

Heuristic Evaluation of *docket*

1. Problem

Docket is a social platform for artists to both document and share their own work, and be inspired by and support the work of others. The three tasks that we are evaluating are 1) Follow Inspiring Projects, 2) Add a Public Quicknote, and 3) Look Over Project Page.

2. Violations Found

Task 1: Follow Inspiring Projects

1. [H2-6: Recognition rather than recall] [Severity: 2] [Found by: A, B, C]

Within the drawer, it is unclear that Projects refers to my personal projects rather than other people's projects. If the user is trying to follow inspiring projects, he or she might tap this button incorrectly in search of new projects as a result of this. The ambiguous icon next to Projects is also unhelpful in conveying that this tab refers to my personal projects. Unclear labeling leads to the user having to recall more information rather than being able to immediately recognize it. Fix: Rename this category something more explicit like My Projects, My Work or Me and change the icon accordingly, perhaps to the silhouette of a person.

2. [H2-8: Aesthetic and minimalist design] [Severity: 2] [Found by: A, C]

Though the newsfeed is very clean and attractive, the significant amount of small text against an almost entirely white background makes the interface a little visually overwhelming. Users may have a hard time taking in so much information at once with no contextual clues to give them a sense for what categories each project falls into. Fix: Reduce the amount of text and enlarge the typeface, add faded background pictures that convey the project visually (eg Shakespearean actors behind the Romeo and Juliet page) or at least the project's genre, or include icons or include colors that denote genre.

3. [H2-8: Aesthetic and minimalist design] [Severity: 2] [Found by: A]

Spacing and placement of dividing lines on newsfeeds makes it difficult to immediately tell which artist goes with which project. Addressing this could prevent errors. Also, tiles are different sizes which will be harder to scale. Fix: Separate projects by creating a card-esque design with low-light gutters (gray maybe?) in between each project and/or moving the artist's name and icon closer to the title of each project and/or distinguishing each project with different colors or semi-transparent backgrounds.

4. [H2-8: Aesthetic and minimalist design] [Severity: 2] [Found by: A]

Color is underused and oddly mismatching in the few places it is used. Overall I really like the mainly white aesthetic – it feels very Apple-esque – but I think the UI would look a little friendlier with more color. Fix: Make top bar a solid color and the text in that bar white. Also, it looks like the color in each person's name and the add post button is one color and the color to indicate

that you are following a person is another which seems unnecessary. Fix: make them the same color or clearly different colors.

5. [H2-2: Match Between System & Real World] [Severity: 2] [Found by: B]

The “Explore” section contains mostly followed projects. Users may be concerned with this clutter in a section where s/he could be viewing more unfollowed projects. Have only unfollowed projects appear in the “Explore” section, and upon following place them in the “Following” section.

6. [H2-2: Match Between System and Real World] [Severity: 2] [Found by: A, B]

The icon corresponding to the “Following” button is reminiscent of a person. This is unintuitive in two ways: 1) when using *docket*, the user follows projects and not people, and 2) the icon seems more appropriate for viewing an individual profile, especially the user’s own. Change this icon to something more indicative of projects currently being followed.

7. [H2-2: Match Between System and Real World] [Severity: 1] [Found by: B]

Explore icon is unclear since a home is not the same as exploring. Fix: Change it to binoculars.

8. [H2-6: Recognition not recall] [Severity: 3] [Found by: B]

No branding anywhere meaning user has to recall what app they’re in rather than being reminded throughout usage. Fix: Put Docket at top of nav bars throughout app.

Task 2: Add a Public Quicknote

9. [H2-4: Consistency and standards] [Severity: 1] [Found by: A]

Placing the add quicknote button in the upper right hand corner rather than the bottom right hand corner as is convention may add friction to adding a quicknote. Given the increasing size of smart phones and tablets, the upper right corner is increasingly inconvenient to reach. Fix: Place the button in the bottom right hand corner.

10. [H2-7: Flexibility and efficiency of use] [Severity: 1] [Found by: A]

Placing the add quicknote button in the right hand corner makes it harder to access for veteran users who may want to quickly add quicknotes. Fix: Place button in lower right hand corner where it is easier to reach.

11. [H2-8: Aesthetic and minimalist design] [Severity: 3] [Found by: A]

Add quicknote button is somewhat hard to see. Fix: Invert colors so that it stands out more.

