

Heuristic Evaluation of Soneme

1. Problem

This is an evaluation of Soneme, a location based DJ application for users to create their own DJ stations and listen in to others near by.

2. Violations Found

1. [H2-10 Help and Documentation] [Severity 1] [Found: B]

The tutorial screen is completely unhelpful in terms of teaching the user how to actually use the app. While it describes the features of application, the numerous gestures are unintuitive and confusing. Without the readme, I would have completely been lost. Much of the functionality is not immediately apparent. Instead of just a short info message, a few panels that actually show images of how to use the interface would teach the user how to use the complex gestures.

2. [H2-4 Consistency and standards] [Severity 3] [Found: A, B, C]

The search menu does not seem to match platform conventions. When a user wants to search, the first thing they typically look for is an input box, but this page lacked any form of input. This may be contained in the add term box, but the user should not have to click through to another box to finally enter a term in. Instead, consider adding a search bar above the search terms. When a term is input, natural language processing paired with smart live search should be able to determine if it is an artist, style, genre, album, etcetera. A good example of this is Spotify's search.

3. [H2-4 Consistency and standards] [Severity 2] [Found: B, C]

Given the multivariate search, it is not clear to the user whether or not each term additional term acts with an OR during search or an AND. For example with the sample, is the search looking for music that is psych, energetic and by the artist War on Drugs or is the search looking for music that is psych, energetic or by the artist War on Drugs. By simply adding an ampersand at the beginning of each line or stating that this is a tutorial, a user can better tailor their search terms.

4. [H2-3 User Control and Freedom][Severity 2] [Found: B]

Users are unable to remove a search term. This means that they must either completely start over in order to edit a search. By adding an × to each row of search terms, a user will be able to edit their search.

5. [H2-7 Flexibility and efficiency of use][Severity 2][Found: B]

In the event that many soneme become widely popular, there could be many DJs in a single area. If you were searching for a particular DJ in the area, or a particular genre, it would be hard to find a DJ station in a list of hundreds. To fix this, there should be options that allow filtering or options to search the DJ list.

6. [H2-1 Visibility of System Status][Severity 1][Found: B,C]

Although the 4.8/5 seems like a solid rating system with concrete number, it took me a few seconds to realize that it was a rating and not a radio station number. It would be better if it was represented in star rating system. This star rating system is almost standard now, and is the best way to visually represent that data.

7. [H2-1 Visibility of System Status][Severity 3][Found: A, B, C]

Also, it is not immediately apparent how the DJ rating is calculated and how a user can contribute to the rating. If the star rating was implemented, the user could also contribute by selecting the number of stars they deem the radio station is, thus giving the star rating system multiple functions. Furthermore, there is no interface to change your DJ photo or bio. Perhaps a create profile page with some history.

8. [H2-5 Error Prevention][Severity 1][Found: B]

The message in the queue for the DJ still reads, “swipe down on songs to add to queue.” Because a user cannot edit a DJ’s queue, this message is inaccurate. Simply change the error message to mitigate this problem.

9. [H2-4 Consistency and Standards][Severity 4][Found A, B, C]

Soneme may be a little overzealous with its gestures that may be not intuitive to the average user. Although it contributes to the minimalism of the app, it disregards usability. While gestures are novel, they are not standard in design language today. Furthermore, there are no visual clues that would indicate them in the prototype. A tutorial to help the

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user before they use the app would be a good way to inform users of the gestures. Furthermore, it may make sense to add more icons to tap so that besides the drag modality to help users. Finally, the simplest interaction, tapping a song is unassigned. Perhaps this could be assigned to select a song as the new center album.

10. [H2-4 Consistency and Standards][Severity 3][Found by B]

It is confusing to have only some gestures work on certain albums in certain positions,. A gesture that reveals more song information should be able to be used for any song on the grid. There is no reason to limit it to merely the center song. All gestures should be enabled for all grid positions.

11. [H2-4 Consistency and Standards][Severity 3][Found by B]

The gesture to reveal more information is not intuitive. An expanding pinch gesture could be used to expand the album to the information as it logically makes sense to expand an album for more information. Then a closing pinch gesture could be used to collapse the information.

12. [H2-4 Consistency and Standards][Severity 2][Found by B]

In order to remove a song from the queue, users are supposed to swipe down according to documentation. However, most interfaces with swipe gestures to remove items actually have users swipe up. See the deck of cards user interface in palm OS. This would bring uniformity with other user interfaces but it would also bring uniformity to the existing gestures. Currently, since swiping up is how users remove artist's descriptions, swiping up on songs should also remove songs from the queue. Another potential way to do this is to hold down on a song much like the home screen in iOS and clicking a remove button.

