

Heuristic Evaluation of showMe

1. Problem

The UI is designed to make it easy for users to get suggestions and discover music they would enjoy while also enabling users to make suggestions for music to other users.

2. Violations Found

1. [H2-1 Visibility of System Status] [Severity 2][Found by B]

On the trending page, it is hard for the user to know what the page is currently being sorted by and how it is being sorted. In addition, does the system sort by both Genre and Location or just one at a time? When the user first gets to the trending page, the user sees Stanford, CA and Genre. My first impression is that the location is in Stanford, CA and the page is being sorted by Genre, even though I don't know what the Genres are. When I click Genres, only then do I see Location and Electro-chill which I assume is a genre, and even then it is a little confusing to know just what the songs are being sorted by. Changing the toggle buttons between Location and Genre and instead grouping Location with Stanford, CA and Genre with Electro-chill would make it less confusing for the user, so that the user knows what the system is currently doing.

2. [H2-2 Match between system and the real world][Severity 3][Found by A, B]

For task three, I was confused about where I should click to enter my suggestions. I click on the background image to enter my song instead of the gray textbox. I think the confusion is a result of the text "Example: Apogee". It suggests that the gray box is there as help documentation. To make it clear that it is a textbox, the text should use standard textbox instructions such as "Enter an album name."

3. [H2-3 User control and Freedom][Severity 3][Found by B]

While the suggestions page appears to have a check and an x for removing suggestions are keeping them, the playlists page only seems to show the title of the song when tapping on one of the images. There does not appear to be a delete option for any of the playlists, and there also doesn't appear to be a delete option for any of the songs in the playlist. This problem could be fixed by simply adding the same delete functionality as the suggestions page to the playlists page. The ability to move songs around in a playlist could also be something to think about in order to give users more freedom with organizing their playlists.

4. [H2-3: User Control and Freedom][Severity 4][Found by A, B, C]

There is no exit or back button to leave Build process or Share song process before finishing. There really should be an elegant way to backtrack or exit these processes. I recommend creating a back button on the top left in place of the home button, or creating some sort of "X" icon somewhere.

5. [H2-3 User Control and Freedom][Severity 3][Found by A, B, C]

Between the send to and attach options for sending recommendations, the two are inconsistent, as one of them determines the sender simply by entering the friend's name into a text box while the other makes you choose from a list of friends and then sends it. In fact, since the two are very closely related, an easier flow might be just to choose friends first and then decide whether to send a message with the recommendation to those friends or write a message to go with it, especially since the user is forced to choose friends one way in one flow and choose friends another way in another flow.

6. [H2-3 User Control and Freedom][Severity 3][Found by A]

There is no easy method to go back and edit your playlist information (i.e. name, genre, etc.) while creating it. It seems as if you have to scroll back up and re-enter the desired text when you're at the end result. This might frustrate or confuse the users and could lead to unnecessary errors.

7. [H2-4: Consistency and Standards][Severity 2][Found by C]

The location of the home button is unintuitive and inconsistent with platform conventions, both on your app and on iOS. All your other screens have their own dedicated button at the bottom, while Home sits awkwardly on the top left. That spot is usually reserved for either a set of menu options or the back button on most iOS apps. I recommend making the Home screen accessible via a button on the bottom tab bar.

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

On the Recommend page with the three images for Album, Track, and Artist, it really breaks my conventional model of thinking when clicking on one of the options reorders all of them such that the one I clicked is on the bottom. Even though the smaller rectangle opening up into a larger rectangle is a common interaction, it was really confusing once all of the three shifted such that the bigger one was on the bottom. To fix this, maybe just have them open like normal drawers that stay in place without reordering.

9. [H2-4 Consistency and Standards][Severity 1][Found by B]

When clicking Playlists, Recommend, and Trending, the different transitions to show each of these pages is different, making it pretty inconsistent and hard to follow. I can kind of understand how going between Playlists and Trending is a left and right kind of transition, but the down transition for the Recommend section was really confusing for me especially when moving from Playlists to Recommend or Trending to Recommend. To fix this, perhaps just use left and right sliding transitions for each of the three bottom options relative to where each of the options are on the bottom bar.

10. [H2-4 Consistency and standards][Severity 3][Found by A]

The "Build" your playlist interface is inconsistent. It starts off with lines that link each stage of creating a playlist. It starts with Build and that links to a box with a message that reads "Build a playlist ..." but then once you scroll down it stops using lines to connect each stage

and you just have text boxes to fill in with blue screen. It took me a couple of seconds to understand and adjust to this inconsistency while creating my playlist. Furthermore, this entire task could have been completed in one screen.

11. [H2-4: Consistency and Standards][Severity 1][Found by C]

The process of making a recommendation is not consistent with how your app and others “find” songs. Usually, there is a search bar where you can filter by artist, track, or album. You can then pick a song from the results list. This is what I assume the search functionality will look like your other tasks. You should stick to that interface here, as opposed to this unique interface with artist, album, and track.

12. [H2-4: Consistency and Standards][Severity 1][Found by B]

Underlining “Recommend” and “Suggestions” makes clicking unclear. Universally, underlined text means some sort of clicking or linking. In your UI, underlined text can either be clickable or not. You should standardize this, but I recommend removing all underlining and demarcating clickable items via buttons and icons.

