

Heuristic Evaluation of DormMate

by Joe Henke with no collaborators

1. Inconsistent Date Formatting

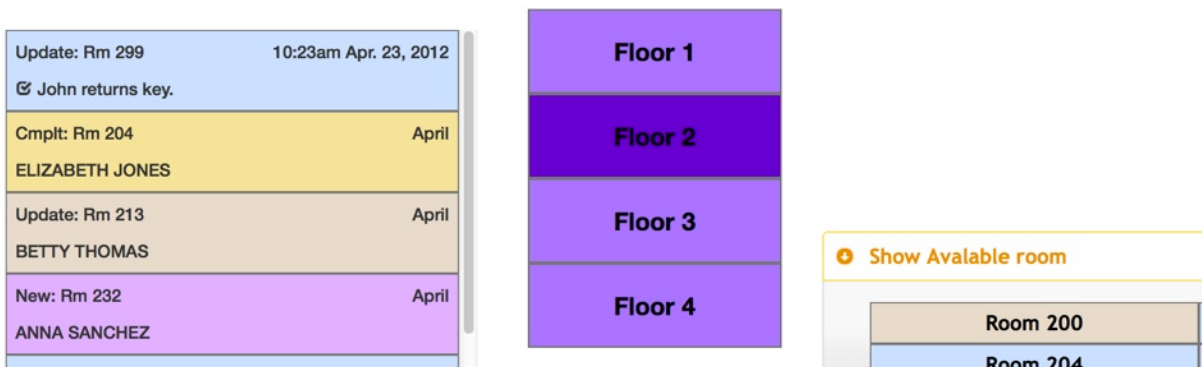
Related to **Consistency**, The dates are shown in different formats in the box “Recent Activity” pane. It is unclear if this difference is significant and noticing the discrepancy, if it is meaningless, is distracting.



This is a **cosmetic** issue.

2. Many Colors Used

Related to **Minimalism**, many different colors are used throughout the interface. It wasn't immediately obvious the meaning of the colors in the left most picture of recent activity either. Perhaps this is because the entire task is highlighted I wasn't sure where to look for the actual difference. If just the status of the task was highlighted differently, perhaps it would render the same information and make the color scheme more **learnable**.



This is a **cosmetic** issue.

3. Overly Complicated Dates

Related to **Simplicity**, In the Task Management Table, all the dates are very long and complicated. This provides a lot of unnecessary detail and makes it hard to actual see the difference between the dates. Perhaps consider showing relative time instead of absolute dates i.e. X days ago.

Thu Mar 29 2012 15:27:43 GMT-0400 (EDT)
Sat Jun 09 2012 10:08:35 GMT-0400 (EDT)
Sat Jan 07 2012 10:24:49 GMT-0500 (EST)
Sat Mar 09 2013 01:49:41 GMT-0500 (EST)
Sun Jun 24 2012 05:40:53 GMT-0400 (EDT)
Tue Oct 09 2012 18:44:37 GMT-0400 (EDT)
Wed Feb 13 2013 07:21:26 GMT-0500 (EST)
Mon Jul 16 2012 07:14:42 GMT-0400 (EDT)
Fri Sep 07 2012 05:17:44 GMT-0400 (EDT)
Fri May 04 2012 06:08:17 GMT-0400 (EDT)
Fri Apr 12 2013 03:37:05 GMT-0400 (EDT)
Fri Jan 25 2013 14:53:33 GMT-0500 (EST)
Sun Dec 16 2012 22:49:08 GMT-0500 (EST)

This is a **cosmetic** problem.

4. Search and Edit Corner Case

Related to **Error Prevention**, the interface actually prohibits you from searching for a one specific name and then modifying the task in the table. In the picture here, I have actually clicked a row, but the dialog does not appear.

jack

Rm # ▲	Task ◆	Residents Involved ◆	
217	Move out	CAROL JACKSON	S

Showing 1 to 1 of 1 entries (filtered from 100 total entries)

This is a **catastrophic** problem.

