

Heuristic Evaluation: mackVibes

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April 25, 2013

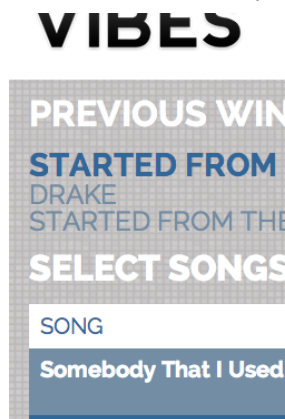
Evaluation Setup

I evaluated mackVibes using Google Chrome on OSX 10.7.5. I also attempted to evaluate the Audience App using the stock Android browser on an ancient Nexus One running Android 2.3.7.

Usability Notes

DJ App

1. **Aesthetic:** The colors in the DJ app are well chosen. The unsaturated shades of blue, along with black, white, and gray make for an appealing interface which is very easy to look at:



2. **Aesthetic, severity: Cosmetic:** The checkered gray background is attractive but distracting in some points. Particularly, it makes the artist and album of the previous winner somewhat difficult to read, since they are written in a lighter font:



3. **User Control:** The large navigation buttons in the top right are a good choice and make it easy for the user to explore the interface and see what is available:

HOME VIBES ABOUT

4. **Help & Documentation, severity: Major:** None of the interface items appeared to have any alt-text or other documentation of their actions. For example, it wasn't clear what the "Vibes" link in the top right did, so an alt-text or on-hover attribute to explain its function might be useful.
5. **Error Prevention, severity: Minor:** Clicking "Begin Voting" with no songs selected should not be allowed. The user should probably be told what they should actually have done (i.e. selected some songs first).
6. **Visibility, severity: Major:** There is relatively little contrast (different color, but little change in size) between the section headers and the information about the previous winning song, which makes it difficult to quickly pick out the instructions, such as "Select songs for voting":



7. **Flexibility, severity: Major:** There appears to be no way to sort the songs that are listed, or to filter them by any characteristics. I imagine that a DJ would need to be able to view and sort songs based on various characteristics such as artist, genre, and tempo.
8. **Visibility, severity: Minor:** There is no visual distinction between subsequent songs in the list, which makes it harder for the eye to align a particular song to its artist:

SONG	ARTIST	DURATION
Somebody That I Used To Know	Gotye feat. Kimbra	2:48
Call Me Maybe	Carly Rae Jepsen	2:48
We Are Young	fun. feat. Janelle Monae	2:48
Payphone	Maroon 5 feat. Wiz Khalifa	2:48
Lights	Ellie Goulding	2:48
Glad You Came	The Wanted	2:48
Stronger (What Doesn't Kill You)	Kelly Clarkson	2:48
We Found Love	Rihanna feat. Calvin Harris	2:48

Alternating slightly different color shades between rows the way programs like iTunes do would help a great deal.

9. **Feedback:** Choosing songs for voting is very well implemented. When a song is chosen, it immediately appears in the listing on the right and its color changes in the main list. This looks good, works well, and makes it easy to understand how the interface should be used:

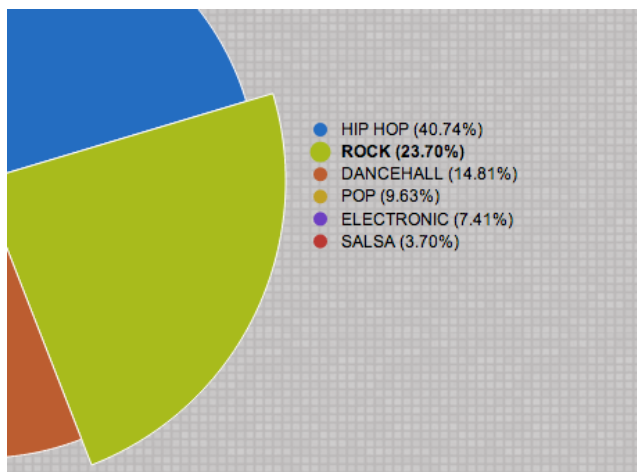
SONG	ARTIST	DURATION	SELECTED SONGS (MAX 5)
Somebody That I Used To Know	Gotye feat. Kimbra	2:48	Payphone X
Call Me Maybe	Carly Rae Jepsen	2:48	Lights X
We Are Young	fun. feat. Janelle Monae	2:48	We Are Young X
Payphone	Maroon 5 feat. Wiz Khalifa	2:48	
Lights	Ellie Goulding	2:48	

