Heuristic Evaluation of Croissant

1. Problem/Prototype Description

We evaluate Croissant's medium-fi prototype, a mobile app that fosters productive collaboration between content creators and fans who hope to share their thoughts. Croissant allows creators to capture meaningful fan feedback and engage directly with their fans through digital studios.

2. Violations Found

1. **H1: Visibility of System Status / Found by A, D / Severity 2**
   - Task 3
   - It seems like other than seeing the status of a studio, creators aren't able to see any indication for how the studio brainstorming or ranking is going. The process of an ongoing studio should be clearer to creators so that they can see whether fans are interested in their studio and the progression of the brainstorming and ranking process.
   - Fix: Next to the status icon (ranking or brainstorming) on each studio, there could be a count of how many fans have responded.
2. **H1: Visibility of System Status / Found by A / Severity 1**
   - Task 4
   - Both creators and fans can't see the fans who weren't specifically invited to speak but are watching the live chat. This can feel uncomfortable for the users who are actively participating in the conversation, since they don't know which other users are watching them.
   - Suggest Fix: Add profile picture icons and names for the fans who are listening in.
3. **H1: Visibility of System Status / Found by D / Severity 2**
   - Task 1
   - The interface adheres to this heuristic well in most stages of task 1. However, when the creators are waiting for the time to elapse (which is aptly displayed as a live countdown), they have no way of seeing the current count of participants/ideas as they can in the final summary.
   - Fix: Add a participants/ideas live counter next to the countdown.
4. **H1. Visibility of system status / Found by C / Severity 2**
   - When users rank ideas, it is not clear that they are ranking a size 6 subset of all the fan ideas. They may end up misinterpreting the situation during ranking, perhaps thinking that the creator only received 6 fan suggestions, or that the app is buggy and only captured 6 responses.
   - Fix: Inform the user that they are ranking a size-6 subset of the ideas.
5. **H1: Visibility of System Status / Found by B / Severity 2**
   - Task 2

- ○ After submitting an idea to a studio, there is no visual indicator that you already responded to that studio question
- ○ Fix: After submitting an idea, put a checkmark next to that studio or move it to a category that says "Studio Responded To" or something similar
6. **H2: Match between System and World / Found by A / Severity 2**
   - ○ Tasks 4 + 5
   - ○ It doesn't seem intuitive that a private fan and creator meetup or collaboration session is named "Room," so I think having "Create Room" in the Studio Results page as well as the "Schedule Room" icon in the following screen can be a little confusing for users since it doesn't directly connect with the idea of further collaboration with selected fans. The fan invitation is also just named "Room with Rachel," which doesn't tell fans what they'll be doing.
   - ○ Fix: The icon could be relabeled as "Collaborate" instead of "Create Room" in the Studio Results page, and "Schedule Room" can be replaced by something along the lines of "Schedule Chat."
7. **H2: Match between System and World / Found by A, C / Severity 2**
   - ○ Task 5
   - ○ The "Upcoming Room" that is created after clicking "Schedule Room" doesn't have a name or a topic headline, so it could cause confusion regarding what the "Room" is for, especially if there are multiple upcoming rooms.
   - ○ Fix: Allow the creator to specify the topic of the upcoming conversation, and display topic in the upcoming room entry that is on their subsequent studios screens .
8. **H2: Match between System and World / Found by B / Severity 2**
   - ○ Task 1
   - ○ Use of the word "studio" can be confusing for a creator
   - ○ Fix: When onboarding a creator into the app, make sure they understand what a studio is as well as the proper functionality
9. **H2. Match between system and the real world / Found by C / Severity 2**
   - ○ Users who see a notification focusing on the action of "time to rank ideas" may not immediately realize why they would want to do that.
   - ○ Fix: More directly connect voting with the value it will bring to the user, such as "Choose which ideas you want rachel_f to talk about."
10. **H2. Match between system and the real world / Found by C / Severity 1**
    - ○ In the synthesis view, the phrase "capture frequently referenced topics by fans" and "most representative" personally feel a little confusing, and I had to take a few seconds to think about how Croissant determined the posts to put in this category, and the practical difference between this section and Fan Favorites.
    - ○ Fix: Change the words "capture" and "representative." For instance, "most discussed topics" with the actual topic name on the top of a stack, with perhaps a "view suggestions" to see the associated suggestions.
11. **H2. Match between system and the real world / Found by C / Severity 0**
    - ○ "Average rank" having values such as just 2.4 don't give the user what they're interested in, which is their ranking relative to others.
    - ○ Fix: Add /x to it, like 2.4/6

