

Heuristic Evaluation: **foodshed**

Problem Statement

The goal of the app is to provide a centralized source of “information on food sourcing, practices, and sustainability ratings” for users.

List of Heuristic Violations

1. [H2-4 Consistency and standards] [Severity 3] [A, B]
The home screen has an “x” button with no functionality. I’m assuming that is supposed to exit out of the app, but this is not consistent with the use of “x” buttons on the other screens where you can go back to the home screen. One fix is to remove the “x” button on the home screen. While this is convention on the desktop, as far as I know (I have a Windows phone and therefore don’t know about iPhone and Android) most phone apps have some other exiting convention and do not have a close button on any app screens.
2. [H2-2 Match between the system and the real world] [Severity 4] [A]
On the product info screen, the “x” button implies quitting out of the screen. However, the first time it is clicked it opens the dropdown menu and only exits back to the home screen on the second click. Instead, the first click should take the user to the home screen (and maybe replace the x with a home icon).
3. [H2-6 Recognition rather than recall] [Severity 3] [B]
Scrolling is kind of hard to discover and after being clicked, the dropdown stays when you scroll down (though this might just be a medium-fi prototype bug). That said, the key information does not need this scrolling to be accessed (other than reviews for task 3) and the dropdown provides another way to access the information that is more discoverable.
4. [H2-6 Recognition rather than recall] [Severity 2] [B]
Took me awhile to find how to return to the home page. The write-up mentions a back button that they changed into an arrow, but I don’t see it in the prototype other than on the “Alternatives” page. It seems important to be able to quickly scan items (for any of the tasks) and to make that very prominent and easily accessible from any view in the app. The README mentions that the individual items will be linked to their product info screens. I would expect the (i) and score buttons to be linked as appropriately as well, but this is probably just not implemented/mentioned in this prototype.
5. [H2-7 Flexibility and efficiency of use] [Severity 3] [B]

For task 2, it would be helpful to be able to just pick an alternative to compare with. Currently you need to first scan and save items and then compare from the saved folder. This is quite a few more clicks and could cause some cluttering of the “Saved” folder. It also oversaturates the “save” concept somewhat and makes it difficult to define what is important to the user and should be saved.

6. [H2-7 Flexibility and efficiency of use] [Severity 3] [B]
Following up on the possibility of a cluttered “Saved” folder, the “Saved” page should have an easy way to remove saved items in bulk.
7. [H2-4 Consistency and standards] [Severity 3] [A, B]
Instead of a star, should use the floppy disk icon for save since that is the standard. Star implies favorite, which is relevant here as well. Another option would be to change the text to favorite and keep the icon.
8. [H2-10 Help and documentation] [Severity 2] [A, B]
It could be helpful to have something that explains the score breakdown a little. For instance, why is locality worth 30 points and community impact only 10? Also, what does each category cover and what criteria was used?
9. [H2-6 Recognition rather than recall] [Severity 2] [B]
The app is careful about this on other pages. However, when in the review screen, there are no implications that we are within the foodshed app. The item that we are reviewing is also not mentioned anywhere and the user needs to remember what he was previously looking at.
10. [H2-3 User control and freedom] [Severity 3] [A, B]
From the review page, the user should probably be able to view/edit the review rather than being brought back to the home page. This is especially important if the user makes a mistake; he should have control to immediately fix the review.
11. [H2-8 Aesthetic and minimalist design] [Severity 2] [A, B]
The dropdown is cluttered with somewhat irrelevant information, which takes away from the reviews. Usually clicking on a link in this sort of dropdown though implies navigating to another page, therefore it was slightly confusing that this just jumped to different parts of a longer page. In particular, the “Certifications” and “Reviews” seemed to be the same. I would recommend making these separate pages to allow for a more minimalistic design for each.
12. [H2-5 Error prevention] [Severity 4] [A, B]
Upon launching the app, it is very clear how to find a product assuming you have it in hand. Are you considering supporting any other sort of searching? (maybe lighting is bad and the camera is struggling) There will probably need

to be some “cannot find/detect item” error and other search options could help prevent getting the users in a situation where they are stuck.