13. [H2-4 Consistency and Standards][Severity 4][Found by A, B, C]

It's not immediately clear whether or not the center position in the grid is reserved for the currently playing song, although the ability to drag other songs there indicates that it is not. Unless there is a clear reason why the center album must be larger besides the fact that it is the seed song for the similar songs around it, I would make the grid uniform.

14. [H2-8 Aesthetic and Minimalist Design][Severity 3][Found by A, B, C]

In my opinion, the off screen menu requires an extra tap and a lot of screen space is used for very few options. There may be a way to incorporate it to the top bar or a bottom bar. Also there should be back button to help users return to previous screens.

15. [H2-4 Consistency and standards][Severity 2][Found by C]

On the search screen, each result is denoted with a secondary identifier such as "artist," "style," and "genre." However, it is not clear what the difference between style and genre. Furthermore, the secondary identifiers for the DJs on the Find DJs screen don't seem to correspond to the styles or genres and the Artist Info screens don't use the styles or genres at all. It is unclear what the "style" and "genre" labels describe. Integrate them more into the artist and/or DJ screens.

16. [H2-4 Consistency and standards][Severity 2][Found by C]

Button labeled "Search" links to a screen titled "Explore." My first instinct/reaction was wondering whether or not the screens were linked properly. Select one label to use for the grid screen. If the grid is displaying search results, consider having the title bar say something like "Search Results"

17. [H2-8 Aesthetic and minimalist design][Severity 2][Found by C]

The Queue/Now Playing segment of the screen doesn't always have to be out. The space felt wasted occasionally when browsing but especially when reading information. Consider adopting an easily accessible swipe-in functionality for that segment (a la the Soundcloud mobile app) where play and queue controls are always one swipe away but don't take up valuable screen real estate.

18. [H2-3 User control and freedom][Severity 2][Found by C]

There isn't any kind of "back functionality when swiping grid items. For example, if I drag a new song into the center of the grid, I can't get back to the grid I just had. That deprives users of a way to go back one state if they make a mistake. Implement a swipe functionality to compliment the swipe left/drag to center gesture that currently advances the "Explore" grid.

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19. [H2-3 User control and freedom][Severity 3][Found by C]

The grid only contains nine items at a time and the only way to get new items served up is to select a new song to go in the middle of the grid. What if a search returns more than nine results or if a user just wants to be able to browse without selecting a new song for the center? It would give the user more freedom if they were able to scroll left and right through a larger grid.

20. [H2-6. Recognition rather than recall][Severity 1][Found by A]

In the "Now Playing Queue", when you extend the scrollview to see the next tracks that will play, the art doesn't have any title along with it. You'd have to locate the album art in the explore page, and find the title of the artist that way. A solution for this would be to simply include the artist title the same way it is included in the explore page.

21. [H2-1. Visibility of system status][Severity 1][Found by A]

The broadcasting icon isn't super apparent (to me) when you're actually broadcasting. A cool icon could be an animated stream of music – so you are more aware you are streaming.

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]	0	2	0	1	0	3
[H2-2: Match Sys & World]	0	0	0	0	0	0
[H2-3: User Control]	0	0	2	1	0	3
[H2-4: Consistency]	0	0	4	3	2	9
[H2-5: Error Prevention]	0	1	0	0	0	1
[H2-6: Recognition not Recall]	0	1	0	0	0	1
[H2-7: Efficiency of Use]	0	0	1	0	0	1
[H2-8: Minimalist Design]	0	0	1	1	0	2
[H2-9: Help Users with Errors]	0	0	0	0	0	0
[H2-10: Documentation]	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total Violations by Severity	0	5	8	6	2	21
Note: check your answer for the green box by making sure the sum of the last column is						

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equal to the sum of the last row (not including the green box)

4 Evaluation Statistics

severity\evaluator	evaluator A	evaluator B	evaluator C	evaluator D	evaluator E
level 0	0%	0%	0%	-	-
level 1	40%	40%	20%	-	-
level 2	0%	50%	75%	-	-
level 3	50%	83%	66%	-	-
level 4	100%	100%	100%	-	-
total (levels 3 & 4)	63%	88%	75%	-	-
total (all levels)	33%	62%	62%	-	-
evaluator #	# problems found	# problems remaining & problem IDs			
Ex. C	Ex. 7	Ex: 5 (1, 7, 11, 13, 17)			
B	13	13 (Most Found)			
C	13	7 shared with evaluator B → 6			
A	7	5 shared with evaluator B and C → 2			
-	-	-			
-	-	-			

Decreasing Returns Graph