12. **H3: User Control and Freedom / Found by A, B, C, D / Severity 2**
    - Task 1
    - It doesn't seem like the creator can delete or edit a pre-existing studio. I think it would be helpful if they were able to edit a studio (for example the time limit or content) or remove a studio they just posted if they made a mistake.
    - Fix: Add a way to edit a pre-existing studio next to each studio in the home page of the creator view.
13. **H3: User Control and Freedom / Found by A, B, C / Severity 2**
    - Task 4
    - The creator has to write a personal message to every fan that they invite. This can be a lot of work if the creator wanted to invite more fans.
    - Fix: Add an option to select multiple fans and invite them with a standardized invitation instead of a separate invite for each fan.
14. **H3: User Control and Freedom / Found by A, C, D / Severity 2**
    - Task 4
    - The creator cannot make any changes to the upcoming room. This might be problematic if the creator needs to change the scheduling or wants to add/remove invitees.
    - Fix: Allow the creator to modify scheduled rooms.
15. **H3: User Control and Freedom / Found by B / Severity 2**
    - Task 2
    - After a user makes a suggestion/provides feedback on a studio, there is no way for them to go edit that suggestion or add to it
    - Fix: Allow an option for a user to click on that studio again and change their suggestion until the time is up
16. **H3: User Control and Freedom / Found by B / Severity 1**
    - Task 3
    - After a user ranks the suggestions and submits the rankings, there is no way to go back and alter the rankings
    - Fix: Either tell the user that the rankings they submit will be final, or provide an option for the user to alter the rankings afterwards
17. **H4: Consistency and Standards / Found by A / Severity 1**
    - Task 1
    - The gray color plus button for creating a new studio in the creator view is not consistent with the rest of the color scheme of the design since most action items are yellow.
    - Suggest Fix: Make the plus button yellow.
18. **H4: Consistency and Standards / Found by A / Severity 0**
    - I was confused by why there is an on and off toggle for creator mode in the creator's profile. At first, I thought that you could switch between the modes to become either a creator or a fan, but since there isn't a similar toggle for the fan view's profile, I'm not sure what this means.
    - Suggest Fix: Remove the toggle for creator mode, or add the toggle to the fan view's profile page as well so that they can switch between modes.
19. **H4: Consistency and Standards / Found by A / Severity 0**

- ○ Task 4
- ○ The back button for the Studio Results page that comes up after the creator posts the studio and fans respond goes to the iPhone's notification screen rather than the home screen of the app. I think this might have just been an accident in linking the Figma screens, but just a heads up!
- ○ Suggest Fix: The back button takes the creator back to her home screen in the app where she can see all her studios.

20. **H4: Consistency and Standards / Found by A / Severity 0**
    - ○ Task 4
    - ○ The begin live room screen has a back button that is labeled Newsfeed, which isn't a feature that is actually there in the app.
    - ○ Fix: A back button that goes to the Studios page instead.

21. **H4. Consistency and standards- Found by C / Severity 2**
    - ○ During the live room, all the invited guests have a circle with an orange circle if they're speaking. Meanwhile, the creator appears in the classic form of their post. While it appropriately differentiates the creator from the fans, the layout also makes it unclear that the creator is also a part of the conversation, and whether the creator is speaking.
    - ○ Fix: Add the creator in their own special circle row, perhaps directly underneath their studio prompt, that indicates their presence and speaking status.

22. **H4. Consistency and standards / Found by C / Severity 1**
    - ○ When submitting an idea, the screen header says to provide "feedback" but that a user submits "suggestions." There might be unneeded difference between terminology of feedback vs. suggestion.
    - ○ Fix: Pick either "feedback" or "suggestion" to consistently use, or else clearly differentiate the words.

23. **H4: Consistency and Standards / Found by A / Severity 1** (more a prototype mistake than an app UI issue)
    - ○ Task 4
    - ○ The original studio prompt and the live chat prompt are different in the creator view. This was confusing because there was no screen where the creator could have changed the prompt.
    - ○ Fix: Keep the same prompt from the studio for the live chat.

24. **H4: Consistency and Standards / Found by A / Severity 1** (a prototype mistake than an app UI issue)
    - ○ Task 3
    - ○ The prompt for the Rank Ideas page in fan view changes in the middle of ranking (between screens 21 and 22). This can be confusing to the user because they won't know if they're now responding to a different studio response ranking.
    - ○ Suggest Fix: Maintain the same prompt throughout ranking.