13. [H2-8 Aesthetic and minimalist design] [Severity 2] [A]
The “Save” and “Saved” buttons should maybe be in the header rather than on the right (based on user expectations from app standards).
14. [H2-7 Flexibility and efficiency of use] [Severity 4] [A]
One of the three tasks is to write reviews; however, using this app I cannot write a review for a product without scanning the barcode. A fix would be to add a button on the home screen for writing reviews or providing another way to access product information for a specific item.
15. [H2-2 Match between system and the real world] [Severity 2] [A, B]
The image on the product information page should be of the product and not a person/farmer.

Summary of Violations

Heuristic Category	#
2-1: Visibility of system status	0
2-2: Match between system and the real world	2
2-3: User control and freedom	1
2-4: Consistency and standards	2
2-5: Error prevention	1
2-6: Recognition rather than recall	3
2-7: Flexibility and efficiency of use	3
2-8: Aesthetic and minimalist design	2
2-9: Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors	0
2-10: Help and documentation	1
Total	15

Evaluation Statistics

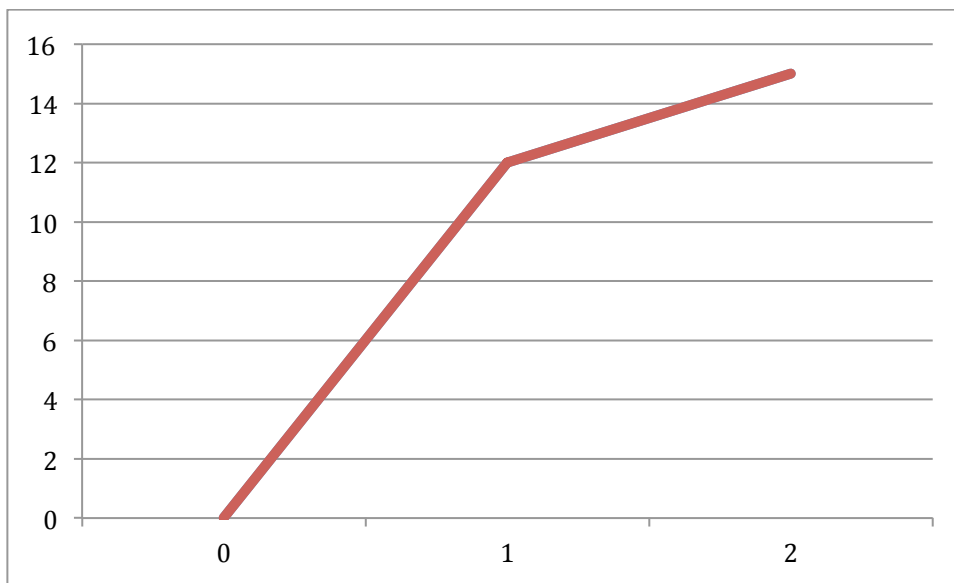
1. Table

Severity/evaluator	Evaluator A	Evaluator B
Level 0	0%	0%
Level 1	0%	0%

Level 2	4/6= 67%	5/6= 83%
Level 3	3/6= 50%	6/6= 100%
Level 4	3/3= 100%	1/3= 33%
Total (Levels 3 & 4)	6/9= 67%	7/9= 78%
Total (All Levels)	10/15= 67%	12/15= 80%

2. Graph

Evaluator #	Problems Found	Unique?
A	10	3 unique, 7 shared
B	12	5 unique, 7 shared



x = # of evaluators
y = # of violations

Additional Individual Evaluations from People who were not present:

Problem

Issues of sustainable food are becoming increasingly important in society. However, that involves better labeling practices and more accessible information about those labels; otherwise, the terms used by food labels are largely meaningless. To combat this, the user interface is meant to centralize information on food sources and sustainability ratings. That would clarify food to the user and also hold companies accountable for their practices.