5. Inconsistent Search Term

Related to **Flexibility and Efficiency**, when searching then clicking something in “Recent Activity”, the search term doesn’t change even though the content displayed below it does not contain the word.

The screenshot shows a search box containing the text "jack". To the right of the search box is a dark button labeled "Inco". Below the search box is a table with the following columns: "Rm #", "Task", "Residents Involved", and "Last U". The table contains one row with the following data: "225", "Move out", "JESSICA LEWIS", and "Mon Jun 04 2012 19:3". Below the table is a light blue edit dialog box with four checkboxes: "Key Returned", "Room Cleaned", "ID Card Access Disabled", and "Maintenance Contacted". To the right of these checkboxes is a dark button labeled "Save Changes".

Showing 1 to 1 of 1 entries (filtered from 100 total entries)

This is a **minor** problem.

6. Non-Removal of Edit Dialog During Search

Related to **Error Prevention**, searching while the edit dialog is up changes under which name the edit dialog appears. This change is abrupt and not illustrated to the user, so it could easily be missed, resulting in improperly altered data.

The screenshot shows a search box containing the text "j". To the right of the search box is a dark button labeled "Incom". Below the search box is a table with the following columns: "Rm #", "Task", "Residents Involved", and "Last Upd". The table contains three rows with the following data: "201", "Move out", "PATRICIA JOHNSON", "Sun Nov 04 2012 10:00:7"; "204", "Move in", "ELIZABETH JONES", "Wed Dec 05 2012 02:48:"; and "205", "Move in", "JENNIFER MILLER", "Sun Oct 07 2012 10:31:1". Below the table is a light blue edit dialog box with four checkboxes: "Key Returned", "Room Cleaned", "ID Card Access Disabled", and "Maintenance Contacted". To the right of these checkboxes is a dark button labeled "Save Changes".

Notice the transition from the above image to the below image changes under which name the dialog appears, just by typing “e.”

je

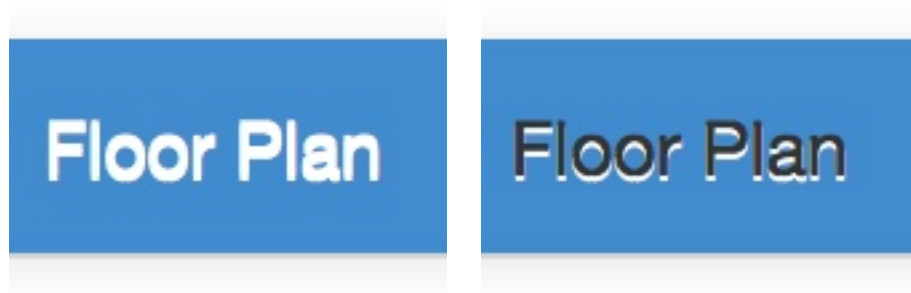
Rm #	Task	Residents Involved	Le
205	Move in	JENNIFER MILLER	Sun Oct 07 2012
225	Move out	JESSICA LEWIS	Mon Jun 04 2012
<input type="checkbox"/> Key Returned <input type="checkbox"/> ID Card Access Disabled <input type="button" value="Save Changes"/>			
<input type="checkbox"/> Room Cleaned <input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance Contacted			
257	Move out	JEAN MURPHY	Fri Apr 05 2013 08
294	Move in	PAULA JENKINS	Tue May 15 2012

Showing 1 to 4 of 4 entries (filtered from 100 total entries)

This is a **catastrophic** issue.

7. Aesthetics of Nav Bar Links

Related to **Aesthetics**, this font appears to be almost three dimensional, but at a glance it seems just blurry, like it was incorrectly rendered on my screen. Additionally, when hovering over it, there is bad contrast between black and blue, and the white part providing the 3d illusion remains white.



This is a **cosmetic** issue.

8. Confusing Navigation Bar

Related to **Visibility of System Status**, the “Main Page” entry in the nav bar (boxed in red) indicates the same status for both the main page and the new task page. However, clicking on Main Page while creating a new task changes the page to the Main Page. Perhaps creating a new task should have its own part on the nav bar or be a modal view, a popup overlaid on whatever is currently displayed.

Recent Activity

- Update: Rm 299 10:23am Apr. 23, 2012
John returns key.
- Update: Rm 240 April
STEPHANIE HILL
- Complt: Rm 242 April
CHRISTINE CAMPBELL
- Update: Rm 255 April
GLORIA MORRIS
- Update: Rm 267 April
NICOLE GOMEZ

Task Management

Search and Filter

Incomplete Completed Show All

Rm #	Task	Residents Involved	Last Update	Complete?
200	Move in	MARY SMITH	Sat Mar 16 2013 22:23:59 GMT-0400 (EDT)	✓
201	Move in	PATRICIA JOHNSON	Tue Dec 18 2012 13:29:54 GMT-0500 (EST)	✓
202	Move out	LINDA WILLIAMS	Wed Apr 25 2012 05:32:19 GMT-0400 (EDT)	✓
203	Move in	BARBARA BROWN	Sun Jan 08 2012 07:38:44 GMT-0500 (EST)	
204	Move in	ELIZABETH JONES	Fri Jan 27 2012 14:06:13 GMT-0500 (EST)	
205	Move in	JENNIFER MILLER	Tue Jan 10 2012 20:48:22 GMT-0500 (EST)	
206	Move in	MARIA DAVIS	Mon Mar 25 2013 22:53:31 GMT-0400 (EDT)	
207	Move out	SUSAN GARCIA	Mon Nov 12 2012 11:02:05 GMT-0500 (EST)	✓
208	Move in	MARGARET RODRIGUEZ	Fri Apr 13 2012 21:09:04 GMT-0400 (EDT)	✓
209	Move out	DOROTHY WILSON	Sat Jul 28 2012 05:58:33 GMT-0400 (EDT)	
210	Move out	LISA MARTINEZ	Mon Mar 12 2012 19:17:58 GMT-0400 (EDT)	
211	Move in	NANCY ANDERSON	Thu Apr 11 2013 09:47:15 GMT-0400 (EDT)	✓
212	Move out	KAREN TAYLOR	Sat Mar 10 2012 20:06:32 GMT-0500 (EST)	✓

Showing 1 to 100 of 100 entries

Create Task

Type of task
 Move In
 Move Out

Resident Information

New resident name

optional

Location/Room #

Move in date

Subtask necessary for completion

Useful information

Show Available room

Room 200	Room 202
Room 204	Room 206
Room 208	Room 210
Room 212	Room 214
Room 216	Room 218

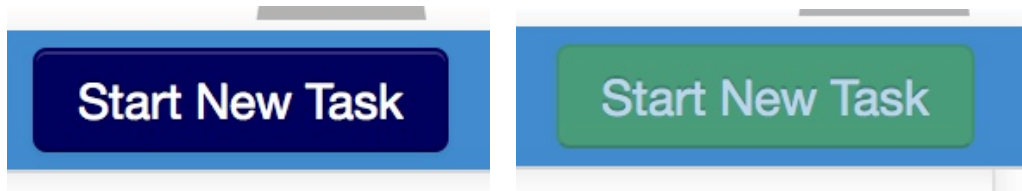
MIT directory search

Suggested tasks

This is a **minor** issue, beyond cosmetic because of the high frequency with which creating a new task is done.

9. New Task Button Always Looks Depressed

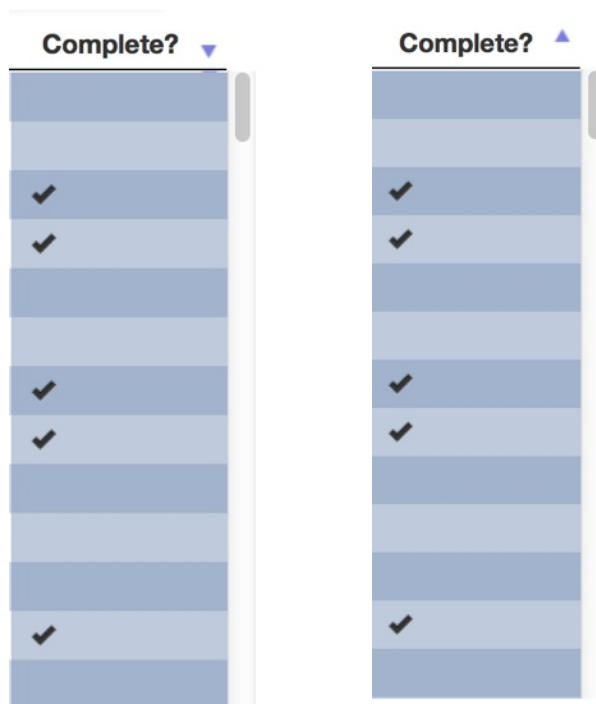
Related to **Affordances** and **Visibility**, the button always looks depressed or disabled. This isn't true, as you *can* click it in the state on the left. Additionally, it is not a prominent part of the interface, where it should be because all tasks must go through this work flow.



This is a **major** issue, due to the frequency with which it would be experienced.

9. Sorting by Completed Doesn't Work

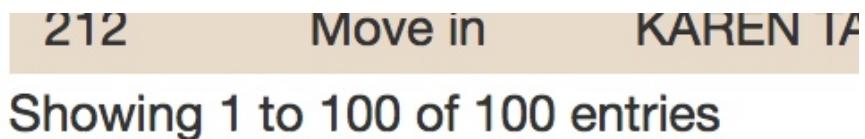
I just think this was an implementation bug and wanted to mention it.



This is a **catastrophic** issue, as this would be very highly used feature.

10. Unclear Status Message

Related to **Visibility of System Status**, the message below the task management table is unclear. It's actually *not* displaying 100 of 100. And 1 to 100 implies it's the first 100, but couldn't it be mixed and matched using search?



This is a **major** issue, due to the frequency with which this message would be read when using this table.

11. Lack of Direct Manipulation of Map

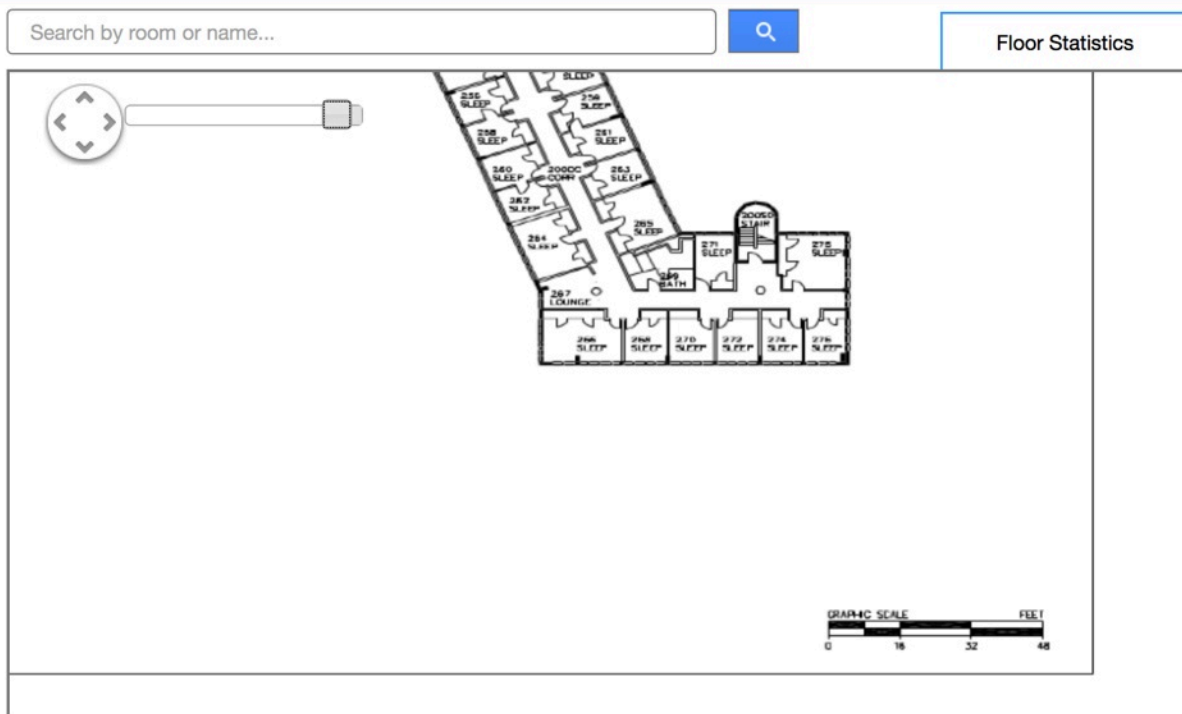
Related to **efficiency**, **user control**, and **natural mapping**, because the map must be panned using those arrows rather than click and drag, it results in poor efficiency for zooming and scrolling to a room. It doesn't allow the user to directly manipulate the image which seems a natural way to interact with the map.