25. **H4: Consistency and Standards / Found by A / Severity 1** (more a prototype mistake than an app UI issue)
    - ○ Task 5

- ○ The description for the upcoming live room in fan view is about vegan recipes but the live room description upon entering the chat is about a new baking series (screens 30 and 31, fan view).
- ○ Suggest Fix: Keep the prompt for the live room and the prompt during the discussion the same.

26. **H4: Consistency and Standards / Found by A / Severity 1**
- ○ The home screen in the fan view is not consistent in its naming as it alternates between "newsfeed" and "studios". The back buttons are similarly labeled inconsistently.
- ○ Fix: Stick with newsfeed for the fan view home screen and labels.

27. **H4: Consistency and Standards / Found by A / Severity 2**
- ○ Task 5
- ○ The creator view has a "Begin Live Room" button, but the fan view doesn't have a "Join Live Room" button. Since it might not be intuitive that they have to click on the prompt in the newsfeed, fans might be confused by how to join a live conversation.
- ○ Fix: Add a yellow button under the post for the room for fans to join the room.

28. **H5: Error Prevention / Found by A, B, D / Severity 1**
- ○ Studios might be more prone to being created accidentally or with some proof-reading or small errors since there isn't a confirmation option before posting the studio prompt.
- ○ Fix: Add a confirmation prompt to verify the studio prompt and content before posting.

29. **H5. Error prevention / Found by C / Severity 2**
- ○ Drag and drop involves a lot of aggressive tapping in different parts of the screen, and I can see fans accidentally tapping submit before rankings are ready. In the current prototype, that would be game over – the disrespectful message still at the top of their unranked list would be erroneously ranked highly.
- ○ Fix: Have a second layer, like an Are you sure? or Confirm

30. **H5. Error prevention / Found by C / Severity 1**
- ○ If creators are like me and make silly math mistakes, then they will definitely end up miscalculating the duration of time and the actual ending time (like thinking that 2am is 10 hours from 2pm). This could result in mistakes in setting studio prompt time limits.
- ○ Fix: Stick grey ending time next to the time limits

31. **H5: Error Prevention / Found by A / Severity 2**
- ○ Task 4
- ○ The invitation page for the Room makes it seem like the fans who aren't selected to be invited aren't able to attend the chat at all, but I think the idea is that they can still tune in on the conversation. However, that doesn't seem intuitive on the creator view when creating a room, so the creator might invite more fans to the chat than the ones they actually want to speak with.
- ○ Fix: Add an explanation for what the fans are being invited for and how the chat will work.

32. H5: Error Prevention / Found by A, D / Severity 1
- ○ Task 4
- ○ No error-prevention confirmation option for scheduling a room, so the creator can easily schedule the room for the wrong time or with the wrong invitees.
- ○ Fix: Add a confirmation prompt before scheduling the room.

33. H5: Error Prevention / Found by A, B / Severity 2
- ○ Task 3
- ○ There are no numbers indicating the rankings of each idea when ranking fan responses in the fan view. This can be confusing when there are many responses and there is no number next to each response indicating its ranking.
- ○ Fix: Add numbers indicating each idea's current ranking next to the submission.

34. H5: Error Prevention / Found by B / Severity 2
- ○ Task 2
- ○ After a user makes a suggestions, there is no confirmation for them that they actually want to post that specific thing
- ○ Fix: Add another button afterwards that confirms the user will want to make that suggestions

35. H6: Recognition not Recall / Found by A, C / Severity 2
- ○ Task 4
- ○ Although the studio results are filtered by category, there are so many fan participants and ideas that it can be difficult to remember who said what, especially if the creator reads through more responses or clicks view all. It's hard to remember who submitted what when inviting fans in the next screen for creating room.
- ○ Fix: It could be helpful to highlight the specific fans in the results page who will be shown as recommended invitees on the next page after clicking create room, so that the creator can recognize their profiles immediately and understand why they're recommended invitees.

36. H6: Recognition not Recall / Found by A, B, C / Severity 2
- ○ Task 4
- ○ Apart from the 5 recommended invitees, it's hard to select specific fans to invite because the creator has to search for them specifically, which can be difficult when there are a lot of participants and responses. It would be nice if the creator doesn't have to remember who said what so that they can look them up by name.
- ○ Fix: Instead of making the creator search for a fan, there can be a list of fans (maybe the ones whose posts made it to the Studio Results page) and a tag next to their name that helps the creator remember what they posted (for example, a tag that says "controversial" next to the fan who posted something that had mixed feedback).

