

Heuristic Evaluation of Cookee

1. Problem/Prototype Description

Cookee is a specific task manager style app mixed with a social networking component that allows users to create meal plans, find recipes, and socialize while cooking, all from a convenient interface on their mobile device.

Severity Ratings Used

- 0 - not a usability problem
- 1 - cosmetic problem
- 2 - minor usability problem
- 3 - major usability problem; important to fix
- 4 - usability catastrophe; imperative to fix

2. Violations Found

1. **H1 Visibility of System Status / Severity 2 / Found by: C**

Clicking on the menu button is convenient and obvious, but once you click on it you are taken to an entirely new screen where there is no indication of the screen you came from. This interrupts the chronological flow of a task because the user can lose track of where they are in the app.

Fix: Have the menu only extend out half way into the screen when it's clicked on and shade the icon that they are currently viewing. This way, the user can see which screen they are on and navigate to a new one easily.

2. **H2 Match between system and real world and H3 User control and freedom / Severity 4 / Found by: B, C)**

From the calendar screen I cannot add a new meal plan directly. This feels a bit restrictive and also doesn't resemble a physical calendar that you can immediately add things to or take things away from.

Fix: Add a way to create a new meal plan directly from the calendar view (as long as it doesn't mess with the other goals of the app)

3. **H2: Match between the system and real world / Severity 4 / Found By: C**

The hover feature in the calendar is a nice idea except it doesn't really work on a mobile phone. The hardware doesn't match with this feature.

Fix: Change the hover feature to be a "click and hold" type of thing that expands the meal plan only when holding down on it.

4. **H2 Match between the system and real world / Severity 2 / Found by: C**

The ingredient list appears kind of ordered alphabetically but is not consistent.

Fix: Make sure the ingredient and recipe lists are ordered in a consistent way so users can quickly find them. This would likely be alphabetical order.

5. **H2: Match between the system and real world / Severity 2 / Found by: C**

It is unclear how the filter function works in the cookie rooms page. I can't tell what it means to filter by "cuisine" or how to do it. I think that the favorites option and the cook time option are excellent, I just can't tell how they relate to the filter option and that is kind of confusing.

Fix: Clearly show what are available filter options vs simple lists like my favorites list. The search bar mentioned in this doc should help with this as well.

6. **H3 User control and freedom/ Severity 3/ Found by: C**

While in the calendar view and viewing my meal plans I cannot click on the meal plan to expand it and show me more details or edit it. This makes that screen feel restrictive.

Fix: Add a direct link to edit existing plans right in the calendar view.

7. **H3 User control and freedom/ Severity 2/Found by: C**

I fully expected clicking the menu icon to open it and it did. However, I also expected an easy way back to the screen I was on, and assumed that clicking the menu icon again would close it. This did not occur as expected and I felt trapped in the menu without a way back.

Fix: Just make the menu button both open and close the menu

8. **H4 Consistency and Standards/ Severity 2/ Found by: C**

In the calendar, clicking on Saturday automatically opens its meal plans but then clicking back to thursday doesn't reveal thursdays plans. This could create confusion on when plans are automatically shown and when they are not.

Fix: Choose whether plans should be automatically shown or not and then stick with that regardless of what day the user clicks on.

9. **H5 Error Prevention/ Severity 2/ Found by: C**

It was a little too easy to leave a group. Similar to how zoom gives you a chance to not leave the meeting if you accidentally click the "leave" button, I feel that this application should do

the same when someone clicks the “leave” button in a cooking room. Especially with flour and butter all over your hands and face, it can be a little hard to click accurately ;)

Fix: When a user clicks “leave” give them a message such as “Are you sure you want to leave? Yes/no”

10. H6 Recognition rather than recall/ Severity 2/ Found by: A, C

When clicking the cookie to list ingredients the interface clearly shows it’s recording and there is a message that says click to stop. However, that message moves further and further down the screen and out of view the longer the list gets.

Fix: Fix the button so that it doesn't get moved out of view.

11. H6 Recognition rather than recall/ Severity 2/ Found by: C

In the calendar, there is no indication of what the events are at first glance. The user has to remember or click and hold to view what something is rather than just see it instantly. The daily view helps with this but it would still be nice to have some indication of an event's contents.

