

Heuristic Evaluation of Improv

1. Problem

Improv is a platform where musicians have fun with musical challenges by integrating social networking functionality.

2. Violations Found

1. **[H2-8: Aesthetic and minimalist design][Severity 1] [Found by: A, B, C]**
The interface uses a left-pointing arrow to point users to “add personal message” to private messages and I was confused on what the arrow meant. It seems to me more like a back button. I would consider a different symbol or even have a textbox to add message without the arrow. The comment/messaging boxes on different pages are also inconsistent. Some have a profile icon (on one page it was in a circle and another it was in a square) followed by a text box, and others use the arrow button.
2. **[H2-7: Flexibility and efficiency of use][Severity 2] [Found by: B]**
The interface uses a right-pointing arrow to go from message to challenge. This is not that effective because it’s an extra step to get to challenge – which itself is already an activity along the user journey that has high threshold (depending on the nature of challenges). I would just try to insert this part to the message box without the further step.
3. **[H2-4: Consistency & Standards][Severity 2] [Found by: A, B, C]**
The interface for the challenge inbox is a bit confusing because there’s not that much differentiation in terms of challenge vs. message. There is still that left-pointing arrow that means adding personal message. I would get rid of this.
4. **[H2-1: Visibility of Status][Severity 2] [Found by: B, C]**
After recording a video to send and sending it to friends, there is no message indicating whether that worked or not. It would be helpful to have a delay in sending message (which I understand, Marvel couldn’t catch) or have a message that tells something about successes/errors in sending videos. Also, after choosing friends to send the video to and pressing Done, the app goes back to the feed. There’s no visual confirmation that the video indeed went to the correct people. If the friend list was quite long and a friend was accidentally tapped while scrolling, the user might not know until they go to the Inbox page.
5. **[H2-1: Visibility of Status][Severity 2] [Found by: B]**
Same with sending challenge tab, after sending a challenge, there is no message indicating whether that worked or not. It would be helpful to have a delay or a status message.
6. **[H2-5: Error prevention][Severity 2] [Found by: B, C]**
I like that pressing “post to public feed” has a message that says shared with everyone, but it does so after sharing it with everyone (no prevention of error). I would ask if the user actually wants to post to public feed then ask for the users’ input. I would also add a button “stop seeing this” or something so that the user doesn’t have to get the same popup every time they are trying to post to public feed.
7. **[H2-10: Help and Documentation][Severity 3] [Found by: A, B, C]**
The settings tab seems like it doesn’t have to be there because it provides little to no information.

Can the user see and control all the posts s/he's made (if they don't want their videos on public feed anymore, if they accidentally posted something, etc.), challenges sent, etc.? I would change this settings tab to be more personalized.

8. **[H2-10: Help and Documentation][Severity 2] [Found by: B]**
Posting to public feed and having people who don't know each other comment on videos could get a bit risky – how are you maintaining positive environment for your users? Is there a report trouble button? I would add a report error/problem button.
9. **[H2-3: User control and freedom][Severity 3] [Found by: B, C]**
The settings tab could be clicked on accidentally but it really doesn't do anything at this point. Put it somewhere else not at the bottom (unless you're adding more to the settings tab as I recommended above).
10. **[H2-4: Consistency & Standards][Severity 3] [Found by: A, B, C]**
Going back to the recording tab, I'm confused by the top part which clearly seems to be a challenge. I'm confused because I thought you could respond to challenges only via the inbox tab and send challenges via the challenge tab. What is the use of this challenge? What is this recording for? I would first flesh out what my recording tab actually does and change buttons accordingly.
11. **[H2-3: User Control & Freedom][Severity 2] [Found by: B]**
Referring to the challenges on top of the recording tab: if these are challenges that users have gotten from their friends, then instead of choosing at random, have a dropdown menu or something so that they can choose which challenge to pick. If they want to do a random challenge, have them pick between getting a random challenge and answering friends' challenges.
12. **[H2-10: Help & Documentation][Severity 0][Found by: A]**
Wording of introductory screen pages could benefit from parallel structure. This is a minor H2-10 issue because the how-to dialogue could be simplified to make the information and tasks easy to read, follow, and remember. Consider changing "Record videos," "Watch videos," and "Create challenges" to "Record," "Watch," and "Challenge" or alternatively, "Create."
13. **[H2-4: Consistency & standards][Severity 1][Found by: A]**
Consider wording consistencies between sample screens and their respective screens. The first screen says "Record Videos" and it's sample screen says "Record." The last screen says "Create Challenges," but the sample screen says "Send a Challenge." This is an H2-4 issue because it confuses platform conventions. Consider using set terminology/phrases for each task throughout.
14. **[H2-4: Consistency & standards][Severity 1][Found by: A]**
Feed page has an inconsistent line outlining the top of the toolbar and it does not appear on other pages. This is an H2-4 issue because the toolbar should remain the same throughout, and should not change for no particular reason. Remove the line.
15. **[H2-8: Aesthetic & minimalist design][Severity 1][Found by: A]**
Spacing around the "Send Challenge" button on the toolbar feels cramped. This is an H2-8 issue because it makes the toolbar harder to read and space to tap is less visible. Consider ways to expand space--use other wordings or move the settings button, for example.