37. H6: Recognition Rather than Recall / Found by C, D / Severity 3
- ○ Task 3
- ○ When ranking a small set of ideas, as done in the prototype, the drag-and-drop system works very effectively. However, I have a feeling that after a list has

about 10-15 ideas, the drag and drop will be timely or too fast & users will get lost in the sea of text. There is a possibility that Croissant intends to only provide a focused set of ranking options to each user.
- ○ Fix: Implement a more scalable ranking feature

38. **H6. Recognition rather than recall / Found by B, C / Severity 1**
- ○ A first-time fan who only vaguely knows that this app will help them hang out a bit more with a creator will be confused by the darker yellow corner circles on the homescreen describing prompts as "Results," "Ranking," and "Brainstorm." They won't know what these words mean nor how they fall in the flow of this app and what the words about the type of interaction have.
- ○ Fix: Visualize these stages perhaps through a tiny timeline, or choose words that more clearly indicate actions that the user can take.

39. **H8: Aesthetic and Minimalist Design / Found by A, B, C / Severity 1**
- ○ Task 1
- ○ The logo takes up a lot of space on the home screen (more than half the row on the top), and is a bit inconsistent with the other scenes where there is only the icon of the croissant and not the text.
- ○ Fix: Take out the Croissant text but keep the icon for the home page.

40. **H8: Aesthetic and Minimalist Design / Found by A, B / Severity 1**
- ○ Task 4
- ○ The create room button is at the very bottom of the Studio Results, which means the creator might miss it since they'd have to scroll through the entire results digest to see it.
- ○ Fix: Move the Create Room button up to the top of the Studio Results, or keep it constant at the bottom of the screen throughout the Studio Results.

41. **H8: Aesthetic & Minimalist Design / Found by D / Severity 1**
- ○ Task 4
- ○ When the creator is hosting a live studio session, the duration of the meeting & the running count of participants is displayed / this is a really convenient feature to have and should be kept, but I wonder if there is a more efficient way to implement this without having the icons at the bottom take up so much space.
- ○ Fix: Remove icons for meeting status info & put them in the background.

42. **H8: Aesthetic and Minimalist Design / Found by B / Severity 1**
- ○ Task 4
- ○ Participants and the number of ideas takes a huge part of the screen, and unsure how important that information is apart from seeing it once
- ○ Fix: Make it smaller and put it at the top of the screen, so creators can see it once, and feel good about it, but then the main information (which are the suggestions) are seen right away

43. **H8. Aesthetic and minimalist design / Found by C / Severity 1**
- ○ After a fan submits a ranking, the screen says "Stay tuned for more info," which is too vague to be useful. What type of info?

- - Fix: Remove the sentence. Potentially replace it with something more actionable, like "remember that the room is at [this date and time]. See you there!"

44. **H10: Help and Documentation / Found by A, D / Severity 2**
    - No information on how a studio works (both on the creator end and fan end) and no information on what creating a room/hosting a live conversation will entail on the creator end.
    - Fix: Additional instructions that explain how the studio will go that show up when creating a studio as well as information on creating a room after results come out.

45. **H10: Help and Documentation / Found by B / Severity 2**
    - Task 3
    - When ranking the ideas, it was unclear as to whether these rankings would be the final say for the idea being chosen, or if the creator was going to have any say
    - Fix: Make it clear on the user's side how the ranking system works and how it will look like on the creator side

3. Summary of Violations

Category	# Viol. (sev 0)	# Viol. (sev 1)	# Viol. (sev 2)	# Viol. (sev 3)	# Viol. (sev 4)	# Viol. (total)
H1: Visibility of Status	0	1	4	0	0	**5**
H2: Match Sys & World	1	1	4	0	0	**6**
H3: User Control	0	1	4	0	0	**5**
H4: Consistency & Standards	3	6	2	0	0	**11**
H5: Error Prevention	0	3	4	0	0	**7**
H6: Recognition not Recall	0	1	2	1	0	**4**
H7: Efficiency of Use	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
H8: Minimalist Design	0	5	0	0	0	**5**
H9: Help Users with Errors	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
H10: Help & Documentation	0	0	2	0	0	**2**
Total Violations by Severity	**4**	**18**	**22**	**1**	**0**	**45**

4. Evaluation Statistics

Severity / Evaluator	Evaluator A	Evaluator B	Evaluator C	Evaluator D
Sev. 0	75%	0	25%	0
Sev. 1	56%	33%	50%	17%
Sev. 2	55%	41%	27%	23%
Sev. 3	0	0	100%	100%
Sev. 4	0	0	0	0
Total (sevs. 3 & 4)	0	0	100%	100%

Total (all severity levels)	56%	33%	36%	20%

5. Summary Recommendations

Absolutely amazing Med-Fi prototype! This was such a great and well-made prototype, and we really enjoyed how the prototype was able to incorporate the passage of time for certain tasks. The UI was really phenomenal and we're super excited to see where the Hi-Fi prototype leads the team. In terms of areas of improvement, we see H3 (User Control and Freedom), H4 (Consistency and Standards), and H5 (Error Prevention) the biggest places where the Croissant team could use some change.