Fix: Add titles to the main calendar slide.

12. H6 Recognition rather than recall/Severity 2/Found by: B, C

I know this one sounds funny but in any calendar based app it is helpful to indicate which day is today whenever one navigates away from it. Here, when a user clicks on Saturday there is no indication of which day is the present day. For those of us that are more absent minded and never have any idea where we are in the space time continuum this can be quite disconcerting.

Fix: A little indicator showing where today is, like a faint outline or something.

13. H6 Recognition rather than recall (and H1 Visibility of system status)/Severity 1/ Found by: C

In the pantry section, the buttons to toggle between ingredients and recipes aren’t immediately clear on where you are and which one is clickable.

Fix: A little interior shadowing can go a long way. Giving the button that is pressed (the current location) a little texture or depth to show it is “pressed” will help your users know where they are and where they can go.

14. H7 Flexibility and efficiency of use and H3 user control and freedom/ Severity 2/ Found by: C

Shouldn’t have to scroll down to leave a group in the cookee rooms. People should be able to clearly see where they can leave the group, even if the list of steps is long.

Fix: Embed the leave button in the video call group

15. H7 Flexibility and efficiency of use/ Severity 2/ Found by: B, C

Items are used from the pantry quickly, so it should be as easy to remove them as it is to add them. Right now it looks like it would take multiple clicks to remove an ingredient from my pantry.

Fix: Add a simple trash can icon to instantly remove an item from my pantry or an edit button when you click it shows minus signs for deleting each item.

16. H7 flexibility and efficiency of use/ Severity 2/ Found by: C

As the pantry list gets longer the “see pantry” button moves further and further down, making it inefficient to move on in the process because you have to scroll up to the cookie and down to the “see pantry” button.

Fix: Make the ingredient list an embedded scrollable instead so that the “see pantry” button and the cookie button stay fixed and the list is the only thing that scrolls.

17. H7 Flexibility and efficiency of use/ Severity 3/ Found by: C

The cooking rooms aren’t searchable, even though there is a filter option. This results in a fair amount of extra searching that could be quickly avoided using a search bar in conjunction with the filter.

Fix: Add a search bar at the top of the cookee rooms screen so that users can type the beginnings of a dish and see the relevant rooms

18. H8 Aesthetic and minimalist design/ Severity 1/ Found by: A, C

The bar across the top of the app feels very heavy and occupies a lot of the screen space. This results in a fair amount of extra scrolling because of the smaller usable screen space.

Fix: I think that even with the buttons remaining functional this could be shrunk considerably. The top bar could just be removed and the menu button moved to the top right corner. I don’t think it’s necessary to have Cookee shown on every page.

19. H8 Aesthetic and minimalist design/ Severity 1/ Found by: C

The photo takes up a lot of space in the individual cookee rooms page, which forces the actionable items further down the screen into the scrolled-to zone.

Fix: Shrink the picture a bit and overlay the title onto the picture somehow. Minimize its coverage without losing the awesome effect it creates!

20. H10 Help and Documentation/ Severity 2/ Found by: C

There is no clear indication of what the calendar contains, so users may think it could be for other activities and things as well as meals (could it be?).

Fix: Add some sort of short message about what they should do with the calendar screen at the top.

21. H11 Accessible/ Severity 4/ Found by: C

Users that cannot speak aren't able to add things to the pantry because there is no manual method (no writing method).

Fix: Add a way to add ingredients with the keyboard, and perhaps even suggest some common ones that are selectable so they don't have to type everything out. Also provide a live-update suggestion bar as they type so they don't have to type it all out.

22. H13 Value Alignment/ Severity 0/ Found by: C

It seemed to me like part of your values is to help parents worry less about meals so they can focus more on the other things that are important to them. Some of the social aspects of the app have a potential to distract from these important things as well and "suck people into" the app.

Fix(not that it needs to be fixed immediately. It's more of a caution): Find a way to encourage these people to get their kids involved and avoid implementing features that will require them to spend more and more time on the app.

23. H1 Visibility of System Status / Severity 3 / Found by: B

While inside of the Cookee room there is no way to indicate which step you are on/have moved on. Users should be able to select which step they are on and update their friends along the way.

