

Heuristic Evaluation of PLATELIST

<https://platelist.proto.io/share/?id=5793e1ea-5fd2-4f9c-9af9-4f745e2e30f2&v=1>

1. Problem

This is an evaluation of Platelist, a mobile application that aims to facilitate quick and easy cooking by streamlining the collection and organization of recipes as well as providing a framework to plan meals in advance and acquire the necessary groceries to prepare them.

2. Violations Found

PRELIMINARY SCREENS

[1] [H2-4 Consistency and Standards] [“Swipe to Get Started”] [Severity: 4] [Found By: A]

The first screen of the interface looks much like the iPhone home screen and prompts the user to “Swipe to get started!” The action of swiping from right to left to unlock may be inconsistent with customers’ previous schema about swiping from left to right to unlock on the iPhone home screen. Swipe from left to right to unlock. I would also consider whether have an unlock screen is necessary – it requires one more gesture for the customer without adding any functionality

[2] [H2-7 Flexibility and Efficiency of Use] [Help Dialog] [Severity: 3] [Found By: A]

Help dialog bubbles highlight how to use the Calendar and Advanced Search. The persistence of these dialogs after the user has figured out how to use the app may become cumbersome. When user taps the dialog, dialog should disappear.

[3] [H2-9 Help Users Recognize, Diagnose, and Recover From Errors] [Font-size of Error Messages] [Severity: 2] [Found By: C]

The font-size of the error messages is too small to be read by anyone. Although the content of the error messages effectively helps users, the message cannot be conveyed.

SEARCH

[4] [H2-4 Consistency and Standards] [Page Title] [Severity: 2] [Found By: A]

The title of the Search page is the app name, “PlateList.” This is inconsistent with the titling scheme for the other screens, where pages are named after their specific function within the

app (“Advanced Search,” “Shopping Cart”). Change the title of the main Search screen to “Search.”

[5] [H2-6 Recognition Rather than Recall] [Search Interface] [Severity: 3] [Found By: A]

The Search interface features a large, colored button for Advanced Search surrounded by whitespace in the middle of the page and an unobtrusive “Search by name” bar at the very top. Customers may miss the primary search altogether because the advanced search is so much more visible. Highlight the “Search by name” box by making it larger and perhaps adding color, while decreasing the prominence of the Advanced Search button.

MY LIST

[6] [H2-4 Consistency and Standards] [Title Consistency] [Severity: 2] [Found By: A]

The menu bar option “My List” leads to a page called “My PlateLists.” Customers may be distracted or confused by the inconsistency in plurality and between “List” and “PlateList.” Name the menu bar option “PlateLists”

[7] [H2-3 User Control and Freedom] [Undo Delete Platelist] [Severity: 4] [Found By: A, B]

The “My list” interface allows customers to delete platelists, but provides no way to recover an accidentally deleted platelist. Losing information that took time and energy to compile may frustrate costumers. Add an undo icon for a few seconds after deleting a platelist that will undo the action.

[8] [H2-8 Aesthetic and Minimalist Design] [Dialog Box Delineation] [Severity: 2] [Found By: A]

When viewing a specific recipe, customers can elect to save the recipe by clicking “Add to My List” which brings up a white text box. Because the background of the screen is also white, it is difficult to distinguish the borders of the textbox and, as a result, the obstruction of part of the recipe photo looks arbitrary and messy. Add a black or pink border around the dialog box to delineate where its borders lie.

[9] [H2-7 Flexibility and Efficiency of Use] [Dropdown Menu Size] [Severity: 3]
[Found By: A, B]

When viewing a specific recipe, customers can elect to save the recipe by clicking “Add to My List” and selecting a PlateList from a dropdown. Users may find it difficult to read the small font of the options in the drop down menu. Increase the size of these different options. Similarly, increase the font size for the “Add Platelist” dialog.

[10] [H2-1 Visibility of System Status] [Acknowledgement of Adding] [Severity: 3]
[Found By: A, B]

When viewing a specific recipe, customers can elect to save the recipe by clicking “Add to My List”, selecting a PlateList, and hitting “OK,” which returns them to the same original recipe page with the “Add to My List” button. Customers may be confused as to whether the recipe was actually added to the list because of the lack of feedback. On the recipe page, add a dialog that notes “Added to [x] Platelist” after this process. Additionally, allow the customer to see what lists this recipe is already a part of. Similarly, acknowledge when a new Platelist is created.

[11] [H2-6. Recognition rather than recall][Captions][Severity: 3][Found By: B]

The screen of “My Platelists” uses only pictures to illustrate a list of recipes, but it would be hard for the users to recall the difference of similar pictures when there is an overlap in cooking procedures and ingredient sets. Add captions to the pictures, providing clues for differentiating.

