

6.813: Heuristic Evaluation of VenView

1. Good: Catchy and visually pleasing title (aesthetic & minimalist design)

As shown in Figure 1, the title features a catchy phrase, “Book a Venue. Plan a tour. Become a star.” moreover, the letter “i” in “VenView” is creatively represented by a microphone.

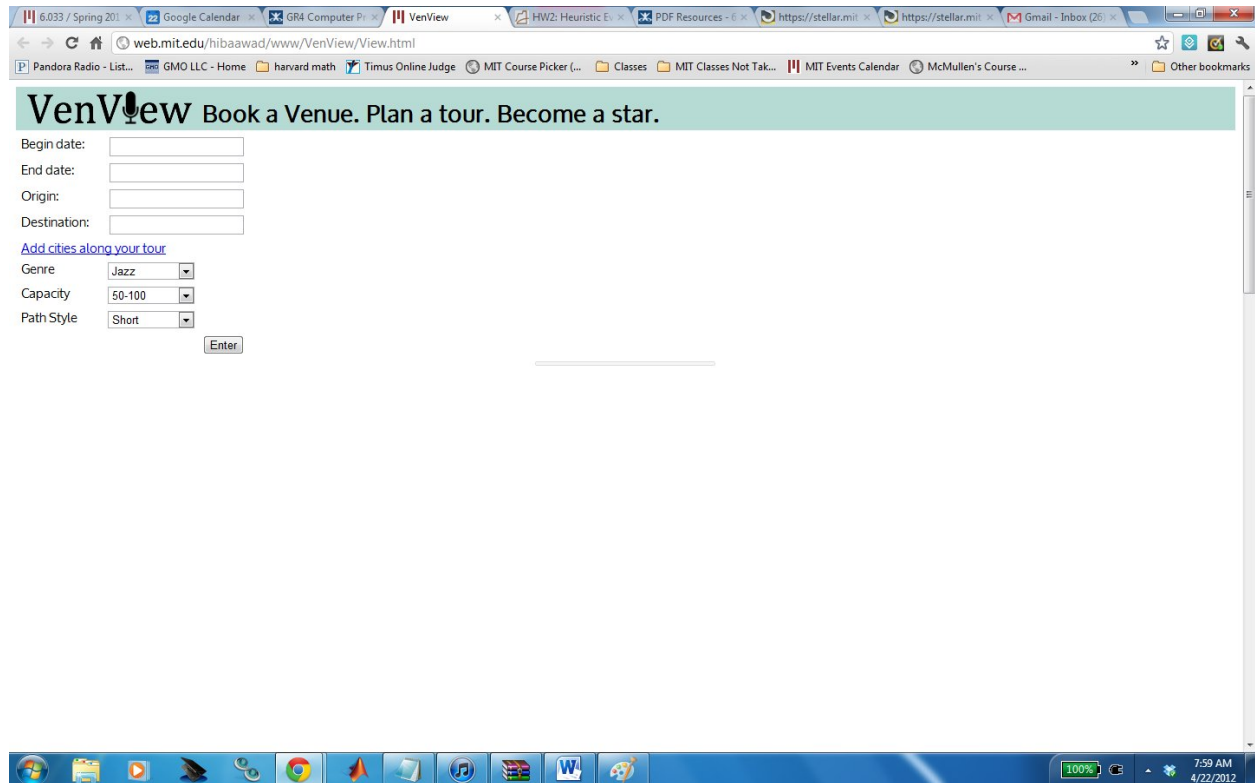


Figure 1 A screen shot of the webpage.

2. Major: Extra white space (aesthetic & minimalist design)

There is too much un-used white space in the right half of the webpage (see Figure 1).

3. Minor: The scrollbar is redundant (aesthetic & minimalist design)

The scrollbar shows up even though everything is within display (see Figure 1).

4. Good: Calendar submenu allows the user to select a date (flexibility & efficiency)

When the user clicks on either one of the date text boxes (“Begin date” or “End date”), a calendar submenu appears (see Figure 2). This calendar allows the user to select a date faster by using a mouse.