10. **Protecting Users' Work, severity: Major:** It appears that no information about past voting is preserved, other than the previous winner. Users should be allowed to access older results as much as possible, since the results of an earlier vote may still be relevant to the DJ's choice of song.
11. **Learnability, severity: Major:** It's not immediately clear what the "Vibes" pie chart is displaying:

GENRE POPULARITY (LAST HOUR)

Is it the percentage of songs in the last hour which belong to a category? Or the percentage of votes cast for songs in a category? Or some other measure?

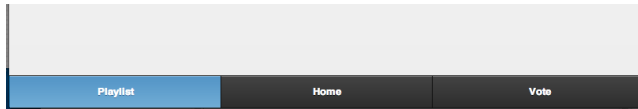
12. **Efficiency & Learnability:** The mouseover effect on the piechart, which highlights the relevant genre in the listing on the right, helps connect the information in the graph and the legend (which should help new users) and makes it easier to identify particular categories quickly (which should help advanced users as well):



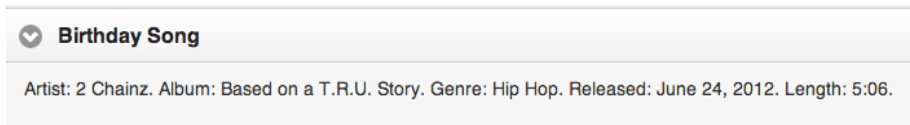
Audience App

I initially tried this app using an Android browser, but discovered that the navigation links at the bottom did not seem to work at all, so I performed the rest of the evaluation in Chrome on OSX.

13. **Explorable Interfaces:** As with the DJ app, the large navigation links, this time at the bottom of the page, make exploring the interface very easy.



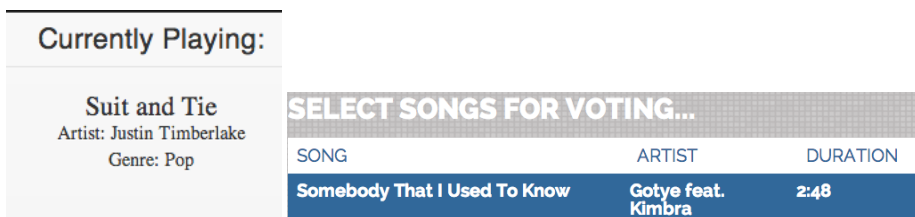
14. **Efficiency, severity: Minor:** The descriptions of the songs on the Playlist screen are difficult to parse or scan, since there is no visual distinction between headers and information and no separation between pieces of data:



Eliminating some unnecessary headers and information might help with this problem. For example, writing "Birthday Song BY 2 Chainz ON Based on a T.R.U. Story" would take less space than explicit "Artist" and "Album" fields. Also, the month and day of release are probably not necessary for this particular context, and the genre might be unnecessary as well. The entire text field could then be replaced by:

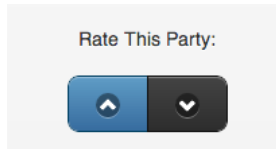
Birthday Song 2 Chainz *Based on a T.R.U. Story* (2012) 5:06

15. **Consistency, severity: Minor:** The information displayed about the currently playing song (title, artist, genre) doesn't match the selection list in the DJ app (title, artist, duration) or the playlist in the audience app (title, artist, album, genre, release date, duration):



16. **Learnability & Visibility of System Status, severity: Major:** There is no information given about what the "Rate this party" buttons do. I'm sure they're intended to give some feedback to the DJ, but there's no way to view the results or know what this feedback will actually be

(for example, will the DJ know that I personally have downvoted his or her party?):



17. **Help & Documentation:** The short, descriptive phrases at the top of each page, such as “Vote for the next song” were surprisingly helpful at reminding me where I was in the interface and what I was supposed to be doing.
18. **Error Prevention and Visibility of Status, severity: Major:** There appears to be no way to change or undo a vote, or to view the status of a vote after I’ve cast it. It would be great to see a bar graph of the results, and perhaps even have the ability to change my vote before voting closes:

