

# Homework 2

## Heuristic Evaluation – Dedice

### Introduction and Overall Comments

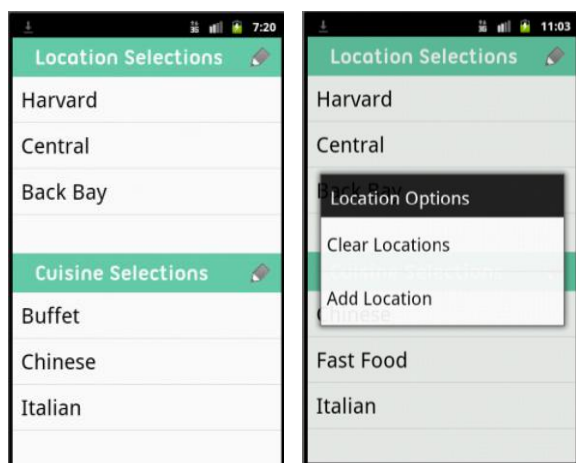
Dedice is an application to help a group of people decide on a place to eat. Its game-like interface uses the metaphors of a betting table and a wheel of fortune to let users input their preferences, and hopefully agree on a dining location.

Dedice is a nice application, and uses well the principles seen in class: it has a minimalist design, makes good use of real-word metaphors, and employs direct manipulation in a large part of the interface. Overall, there aren't many suggestions for improvement. One exception is that in some places the UI may be a little restrictive. As an example, it demands that the users pick exactly 3 three choices for locations or cuisines. It seems a very plausible case where the group wants to restrict their options to only one or two specific neighborhoods.

All positive and negative comments will be presented in the next section. However, one point deserves a more elaborate discussion: it took a considerable amount of time to form a user model of the configuration process. This indicates that this part of the interface could benefit from a review by the design team.

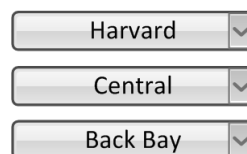
After some experimentation, a user should be able to devise the following model for the configuration process. For each category (location, price, or cuisine), Dedice has a built-in list of choices, which cannot be modified. A user configures the application by selecting 3 items from each list. The prices list is an exception, because it has only 3 items (S, SS, or \$\$\$) and therefore requires no configuration.

Although this is a simple system model, it could probably be conveyed more clearly to the user. The current layout for the *Set Preferences* screen (Fig. 1a) can be misleading. Remember that when a new user reaches this screen, he or she is not aware of the model described above. The text chosen for the available menu items (e.g., "Add Location") seems to indicate that the user could type in new location names. In reality, all that the user can do on this screen is to make a selection, of exactly 3 locations and exactly 3 cuisines, to be used during the next run.



(a) Current screen.

Possible locations:



Possible cuisines:



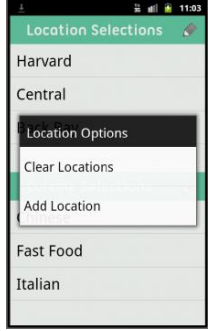

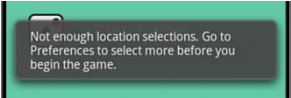
(b) A suggestion to improve efficiency and convey the system model more effectively.



Fig. 1. The *Set Preferences* screen.

It is left as a recommendation to the designers to present this task more clearly to the user. One suggestion is shown in Fig. 1b, using conventional selection boxes. Besides leaving little margin for doubt, this suggestion has another advantage: it reduces the number of operations required to change a location from 5 to 1 (see comment #6 below for details).

As mentioned, the interface is overall well-designed, and the preferences screen was the only point identified as a possible source of confusion. Once Dedice addresses the few problems identified, it should be very easy and a pleasure to use.

## List of Comments

Home Screen				
#	Observation	Heuristic	Severity	
1	+ The home screen has only a few options (only 3 choices)	Simplicity	Good	
2	+ A shortcut to get help is presented on the 1 <sup>st</sup> screen (“How to play”)	Help & document.	Good	
3	+ The home screen layout is simple and clear	Minimalist design	Good	
Help Screen (“How to Play”)				
#	Observation	Heuristic	Severity	
4	+ The help text is short and focused on the user’s task	Help & document.	Good	
5	- The text is always the same throughout the application; for more specific tasks, a contextual help is recommended	Help & document.	Minor	
Configuration Screen (“Set Preferences”)				
#	Observation	Heuristic	Severity	
6	<p>- Changing a single selection is a complex task, involving 5 operations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Click one of the current selected items;</li> <li>2. In the popup menu, choose Remove Location;</li> <li>3. Click the pencil icon;</li> <li>4. In the popup menu, choose Add Location;</li> <li>5. Browse through the list and pick a location.</li> </ol> <p><b>Suggestion #1:</b> use 3 selection boxes; this reduces the task to a single operation (see Fig. 1b).</p> <p><b>Suggestion #2:</b> add shortcut icons to add or remove a location/cuisine.</p>		Efficiency	Major
7	<p>- It is not clear what the application model is, and what the user flow should be to accomplish this task.</p> <p><b>Suggestion:</b> use 3 selection boxes. This creates a clear distinction between what is a user choice and what are fixed parameters.</p>		Learnability	Catastrophic
8	<p>- The user is not allowed to use the application with less than 3 cuisines or 3 locations</p>		User control	Major

Player Selection Screen			
#	Observation	Heuristic	Severity
9	- The large “player 1” box could be used as a shortcut to start the player’s turn 	Fitt’s Law	Cosmetic
Betting Page			
#	Observation	Heuristic	Severity
10	+ Direct manipulation of the chips makes the process intuitive and self-explaining	Direct manipulation	Good
11	+ Good use of the betting table metaphor makes the betting process self-explanatory 	Match the real world	Good
12	+ All information describing the bet status is shown on the screen	Visibility of system status	Good
13	- There is no undo. If the user changes his mind, the only way around is to clear the entire table.  <b>Suggestion #1:</b> provide an Undo action  <b>Suggestion #2:</b> allow user to drag the already placed chips	Efficiency; User control & freedom	Catastrophic
14	- Chips cannot be dragged after they are placed on the table	Efficiency; User control & freedom	Major
15	+ <i>Clear</i> and <i>Done</i> buttons well apart from one another	Error prevention	Good
Wheel Screen			
#	Observation	Heuristic	Severity
16	+ The “Wheel of Fortune” metaphor makes the task self-explanatory	Metaphor	Good
17	+ Can spin the wheel in either direction	Match the real world	Good
18	- The wheel does not respond to dragging; the only way to interact is with a quick swipe	Direct manipulation	Minor
19	- The “momentum” of the wheel has no relation with the speed of the swipe; the wheel always spins ~ 10-11 turns before stopping	Match the real world	Minor
20	- The <i>Next</i> button looks the same whether it is enabled or disabled.	Consistency & standards	Minor

General			
#	Observation	Heuristic	Severity
21	- The font selected for the UI does not provide a clear distinction between a lowercase “a” and an “o”; example: <b>of randomness.</b>	Readability	Minor
22	- The mapping between application symbols for prices (\$, \$\$, and \$\$\$) and real-world values is never presented to the user	Help & document.	Minor