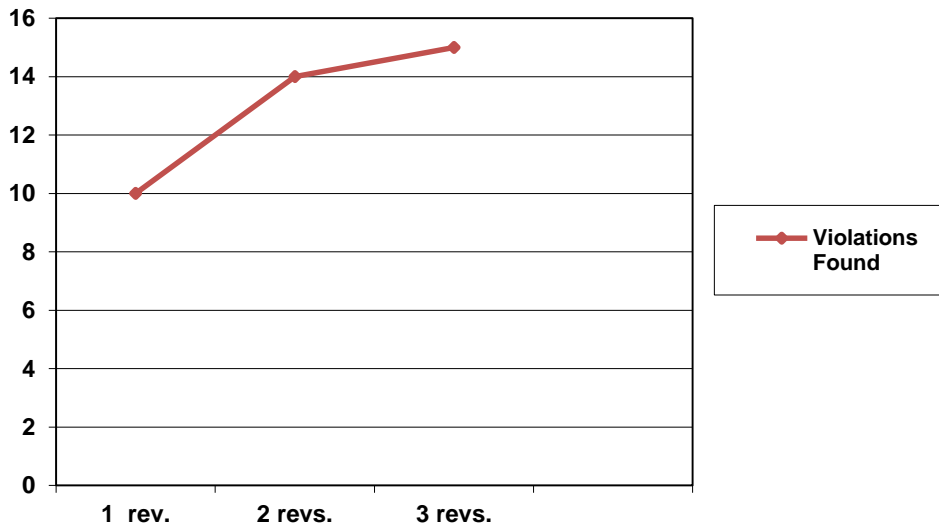
15. [H2-7] [S:1] [C] This is a minor point, but it seems like the Idea Board is not organized in any fashion. Maybe it should be organized by most recent to least recent.

**3. Summary of Violations**

Category	# Viol. (sev 0)	# Viol. (sev 1)	# Viol. (sev 2)	# Viol. (sev 3)	# Viol. (sev 4)	# Viol. (total)
[H2-1: Visibility of Status]		1	1	1	1	4
[H2-2: Match Sys & World]						0
[H2-3: User Control]					2	2
[H2-4: Consistency]		1	2	1		4
[H2-5: Error Prevention]		1	1			2
[H2-6: Recognition not Recall]		1				1
[H2-7: Efficiency of Use]		2				2
[H2-8: Minimalist Design]						0
[H2-9: Help Users with Errors]						0
[H2-10: Documentation]						0
<b>Total Violations by Severity</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>15</b>

### 4 Evaluation Statistics

Severity/evaluator	evaluator A	evaluator B	evaluator C
level 0	0	0	0
level 1	2	3	3
level 2	3	2	1
level 3	2	2	1
level 4	3	2	2
<b>total (levels 3 &amp; 4)</b>	5	4	3
<b>total (all levels)</b>	10	9	7
<b>evaluator #</b>	<b># problems found</b>	<b># problems remaining &amp; problem IDs</b>	
A	10	5 (10, 12, 13, 14, 15)	
B	9	1 (15)	
C	7	-	



### 5. Recommendations

Dear Team Flow,

We think your medium-fi prototype has excellent potential as an idea/project management app—the concept is clever, the graphics are nicely done, and we could see ourselves using this across a wide variety of subjects. Here are a few headline heuristics impressions:

- Back buttons or breadcrumbs are needed, pretty much everywhere. We hit a lot of dead ends using the app, which was extremely frustrating.
- We think we see where you’re going with editing projects and designing workflows, but as it stands, the number of different ways a user can edit the

same components of projects makes the feature highly unintuitive. The interface should be simplified so that editing is clear and limited in scope.

- We got confused about how we could get to the map and summary for projects on demand, and mentally mixed projects up with the other workflow items that could be created. Ideas/inspirations and projects should be better integrated, and you should decide on using the term “idea” or “inspiration” across the app, including on the “Ideaboard/inspirationboard”
- Also, it would be great to have a way to make ideas become part of projects or morph into them
- We had button struggles. In particular, the “+” button in the upper RH corner seemed to arbitrarily create a particular kind of workflow item; it would be more effective either as a menu for starting the creation of different things or if it were contextual.
- Your color choice was pleasant, although more vivid colors and larger text and buttons would be a huge step forward with usability.

Love,

Your Least Consequential Critics

### Severity Ratings

- 0 - don't agree that this is a usability problem
- 1 - cosmetic problem
- 2 - minor usability problem
- 3 - major usability problem; important to fix
- 4 - usability catastrophe; imperative to fix

## **Heuristics**

### **[H2-1: Visibility of System Status]**

- keep users informed about what is going on

### **[H2-2: Match Between System & Real World]**

- speak the users' language
- follow real world conventions

### **[H2-3: User Control & Freedom]**

- "exits" for mistaken choices, undo, redo
- don't force down fixed paths

### **[H2-4: Consistency & Standards]**

### **[H2-5: Error Prevention]**

### **[H2-6: Recognition Rather Than Recall]**

- make objects, actions, options, & directions visible or easily retrievable

### **[H2-7: Flexibility & Efficiency of Use]**

- accelerators for experts (e.g., gestures, kb shortcuts)
- allow users to tailor frequent actions (e.g., macros)

### **[H2-8: Aesthetic & Minimalist Design]**

- no irrelevant information in dialogues

### **[H2-9: Help Users Recognize, Diagnose, & Recover from Errors]**

- error messages in plain language
- precisely indicate the problem
- constructively suggest a solution

### **[H2-10: Help & Documentation]**

- easy to search
- focused on the user's task
- list concrete steps to carry out
- not too large