12. [H2-8: Aesthetic and minimalist design] [Severity: 2] [Found by: A]

Icon for adding quicknote is more complicated than necessary. Fix: Remove pencil and just have a large plus on icon.

13. [H2-8: Aesthetic and minimalist design] [Severity: 3] [Found by: A, C]

After clicking on add quicknote button it is unclear where next I ought to press. In fact, though the user will likely want to press New Stage button, its current dark gray coloring suggests it is not clickable. Fix: Highlight New Stage in color to guide user to tapping it.

14. [H2-2: Match System and Real World] [Severity: 2] [Found by: A, C]

New Stage strikes me as a unclear and even misleading name for this button. I am also not sure what I'm being brought to in this prototype. I thought this would bring me to a place where I could add another chapter but the example text is asking for feedback. Fix: Replace New Stage with more appropriate text.

15. [H2-3: User control and freedom] [Severity: 3] [Found by: A, B, C]

After tapping the Add Quicknote icon and then the New Stage button, there is currently no way to navigate back to the new quicknote page. Instead, the back arrow in the upper left hand corner sends me all the way back to the newsfeed. This is problematic if the user accidentally taps on the New Stage button. Fix: After tapping the New Stage button, going back one screen strikes me both as more intuitive and more helpful.

16. [H2-1 Visibility of System Status] [Severity: 3] [Found by: B]

After writing and sending a new quicknote, it is unclear whether the quicknote has been sent, as there is no confirmation message and the note doesn't pop up on the "Quicknote" screen afterwards. Users may be confused by this lack of confirmation. Add some sort of "Posted!" or "Sent!" notification after a successful new quicknote.

17. [H2-4 Consistency and Standards] [Severity: 1] [Found by: B, C]

When bringing up the "Quicknote" page, there are two identical "Media" boxes before clicking the text box, and only one afterwards. Users may be confused by this discrepancy. Use only one "Media" box.

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

There appears to be no way to delete a preexisting quicknote. The user could be concerned that anything posted cannot be taken down until the project is finished. Add a delete/remove function to quicknotes.

19. [H2-10: Documentation] [Severity: 3] [Found by: C]

When creating a quick note, the 'media' option next to the text is rather confusing - what sort of media am I attaching? Am I even attaching? Will my media be inline? It also looks strange taking up so much space on the left hand side of the text box, when conventional text boxes (like in a texting platform) tend to minimize the amount of space between the input and the border. I suggest making an attachment icon (paper clip?) above the send button, which clears up space and makes it clear that you are attaching some form of media to the post.

20. [H2-2: System and Real World] [Severity: 2] [Found by: C]

When posting the latest quick note update, it goes to the bottom of the list, which is not a logical place (in my mind) to see latest updates. News feeds or updates of any sort happen in a

chronological order, with the most recent being on top (think Facebook or Instagram). I suggest reversing the ordering to have the latest quicknotes be in order from newest to oldest.

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

When looking at the project section 'Chapter 2 Draft 2', it is unclear why the text file has a '...' icon next to it, and the audio recording does not. Are there certain settings that a text file has that an audio recording doesn't? Even if so, if they both generally have settings (ex. the option to download), then the icon should at least be present in both displays. I suggest either duplicating the icon to keep it standard among uploaded media, or removing it entirely.

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

When creating a quick note for a particular 'stage' it isn't clear how to upload to different stages, and which stage you are currently uploading to. The current quick note screen shows a variety of updates for 'Chapter 2 Draft', but I'm not sure if this is just hard coded or if they are the latest updates for the project in general or how this particular stage was selected to upload notes to. This makes it hard for the user to keep track of where they are posting to within their own project. I suggest making it very clear when creating quick notes that you can select (maybe from a drop down menu) which stage of the project this note is for.

23. [H2-6: Recognition not Recall] [Severity: 2] [Found by B, C]

When creating a quick note and deciding to make it public or private, there is no indication once it has been published to the project view whether it is indeed public or private, forcing users to remember what they marked their preference as when first creating the note, or going back to the quick note screen to receive the detailed breakdown. I suggest showing this information on the project screen.

24. [H2-9: Help Users with Errors] [Severity: 1] [Found by C]

Although perhaps not in the scope of the three tasks, it would be nice to see some sort of guidelines or restrictions on the type of media one can upload with a quick note, to prevent users from getting their hopes up about uploading videos of performances or super long audio clips. Also offering feedback about the error would be an important development in future development.