[12] [H2-7. Flexibility and efficiency of use][Multiple choice][severity: 2][Found By: B]

The “Add to platelist” button pops out a dialog that only allows for one single choice of platelist, while the user may want to add the current recipe to several lists at one time. Add checkboxes to the pop-out platelist so the user could select multiple lists.

[13] [H2-5. Error prevention][Black cross][Severity: 2][Found By: B]

The black cross on the upper right corner is visually obtrusive on the background of the recipe picture. A careless tapping on the black cross causes unintended deletion. Hide the delete button and only show it at a swipe to the left.

[14] [H2-1 Visibility of System Status] [Add to Cart] [Severity: 3] [Found By: B]

At the recipe detail page, the user may add an ingredient to the shopping cart by tapping on the cart icon, but there is no instant feedback to indicate the success of an adding action or

the current status of the shopping cart. Update the ingredient bar with its status in shopping cart or update the notification in the navigation bar by showing how many items are added to the cart.

[15] [H2-4 Visibility of System Status][Add to Recipe][Severity: 3][Found By: C]

Although this feature violates more than one usability heuristic, the Platelist view most egregiously this usability heuristic. When I navigate to “My List” on the footer menu, the “Delete Platelist” button monopolizes my attention as a result of its contrasting color. A few moments passed before I realized that there existed additional functionality on the view, including creating a Platelist as well as viewing Platelists other than the current one. In fact, I believe the most important action to be taken on this view would be to create a Platelist—you could associate this action with a blue button labeled with a plus-sign.

CALENDAR

[16] [H2-10 Help and Documentation] [Meal Name Cycling] [Severity: 4] [Found By: A]

On the Calendar screen, clicking on the meal slot buttons cycles through the labels “+,” “Breakfast,” “Lunch,” “Dinner,” and back to “+.” When customers accidentally click past the desired label, clicking again does not allow them go back through the options and as a result they will be unable to correct the mistake. Loop this button so that a click will always move one label forwards.

[17] [H2-8 Aesthetic and Minimalist Design] [Redundant Text] [Severity: 2] [Found By: A]

On the Shuffled Calendar page, the empty meal slot on Wednesday is highlighted with the text “There’s nothing here!” The text is redundant because the grey background already indicates a missing meal, and it detracts from the sleek layout with photos.

[18] [H2-2 Match Between System and Real World] [Efficiency in Meal Selection] [Severity: 3]
[Found By: A, B]

The Calendar interface treats each of the three meal boxes for a day the same: each cycles through the labels “Breakfast,” “Lunch,” and “Dinner” in the same order. As a result, each time the customer designate a dinner, they must click the third box three times. Instead, have the entry point to the cycle depend on which box is clicked: the box on the left begins at

“Breakfast,” the middle box begins at “Lunch,” the right box begins at “Dinner.” This matches with real world concepts about meal order while retaining flexibility.

[19] [H2-10. Help and documentation][Calendar function][Severity: 4][Found By: B]

The functionality of button “Shuffle” is ambiguous and the customer may have hard time figuring out how to assign a dish to a meal. Revise the help text bubbles to provide more clear instructions.

[20] [H2-2. Match between system and the real world][Meal name][Severity: 2][Found By: B]

In the meal plan screen, all the recipes of one day are clustered together and the user may not see what is for which meal clearly. Add subtabs of breakfast, lunch and dinner to each day.

[21] [H2-6. Recognition Rather Than Recall][Ambiguous Plus-sign][Severity: 4][Found By: C]

Platform conventions suggest that the click action on each plus-sign in the calendar view would add content. In this case, there exists ambiguity as to what content will be added. Does the action add a meal to a particular day (essentially the declaration “I am eating lunch on Monday”) or does the action add a recipe to a meal (essentially the declaration “For lunch on Monday, I am eating Macaroni and Cheese”)? Also, why do only a subset of the meals contain a plus-sign? This ambiguity necessitates that the user recall, rather than recognize, the action tied to the button, thus violating this usability heuristic.

[22] [H2-6 Recognition Rather Than Recall][Truncated Week][Severity: 3][Found By: C]

The calendar cannot be viewed for the entire week in the same screen. As a result, the user must recall, rather than recognize, content from Friday when viewing related content from Monday. Because the user must remember information from one part of the dialogue to another, the calendar view violates this usability heuristic.

[23] [H2-4 Consistency and Standards][Shuffle Action][Severity: 3][Found By: C]

In the calendar view, the action that results from clicking the button “Shuffle” remains unclear. Does it shuffle the meals within a specific day? Does it shuffle the groups of meals within a specific week?