16. **[H2-7: Flexibility and efficiency of use][Severity 3][Found by: A, C]**

On the Feed page, it is unclear that videos can be tapped to reach their own pages. This is an H2-7 issue because while it may be clear to more advanced users that videos can be clicked, for newer users that feature is hidden and thereby not allow them to complete the Task #1 in full. Maybe show a number of comments link or likes, or something to indicate that there's more connected to the video.
17. **[H2-7: Flexibility and efficiency of use][Severity 3][Found by: A]**

No clear way to search for other users and add friends to share with. This is also an H2-7 issue for similar reasons outlined above. Consider making the option to search users or friends more apparent outside of the inbox page (which already assumes you have friends connected since it is a prototype).
18. **[H2-8: Aesthetic & minimalist design][Severity 0][Found by: A]**

After a video is recorded, the buttons' text style has an inconsistency--the first two have a drop shadow, but the last one does not. This isn't a huge aesthetic issue, but it can make it easier to group the buttons together and easier to read if they follow a certain scheme that won't get obstructed by the video they appear over.
19. **[H2-1: Visibility of system status][Severity 3][Found by: A]**

The feed does not include a title or where the videos are pulled from (friends vs public). This is an H2-1 issue because the system doesn't make it clear where the user lands at the onset. The feed needs an indication that the current user has arrived on that page and where the content is coming from.
20. **[H2-8: Aesthetic & minimalist design][Severity 0][Found by: A]**

"I'm ready to record" button is small and has a lot of space surrounding it. This is an H2-8 because buttons should be large and visible to users. Maybe make the prompt take up the whole white space rather than making it a button.
21. **[H2-4: Consistency & standards][Severity 1][Found by: B]**

Inconsistent icons within screens, for example the challenge icon represented with lightning bolt followed by the record icon represented with the camera are different from those icons used in the toolbar. This is an H2-4 issue because different icons obstruct user understandings of the same things. It would be nice if these icons were consistent with those in the toolbar/icons used throughout.
22. **[H2-3: User control & freedom][Severity 2][Found by: A]**

Not all pages include back buttons. This is a user control issue because it prevents users from escaping unwanted states. Add back buttons to all pages.
23. **[H2-1: Match Sys & World][Severity 0][Found by: C]**

I want to like the baby bottle for the feed icon, but I don't think it matches the nature of what that tab represents and what the user will see. Perhaps a list icon or another icon that better represents a social feed here would be more appropriate.