Task 3: Look Over Project Page

25. [H2-8: Aesthetic and minimalist design] [Severity: 2] [Found by: A, C]

After tapping Chapter 2 Draft 2 it's not totally clear that the materials below belong to it. This may lead to some minor confusion for users. Fix: Use shadow to indicate that Chapter 2 Draft 2's contents are docs within that folder, or outline Chapter 2 Draft 2, or slightly indent the content.

26. [H2-8: Aesthetic and minimalist design] [Severity: 2] [Found by: A]

Again there is so much black text on whitespace that the page looks a little bland. Fix: Add a little more color.

27. [H2-2: Match Between System & Real World] [Severity: 2] [Found by: B]

Although there is just one project right now, the “Projects” tab leads straight to the project page. This could become confusing once there are multiple projects. Either have the “Projects” button lead to a list of current projects or put all current projects in the sidebar.

28. [H2-7: Flexibility & Efficiency of Use] [Severity: 1] [Found by: B]

Neither the prototype nor the slides show how to mark a project as completed or remove it. Users may feel cluttered if they can’t take projects down somehow. Have some sort of “remove project” or “Complete!” functionality.

29. [H2-8: Aesthetic and Minimalist Design] [Severity: 1] [Found by: B]

When looking at a project page, opening up all notes in each section of the project could cause unnecessary clutter quickly. Only directly pertinent notes (those from the section currently being viewed) should necessarily be displayed. Have only one section’s notes viewable at a time by having one section close/minimize when another is opened.

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	0	0	2	0	2
[H2-2: Match Sys & World]	0	1	5	0	0	6
[H2-3: User Control]	0	0	0	1	1	2
[H2-4: Consistency]	0	3	0	0	0	3
[H2-5: Error Prevention]	0	0	0	0	0	0
[H2-6: Recognition not Recall]	0	0	2	1	0	3
[H2-7: Efficiency of Use]	0	2	0	0	0	2
[H2-8: Minimalist Design]	0	1	6	2	0	9
[H2-9: Help Users with Errors]	0	1	0	0	0	1
[H2-10: Documentation]	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total Violations by Severity	0	8	13	7	1	29

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

4. Evaluation Statistics

Severity / Evaluator	Evaluator A	Evaluator B	Evaluator C
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sev. 0	N/A	N/A	N/A
sev. 1	25%	50%	37.5%
sev. 2	69.2%	38.5%	46.2%
sev. 3	42.9%	57.1%	57.1%
sev. 4	0%	100%	0%
total (sev. 3 & 4)	37.5%	62.5%	50%
total (all severity levels)	48.3%	48.3%	44.8%

5. Summary Recommendations

Overall, Docket has a strong UI that is clean, understandable and attractive. It's most significant opportunities for improvement lie in better matching parts of their system to the real world and making small design changes to enhance clarity and usability.

To improve matching system to real world, Docket's designers can add more appropriate icons and labels like changing the project icon to a folder rather than a person since that category is a collection of your work rather than a user profile. We also agree that following people might be an important, possibly complementary feature, to following specific projects. If users like a given project from one artist, they are likely to also like other projects by that user and some kind of subscribe feature similar to YouTube could be helpful. We also found that the UX flow for creating a new quicknote could be improved. For example, we suggest new content appearing at the top of a project's content rather than at the bottom. Additionally, we found that the overall term and idea of a 'quicknote' was not intuitive. We suggest offering a pop up menu when holding down a project to add multiple forms of information, such as an update or project materials, instead of being limited to one function of adding a quicknote.

We also identified a number of minor but meaningful areas for improvement within the layout of the app that we thought could improve the app's look and usability. For example, we felt that projects in the newsfeed could be more clearly delineated with more clear spacing, separate semi-transparent background pictures or colors. We also thought adding a little more color on various screens either to indicate pressable buttons or just to enhance visual variety could be helpful.

More generally, we wondered if the app is currently conceived would be better as a webapp + mobile extension rather than exclusively on a mobile device due to the emphasis on uploading content. We felt users would likely either be unable or unwilling to upload projects directly from their mobile device. Instead, we thought the mobile device should be primarily geared towards following projects rather than creating/adding your own.

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