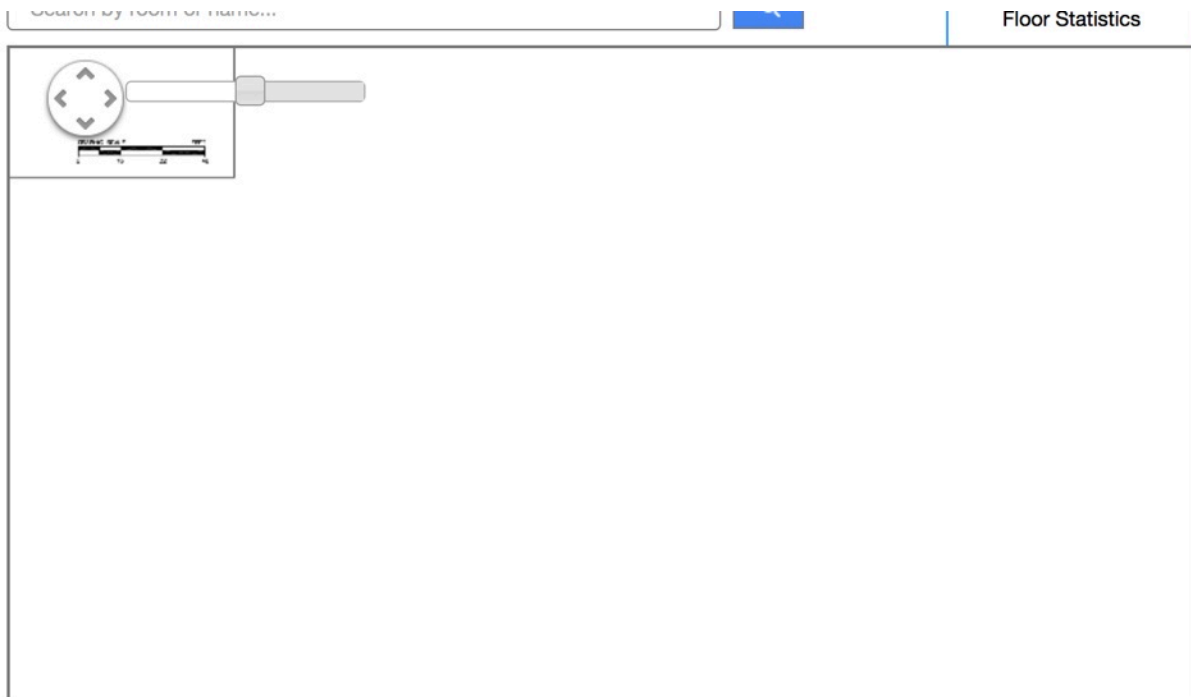
This is a **major** issue.