Violations

1. **[H2-8. Aesthetic and minimalist design]**
On the home screen, the X in the upper right corner has no function; I don't know where that would take me to that simply pressing the home button wouldn't. I'd just eliminate this button.
2. **[H2-4. Consistency and standards]**
On the Granny Smith page, the saved button migrated from the upper left corner to a strange spot on the right side—for a consistent user experience, I would keep it in the same place between screens, given that it's the same icon.
3. **[H2-8. Aesthetic and minimalist design]**
On the Granny Smith page, I have no idea why there is a boy in the middle of the screen and no clue what that signifies. It actively takes away from the score, which seems to be most important part of this portion of the screen. I would replace this by having a picture of the product, because that has significance for the screen, or by simply eliminating this extra space and pushing everything below it up.
4. **[H2-6. Recognition rather than recall]**
On the Granny Smith page, having the score at the very top of the scrolling section of the page seems to isolate the most prominent information for the user. Presumably, the user would want to be able to see that score without having to scroll to the top section. Instead, just keep the score in the header, so it's visible to the user scrolling down.
5. **[H2-1. Visibility of system status]**
On the Granny Smith page, the "ALT" button's function isn't immediately clear—the only way the user would learn this is by going through a few products and figuring out what "ALT" means. It's also awkwardly placed. Having a larger button at the bottom of the screen saying "Alternative Products" would be clearer to the user than the current design.
6. **[H2-8. Aesthetic and minimalist design]**
Scrolling down the Granny Smith page, "About Us" and "How It's Made" seem to have little to no difference to the app's functionality. Users don't care about some generic company publicity statement, just the production process. Eliminating "About Us" would take out redundant, possibly confusing information.
7. **[H2-8. Aesthetic and minimalist design]**

Scrolling down the Granny Smith page, “Map” and “Location” are also redundant; it’s duplicate information taking up screen space. Keeping the location header and overlaying the text on the map would save screen space and present the information both visually and legibly.

8. **[H2-1. Visibility of system status]**

The review screen should make it clear what product is being reviewed: in case the user has to do something and exits the app, there’s a high chance she will have no clue what’s happening upon reopening. Copying the header from the last screen can provide that functionality.

9. **[H2-3. User control and freedom]**

The review screen is self-contained: there’s no way to go back to the product’s screen. A back button should be added with that functionality.

10. **[H2-3. User control and freedom]**

When using the keyboard for the review, there’s no option to actually enter the review text. There should be enter/exit buttons so that the user can control the actual entry of the review more easily or decide not to enter one at all.

11. **[H2-5. Error prevention]/[H2-3. User control and freedom]**

Currently, the user posting a review would have it immediately posted; this avoids error prevention and constrains user control. There should be a confirmation screen and the option to go back in the event of unwanted opinions being posted. This should be

12. **[H2-2. Match between system and real world]**

After reviewing a product, the app currently takes users back to the home screen. This is non-intuitive: generally, after reviewing, users would expect to just see the product again. Having that flow would be a better match between the system and the real world.

13. **[H2-6. Recognition rather than recall]**

On the comparison page, having the two products on top of each other creates a strange user experience: I have to look at a field on the top one, then one on the bottom one, and repeatedly move back and forth. As a result, I have to actively remember one of those scores to make the comparison. It would be better to split screen them vertically, so I can directly compare the fields next to each other (left to right processing) which makes comparison MUCH easier.

Summary Table

Heuristic	Number of Violations	Which Numbers
H2-1. Visibility of system status	2	5, 8
H2-2. Match between system and the real world	1	12
H2-3. User control and freedom	3	9, 10, 11
H2-4. Consistency and standards	1	2

H2-5. Error prevention	1	11
H2-6. Recognition rather than recall	2	4, 13
H2-7. Flexibility and efficiency of use		
H2-8. Aesthetic and minimalist design	4	1, 3, 6, 7
H2-9. Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors		
H2-10. Help and documentation		

Total: 13 violations.

Recommendations

The violations above make me seem much meaner than I am. I really think that most of this application is usable and intuitive, but there are some high-level design flaws that I think hinder the experience. In general, the screens have a lot of very redundant information and non-intuitive icon placement. Buttons are strangely placed (like the Saved and ALT buttons); information is duplicated (the location information and company information on the product screen); and the review page needs to be redesigned for better user flow.

Apart from that, I didn't have significant feedback that fit into the violations. I think the scanner/home screen is intuitive, and there isn't significant information missing from the product screen or comparison views. Most of my remaining issues are about creating an aesthetically pleasing experience. I referenced some of these in the violations above and think that better button placement and eliminating redundancies will help this a lot. Compacting many of the views effectively will reduce time spent scanning the screen and generate an aesthetically pleasing experience.

In terms of general suggestions for each screen, I'd say the following. For the product, combine similar information, and the user experience will be much, much better. For the comparison, make it vertically split screen, so the user can scroll down and immediately compare the information. For the review, make it easier to navigate and tell what you're reviewing. Good luck!!