A general theme that we found in many of the heuristic violations (in particular, those concerning user control and freedom as well as recognition not recall) revolved around the tension between creator and fan desires. For example, we noticed that there isn't an option to edit or remove a studio. Although this does limit user freedom, it also has its merits in that fans who already submitted feedback to a studio won't feel like their ideas were just suddenly or arbitrarily thrown out since the studio can't be deleted. Similarly, pushing the creator to remember which fan submitted which idea, and asking them to create customized messages for each panel invitation can create more work for the creator, but can also strengthen their collaborative relationship with their fans in the long term. Furthermore, fans will be more likely to feel like their ideas are being heard and taken into consideration.

Some concrete areas for improvement we see right now are:
- Visibility of System State. This app provides a creative, effective, and niche solution to fan-to-creator content advice; in doing so, it may be confusing to the user how the whole process works and how ideas are filtered before reaching the creator. Specifically, the flow of Prompt → Brainstorm → Ranking → Results → Room is not immediately apparent for creators or users, which means that the flow of the app itself feels a little less intuitive. Fortunately, a bit more transparency in this area could go a long way – perhaps some little timeline-style icons or just reformatting the home screen a little bit.
- The ranking situation is confusing for the user. Although they probably don't need so much "help & documentation" that they understand the precise algorithm that their ranking will go into, it was confusing to me to only see myself ranking 6 options, when there were 11k+ ideas submitted. Was I ranking a random subset? Or perhaps these were only highly ranked ideas, thus representing the best of the creators' fans? It would be helpful to have some clarity in the behind-the-scenes of the ranking process.
- There's also a shortage of undo features and error prevention. Fortunately, most errors on this application won't be fatal to the app's functionality or detrimental to its users. There just needs to be a bit more freedom surrounding the deletion of studios, meetings, and ideas.

In summary, this mockup was a wonderful implementation of both the creator and fan flows, and it effectively adhered to most of the heuristics listed below. The developers were cautious and thorough in their design, which is proved by the challenging nature of this evaluation. It was a real treat to work on this, and I am excited to see what comes in future iterations.

Action items

1. landing screen post-signup to give documentation
2. timeline icon for group status in components
3. copy-editing/consistency
   a. Fix alignment of header so croissant logo is always precisely in the middle
4. editing flow: fans can edit comments, creators can delete studio or modify timing scheme
5. confirmation modal for ranking

Welcome to Croissant!
We're excited you're here.
Croissant allows creators to hold digital studios for focused, productive collaboration with their fans.
Here's how it works:

Creator script {
[insert timeline]

Step 1: creating a studio

To get started, you'll create a new studio. Studios are spaces where fans respond to a prompt that you pose. Ask a question, share your latest idea, or give your fans food for thought. Anything goes — get creative!

Step 2: fans give ideas and rank them

Once you've created your studio, fans have the opportunity to share their thoughts related to the prompt. After a set period of time, fans go through and rank the ideas.

Step 3: review feedback and schedule fan chat

After the fans finish ranking, our algorithms show you the highest ranked ideas. We'll also show you the most controversial ideas as well as the topics that appeared most frequently. Once you've viewed the feedback, you can invite the fans who provided the most useful ideas to a scheduled chat.

Step 4: talk to top fans in the live panel

Finally, chat directly with your invited fans over audio - other fans can listen in as well! Engaging, productive conversations with your fans — that's what Croissant is all about. Welcome aboard.

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Fan script {

Step 1: Browse studios and contribute your ideas

Follow your favorite content creators to view their latest studios. Studios are spaces where you can respond to a prompt that a creator poses. Creators can pose a question, share their latest idea, or ask for honest feedback. Submit a response — here's your chance to be heard by the creator!

Step 2: rank ideas from other fans

After the time period to submit ideas has ended, you'll rank a handful of ideas contributed by other fans, from your favorite to your least favorite.

Step 3: join a creator chat

Once the creator has seen all the top feedback, they will hold a live audio chat and invite fans who provided the best ideas. If you are invited, you have the opportunity to join an organic conversation between the creator and a few other fans. Otherwise, listen in to hear engaging, thoughtful content you can't find anywhere else. This ….. Is croissant ™

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