Fix: When you first join, step #1 will be highlighted and its details will be opened. When you click on step #2 it will highlight it, open it, and move your status to that one.

24. H1 Visibility of System Status / Severity 1 / Found by: B

On the calendar it doesn't show progress throughout the day about what meals have been completed.

Fix: Add check marks next to completed events.

25. H2 Match Between System and the Real World / Severity 3 / Found by: B

The concept of a Cookee room is not intuitive to users (who is inside them and what happens within them?)

Fix: Add a short explanation for what a Cookee room is during the onboarding process.

26. H3 User Control and Freedom / Severity 3 / Found by: B

While adding ingredients to the pantry, there is no way to edit or delete the added ingredients.

Fix: After the Cookee stops recording, users should be allowed to edit the ingredients.

27. H4 Consistency and Standards / Severity 1 / Found by: B

On the front page it says “View current ingredients and recipes” and then says “35 Items | 10 Recipes” below so there is a mismatch between ingredients and items.

Fix: change both to either items or ingredients.

28. H5 Error Prevention / Severity 3 / Found by: B

There aren't any instructions while adding pantry ingredients by voice that makes it easier for whatever program is being used to parse it and split it into a list of ingredients. It could be less prone to recording errors that way.

Fix: Add a prompt like “say AND between each ingredient” or something.

29. H6 Recognition Rather Than Recall / Severity 2 / Found by: B

Missing a prompt or instructions while the Cookee is recording.

Fix: Add a prompt like “What ingredients are in your pantry?”.

30. H7 Flexibility and Efficiency of Use / Severity 0 / Found by: B

There is no place to save and access favorite recipes that expert users would want to make repeatedly.

Fix: Add a “My Recipes” tab that you can view and add to.

31. H7 Flexibility and Efficiency of Use / Severity 4 / Found by: B

There is no way to create a Cookee room and invite friends.

Fix: Add a plus button on the Cookee Rooms tab that leads to a Cookee room creation process

32. H7 Flexibility and Efficiency of Use / Severity 2 / Found by: B

There is no way to see other friends and interact with them on the app.

Fix: Add a friends tab.

33. H8 Aesthetic and Minimalist Design / Severity 1 / Found by: B

I feel like the calendar doesn't need its own tab and being accessed through the homepage is enough.

Fix: Remove calendar from the menu tab.

34. H10 Help and Documentation / Severity 0 / Found by: B

The Cookee rooms just show a list of steps but it could be helpful to have a way for users to ask questions.

Fix: Have some FAQs about the recipes or something.

35. H11 Accessible / Severity 1 / Found by: B

The black color of the menu bar doesn't have enough contrast with the dark brown header color.

Fix: Change the menu bar to be white.

36. H8 - Flexibility and Efficiency of Use / Severity 1 / Found by: A

In my opinion, the text on the Italian Night page ("BACK" and "JOIN") would look better if it was smaller.

37. H4 - Consistency and Standards / Severity 1 / Found by: A

On "Pantry" page, there are spelling mistakes on "Ingredients" and "Bananas"

38. H4 - Consistency and Standards / Severity 1 / Found by: A

Capitalisation is inconsistent on the ingredients list "Pantry" page.

39. H3 - User control and Freedom / Severity 2 / Found by: A

The "Add Ingredients" looks like the default way to add ingredients, which makes it unclear if the search bar is for searching for ingredients or for searching for existing ingredients. Would be great if it was made clear if it was for adding ingredients (maybe by being inside the "Add Ingredients" box), or for searching existing ingredients.

40. H8 - Aesthetic and Minimalist design / Severity 1 / Found by: A

"Add Ingredients" widget is on calendar page - it does no harm, but doesn't need to be there.

41. H4 - Consistency and Standards / Severity 2 / Found by: A

Calendar states full recipe (lasagna, brussel sprouts and foccacia), whereas this isn't stated anywhere else.