24. **[H2-5: Error Prevention][Severity 1][Found by: C]**
 The back button on the “Diego challenged you! Perform like a chipmunk” page goes back to the inbox, but I expected it to go back to the previous card since that’s the screen I came from. I think the confusing part of this interaction is that you have to tap on the arrow to go to the next card, so from the tap I think there is a contextual screen change. If the interaction were a swipe then I would think of it more as the same context (the stack of cards) rather than a different screen.
25. **[H2-8: Minimalist Design][Severity 0][Found by: C]**
 When a user starts recording, the refresh icon for the challenge disappears but the text is still aligned as if there were a refresh icon there, causing the text to not be centered.
26. **[H2-1: Visibility of Status][Severity 2][Found by: C]**
 On the “Send a Challenge” screen, I expected to go directly to the friends list after selecting one of the featured challenges. I almost missed that the challenge updated the textbox above because the text was also gray like the placeholder text.
27. **[H2-4: Consistency & Standards][Severity 0][Found by: C]**
 When a video is recorded, there is the option to post it to the “public feed” but the icon on the tab bar just says “feed”. This may lead to a point of confusion on whether these are the same features.
28. **[H2-1: Visibility of Status][Severity 1][Found by: C]**
 On the Inbox page, I assumed the 3 meant there were 3 challenges waiting, but when I clicked through I only saw 2 challenges, so I questioned my assumption and wondered if this meant there were 3 unread comments/messages waiting. Perhaps it was an oversight in designing the prototype, but this also gives that you could have different indicators for unread challenges, challenges that were read but not replied to, and unread messages.
29. **[H2-1: Consistency & Standards][Severity 1][Found by: C]**
 The UI to add a public comment on the video page has the user’s icon next to it. Since these are present when commenting, I expected them to also appear in the list of comments.

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

Total Violations by Severity	6	9	8	6	0	29
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	Evaluator D	Evaluator E
sev. 0	3	0	3		
sev. 1	4	1	4		
sev. 2	2	7	4		
sev. 3	5	3	4		
sev. 4	0	0	0		
total (sev. 3 & 4)	5	3	4		
total (all severity levels)	14	11	15		

5. Summary Recommendations

The issues that I noticed were mainly on fleshing out the specific roles that each button at the bottom plays. The recording challenge tab seems to me the most confusing and the settings tab most unnecessary. I would think about separating messages from challenges or have the recording challenge tab as a tab that only receives and sends challenges (integrate challenge + record tab). I also noticed that the settings tab is useless unless there is more information for the user. I recommend, since this is a feed unlike Snapchat stories or Instagram stories that disappear after 24 hours but rather, timeless, a section where users are able to see what they've posted so far (allow users to delete, make it private, etc.), see statuses of the challenges that they've sent, etc. Additionally, I would like to see more indications of successful recording/sending challenges. Overall, I think this is a fun app to play around with friends!

Considering the limitations outlined in the README (you can't actually send challenges, record videos or watch videos yet, etc), the app overall allows their tasks to be successfully completed however there are a few key issues that can hinder the process. The top issues were in consistency & standards, flexibility & efficiency of use, and aesthetic & minimalist design. As outlined above, these issues primarily made the actions either hidden or diminished. Additionally, there are some other outer fixes that are not in line with the heuristic evaluation, but could make the presentation of the app much cleaner and clearer. For one, signing-up and user profiles were not included although we are expected to share things with friends as well as the public user base. Some visual things I noticed were the overall inconsistencies in buttons, positioning, header sizes, page sizes and colors for accents (i.e. new messages bubble, or "on" switches) which I would try to adhere to a set of layout conventions. Timestamps were also included in the inbox, but nowhere else in the challenge journey or on the feed. I would try to incorporate timestamps more throughout the app, especially on the feed, so it's easy to notice when things are more recent. Another issue I wondered about was the wording of challenges. The feed says "is performing a song twice as fast," whereas the challenge probably said "perform a song twice as fast" which could turn into an issue with more complicated challenges and custom challenges. I would consider different ways to present challenge captions.

I like the overall feel of the app and think it looks pretty close to a real app. I would enjoy using this with friends and it can easily be extended to other challenges beyond just music. My biggest recommendation for change is to clean up the flow of both your medium and complex task. With sending a challenge to friends,

the featured section could involve one less tap, and it may even be cool to have a refresh tab with the featured challenges if users are not feeling super creative at the moment. With the recording a video feature, after a video is done I would make the flow similar to what Snapchat does where the public feed option and save to camera button is available on the friend list. Lastly for both the send to challenge and record a video features, I would redirect the user back to the inbox rather than the feed to give feedback to the user that their challenge or video was both delivered and directed to the correct people. Overall, I'm excited to see how the app turns out!