SHOPPING CART

[24] [H2-2 Match Between System and Real World] [Grammar] [Severity: 2] [Found By: A]

The title of the page to enter shipping and billing information is called “Check Out.” This spelling might be distracting or jarring to customers used to the conventional spelling of the noun, “Checkout.” Change the page title to “Checkout.”

[25] [H2-6 Recognition Rather than Recall] [Efficiency in Checkout] [Severity: 3] [Found By: A]

The Check Out interface requires the user to fill out 8 text box fields. Customers may find it tedious to re-enter so much information each time they wish to make an order. One solution is to remember the last shipping information entered and use that information to pre-fill out the form; another is to allow the user to create an account that officially stores this information..

[26] [H2-5 Error Prevention] [Required Fields] [Severity: 3] [Found By: A]

The Check Out interface only designates one field (Address 1) with a “*.” Because a “*” usually signifies that the designated field is required, customers may not know which fields are indeed required. Add a “*” by the title of each of the required fields and perform error checking before proceeding.

[27] [H2-5 Error Prevention] [Images in Shopping Cart] [Severity: 1] [Found By: C]

While somewhat effective, the minimalist design applied to the shopping cart does not match the real world analogy. Shopping in the traditional sense involves picking up real items and placing them in a shopping cart to later bring to the checkout line for purchase. Very much a visual experience, the real world task differs from the shopping list described in this application, which does not contain any visuals.

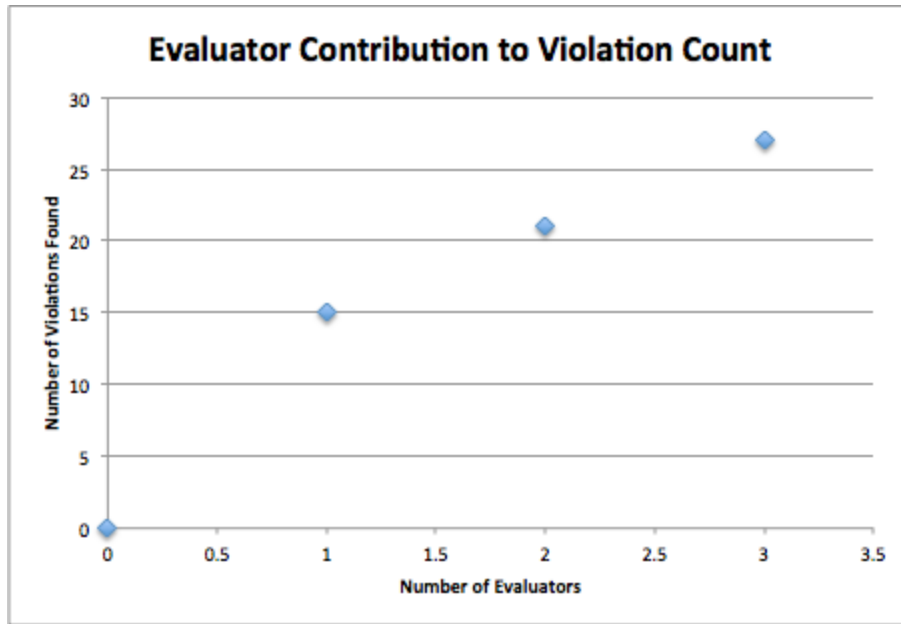
3. Summary of Violations

Category	# Viol. (sev 1)	# Viol. (sev 2)	# Viol. (sev 3)	# Viol. (sev 4)	# Viol. (sev 5)	# Viol. (total)
[H2-1: Visibility of Status]			2			2
[H2-2: Match Sys & World]		2	1			3
[H2-3: User Control]				1		1
[H2-4: Consistency]		2	2	2		6
[H2-5: Error Prevention]	1	1	1			3
[H2-6: Recognition not Recall]			4			4
[H2-7: Efficiency of Use]		1	1	1		3
[H2-8: Minimalist Design]		2				2
[H2-9: Help Users with Errors]						0
[H2-10: Documentation]		1	1	1		3
Total Violations by Severity	1	9	12	5	0	27

4 Evaluation Statistics

severity\evaluator		evaluator A	evaluator B	evaluator C		
level 1		0	0	1		
level 2		5	3	1		
level 3		6	2	3		
level 4		4	1	1		
level 5		0	3	4		
total (levels 4 & 5)		4	4	5		
total (all levels)		15	6	6		

evaluator # Ex. C	# problems found Ex. 7	# problems remaining & problem IDs Ex: 5 (1, 7, 11, 13, 17)
A	15	0
B	6	4 (7, 9, 10, 18)
C	6	0



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