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	1	1	0	3

H2: Match Sys & World	0	0	2	1	2	5
H3: User Control	0	0	2	2	1	5
H4: Consistency & Standards	0	3	2	0	0	5
H5: Error Prevention	0	0	1	1	0	2
H6: Recognition not Recall	0	1	4	0	0	5
H7: Efficiency of Use	1	0	4	1	1	7
H8: Minimalist Design	0	5	0	0	0	5
H9: Help Users with Errors	0	0	0	0	0	0
H10: Help & Documentation	1	0	1	0	0	2
H11: Accessible	0	1	0	0	1	2
H12: Fairness & Inclusion	0	0	0	0	0	0
H13: Value Alignment	1	0	0	0	0	0
Total Violations by Severity	3	11	17	6	5	41

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
Sev. 0	0%	66%	33%
Sev. 1	45%	36%	27%
Sev. 2	18%	24%	76%
Sev. 3	0%	83%	33%
Sev. 4	0%	40%	60%
Total (sevs. 3 & 4)	0/11 (0%)	7/11 (64%)	5/11 (45%)
Total (all severity levels)	8/41 (20%)	17/41 (41%)	22/41 (54%)

*Note that the bottom rows are *not* calculated by adding the numbers above it.

5. Summary Recommendations

Evaluator A:

Overall, our group absolutely loves the app! It's incredibly well (and extensively) mapped out, and the concept is really interesting. We would each love to be a part of a community that uses it.

A few things stood out as points of improvement:

- Font size may be too large in some places - mostly buttons
- The UI may appear a bit outdated in some areas - for instance, the borders around the buttons on the menu page.
- The heading for each page (ie, "home"), takes up a lot of space, and isn't really necessary - maybe it could replace the "Cookee" text at the top (as the Cookee logo is still there), or just be removed?
- We suggest playing around with different color schemes/fonts, but this is a highly subjective point. Certainly up to your team.

That said, we really liked your prototype. It is beautifully designed, easy to understand, and relatively intuitive, with each of us feeling that it was quickly learnable. Despite what we listed above, the colors and images also meld together quite well. Our feedback generally centers around functionality which we recognize is hard to capture completely within Figma. You may have considered these features already, but here are some we suggest adding:

- Ability to add to and edit the Calendar
- Smart updating and manual updating of your pantry
- Creation of Cookee rooms
- A page or something that allows viewing and interacting with friends

- An explanation of Cookee rooms and maybe redesigning the Cookee room interface to reflect that explanation.

The larger trend is that the app should account for every possible action and desire that a user would have in relation to the tasks. We recognize the limitations of med-fi prototyping and are highly impressed with the product that is developing in the Cookee offices. Good luck in the development stage, and can't wait to "see what's cooking". ;)

Heuristics

H1: Visibility of System Status

- Keep users informed about what is going on

H2: Match Between System & Real World

- Speak the users' language
- Follow real world conventions

H3: User Control & Freedom

- "Exits" for mistaken choices, undo, redo
- Don't force down fixed paths

H4: Consistency & Standards

- Words, actions, and UI elements should be consistent across the entire platform
- Follow platform and industry conventions

H5: Error Prevention

- Minimize error-prone conditions
- Remove memory burdens, support undoing, and warn your users when necessary

H6: Recognition Rather Than Recall

- Make objects, actions, options, & directions visible or easily retrievable

H7: Flexibility & Efficiency of Use

- Accelerators for experts (e.g., gestures, keyboard shortcuts)
- Allow users to tailor frequent actions (e.g., macros)

H8: Aesthetic & Minimalist Design

- No irrelevant information. Focus on the essentials.

H9: Help Users Recognize, Diagnose, & Recover from Errors

- Error messages in plain language
- Precisely indicate the problem
- Constructively suggest a solution

H10: Help & Documentation

- Easy to search

- Focused on the user's task
- List concrete steps to carry out
- Not too large

H11: Accessible

- Users can interact with the system using alternative input methods.
- Content is legible with distinguishable contrast and text size.
- Key information is upfront and not nested for screen readers.
- Purely visual or auditory content has text-based alternatives for users with low vision and low hearing.

H12: Fairness and Inclusion

- Users shouldn't feel that the design is not made for them.
- The design should meet all users' needs equally and prevent the reproduction of pre-existing inequities.
- It should not create additional burdens for members of disadvantaged populations.

H13: Value Alignment

- The design should encode values that users can understand and relate to.
- Conflicting collateral values should not emerge when the user interacts with the product.
- Encoded values should match users' values in a broad set of use-contexts.