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

The search bar functionality in varies in the Trending songs list. When you are in the “Trending near you” view, there is just “search” in the bar, which I take to mean you can search for trending songs near you. However, when you switch over to “Songs of a genre that are trending,” the search bar shows “search genres.” The Search bar should probably be searching for songs in both cases, while the searching for genres should happen when you define the genre.

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

On the home screen, there appears to be a link to the home screen that is clickable. However, since the user is already on the home screen, it is confusing that there is a link to the screen that the user is already on, and it leads to confusing thoughts like is there a different home screen and is this button broken. To fix this problem, simply remove the home screen link from the home screen itself.

15. [H2-5 Error Prevention][Severity 3][Found by B, C]

On the Artist recommendation page, I tried sending a message to a friend even without showing the recommendation by clicking on the recommendation button. Instead of giving me an error saying no recommendation had been chosen yet, the recommendation simply revealed itself and the app asked me if I wanted to send. Instead of simply assuming that the user wanted to send the recommendation that he/she hadn’t even opened yet, which is not the assumed behavior, a prompt or error message should be given, or the send button should be disabled or not available while no recommendation is shown.

16. [H2-6: Recognition rather than Recall][Severity 4][Found by A, B, C]

For all lists, the pictures are visually nice but hide essential information about music. A lot of people do not recognize album art and are forced to click or swipe to look through a list. Users should not need to remember cover art in order to be able to glance at a list and know what they're looking at. I recommend overlaying the cover art bars with the song name and/or artist name. You may use a semi-transparent layer between the image and text to ensure that all objects are visible.

17. [H2-7: Flexibility and Efficiency of Use][Severity 4][Found by A, B, C]

There is a redundant Build button that appears after hitting the build button the first time. After you hit the build button, the user does not need to hit a slightly different build button again. That type of redundancy does not add value and is inefficient. Try going straight from hitting the build button to the playlist name menu. Also, scrolling through several screens to make a playlist is cumbersome. If all you need to make a playlist is a playlist name, genre, and song limit, one can do all of that in one view. Try eliminating the arrow navigation and allow the user to enter all that information in one screen.

18 [H2-8: Aesthetic and Minimalist Design][Severity 2][Found by C]

At every stage of the Building Playlist process, there are instructions. You have text about the general purpose of lists, entering a playlist name, a genre, etc. A lot of this is self-explanatory. You do not need to tell the user about entering a playlist name; all you need is "Playlist name:" next to the text box. I recommend removing all such text, except maybe the "Build a playlist for your friends' recommendations" text during the first time that they use the function.

19. [H2-9 Help Users Recognize, Diagnose, and Recover from Errors][Severity 3][Found by B]

When the user clicks Electro-Chill or Stanford, CA, the design appears to take them to a text field that has no other information and simply gets the user to type in what they think is a location or genre. Instead of having the user typing these things without checks or errors for proper formatting or invalid fields, perhaps drop-down menus, auto-completion features, or at least hints for what types of information is valid would be useful to help users recognize potential errors and problems with bad inputs. Bad inputs should also similarly produce a prompt or error message in the case of invalid inputs.

20. [H2-10 Help and documentation][Severity 3][Found by A]

The home page for showMe is a list of suggested songs for the user, but it is unclear what criteria the app used in determining its recommend (i.e. where the songs are based on the user's geographical location or genre preferences). There is no pop-up message or a settings button that indicate this information. It could lead to confusion for the user and him or her questioning the quality of the suggested songs.

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
[H2-2: Match Sys & World]				1		1
[H2-3: User Control]				3	1	4
[H2-4: Consistency]		3	3	2		8
[H2-5: Error Prevention]				1		1
[H2-6: Recognition not Recall]					1	1
[H2-7: Efficiency of Use]					1	1
[H2-8: Minimalist Design]			1			1
[H2-9: Help Users with Errors]				1		1
[H2-10: Documentation]				1		1
Total Violations by Severity		3	5	9	3	20
Note: check your answer for the green box by making sure the sum of the last column is equal to the sum of the last row (not including the green box)						

4 Evaluation Statistics

severity\evaluator		Evaluator A	Evaluator B	Evaluator C		
level 0		0	0	0		
level 1		0	1	3		
level 2		0	2	3		
level 3		5	6	1		
level 4		3	3	3		
total (levels 3 & 4)		8	9	4		
total (all levels)		8	12	14		

evaluator # Ex. C	# problems found Ex. 7	# problems remaining & problem IDs Ex: 5 (1, 7, 11, 13, 17)
Evaluator A	8	Shared 5 (2,4,5,16,17) Individual (6,10, 20)
Evaluator B	12	Shared (2, 4, 5, 15, 16, 17) Individual (1, 3, 8, 9 ,14 ,19)
Evaluator C	10	Shared (4, 5, 15, 16, 17) Individual (7, 11, 12, 13, 18)

Violations Chart



Severity Ratings

- 1 - don't agree that this is a usability problem
- 2 - cosmetic problem
- 3 - minor usability problem
- 4 - major usability problem; important to fix
- 5 - 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