12. Zooming doesn't zoom to the center of screen

Related to **Error Prevention**, when using the zoom scroll bar, it seems to zoom considering the focus of the picture to be the top left corner, not the center of the screen. This leads to zooming out to nothing.



Zooming out from the above view produces the below view.



13. Small text for floor statistics

Related to **visibility**, the text showing the statistics is very small. Perhaps it should be more prominently displayed in some kind of popup.

Floor Statistics	
Total Rooms	18
Occupied Rooms	15
Bath Rooms	4
GRT Rooms	2
Pending Tasks	3

This is a **cosmetic** issue.

14. Floor buttons

Related to **affordances**, these do not look like buttons that can be pressed as their are no affordances for being able to “push” them.



This is a **cosmetic** issue.

15. Suggested Help Dialog

Related to **help and documentation**, while this is not necessarily a problem with the current interface, it could perhaps be improved with some sort of help dialog. I recommend [intro.js](#).

This is a **minor** issue.

16. No Saving Feedback

Related to **feedback**, when “Save Changes” is clicked, there is no feedback to indicate the save was successful.

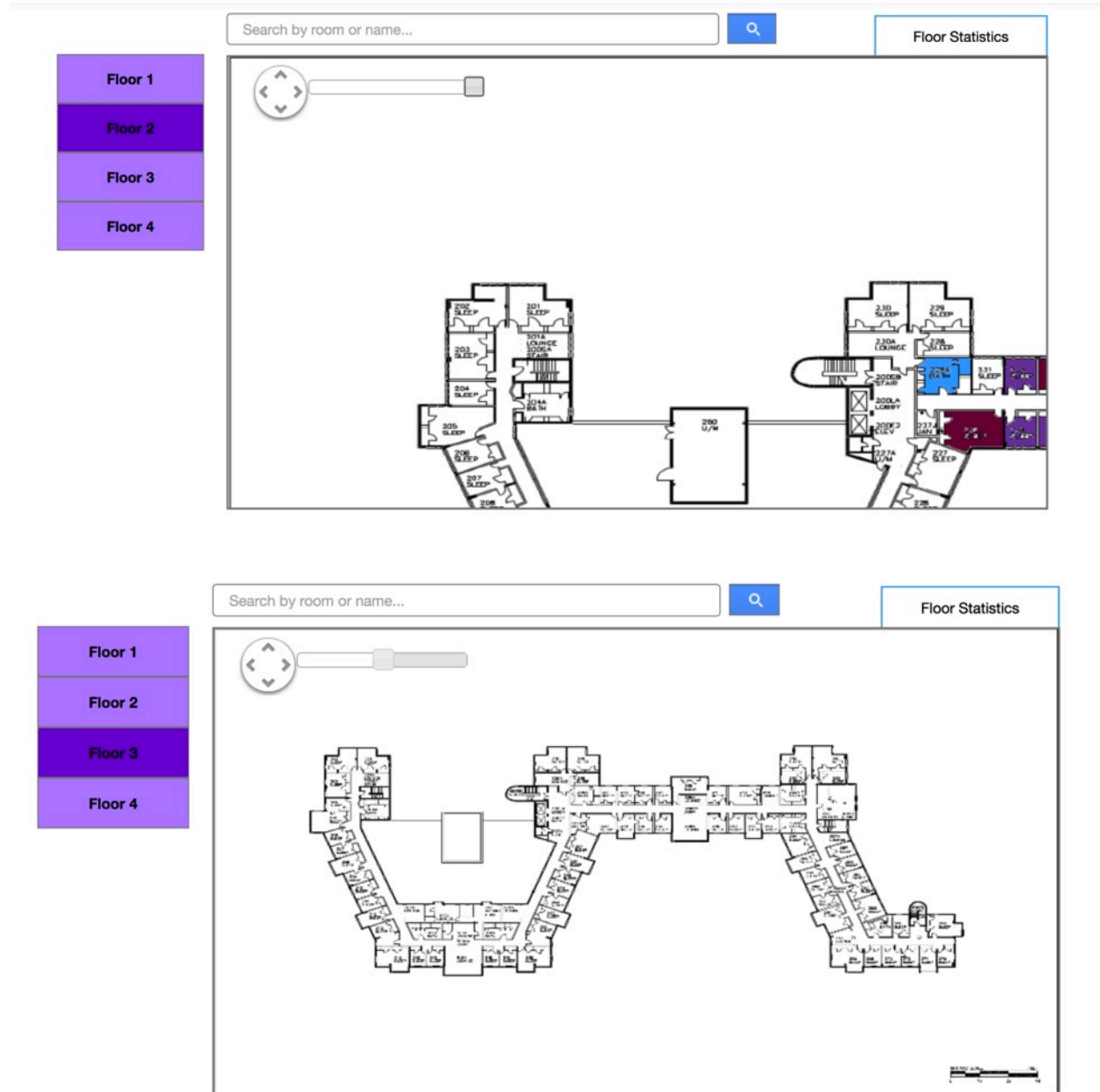


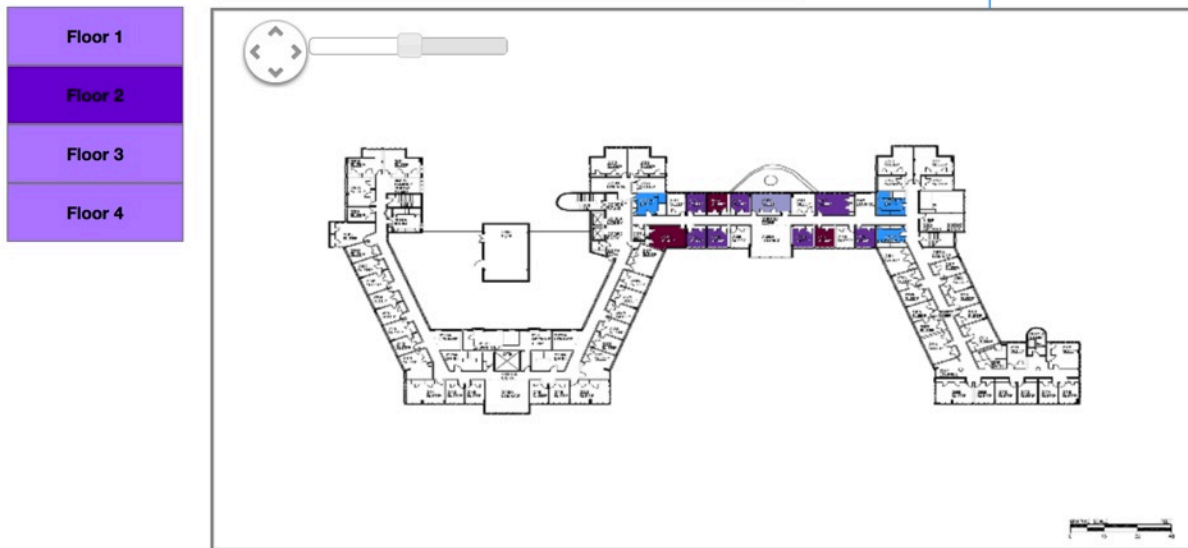
Considering the high frequency with which this happens, I would elevate this from a cosmetic issue to a **major** issue. This could potentially result in lost data if someone thinks they saved but it didn't work.

17. No Preservation of Zoom State

Related to **recovery**, changing between floors does not preserve your zoom state. To recover from accidentally changing floors would be a helpful feature.

See how zooming, selecting another floor, then reselecting the first floor doesn't preserve the state.





This is a **minor** issue.

17. The Map is Great

Related to **mimicking the real world** and **recognition vs. recall**, the map is very helpful in relating to the real world as it directly represents a physical layout. It also allows users to easily see and be reminded of the layout of the floors without having to memorize, or recall, it.

This is **good**. :-)