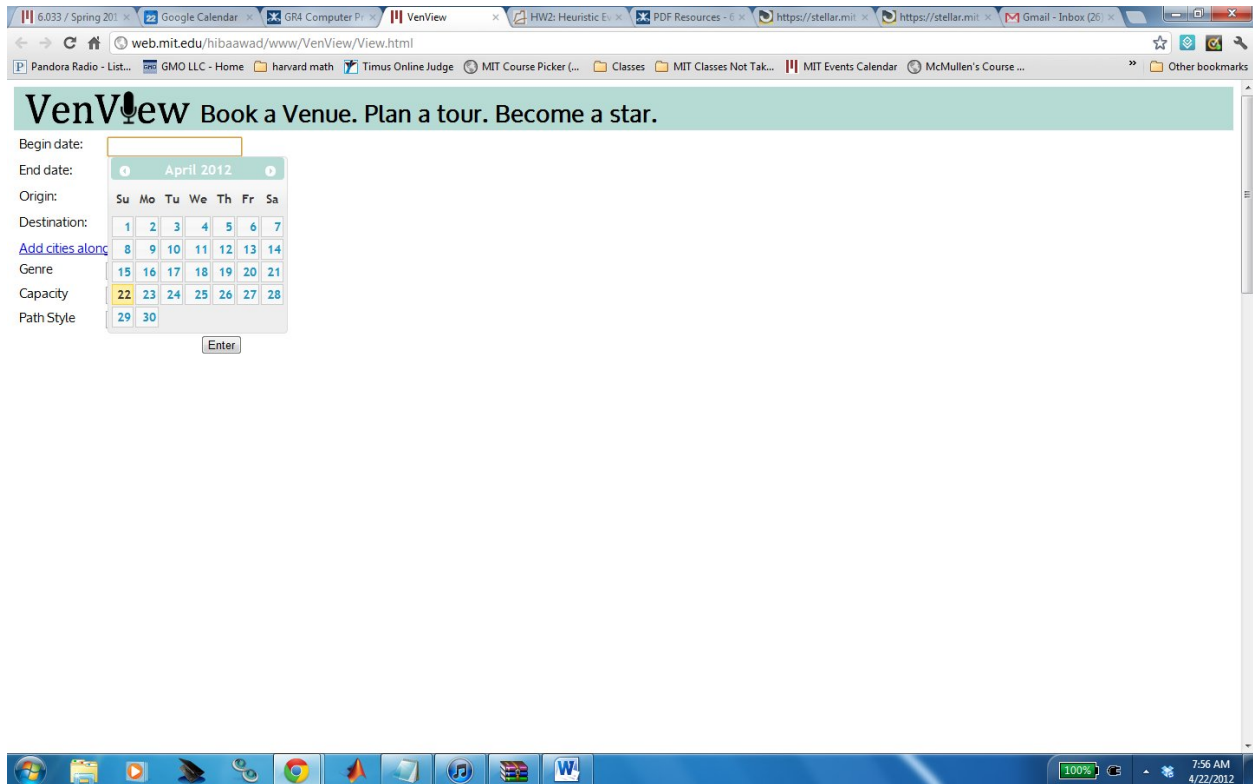


Figure 2 Clicking the date text boxes will bring up a calendar submenu.

5. Major: No auto-completion for the “Origin” and “Destination” text boxes (error prevention)

Having auto-completion here could prevent the users from misspelling the city names. It can also increase the user’s efficiency.

6. Minor: The “Add cities along your tour” button should not be below “Destination” text box (*match the real world*)

This button is best placed between the “Origin” and “Destination” text boxes. This placement matches the fact that all additional cities are in-between the origin and destination cities.

7. Good: text boxes for additional cities are indented (*consistency & standards*)

Each time when the user clicks the “Add cities along your tour” button, a new text box appears between the “Origin” and “Destination” boxes. All these boxes are indented (see Figure 3); this is consistent with the fact that all the corresponding cities are intermediate (along the tour).



Figure 3 The textboxes for additional cities are indented.

8. Major: The attribute “path style” is confusing (match the real world)

I do not understand what “path style” means. Neither the attribute name itself nor the provided choices (see Figure 4) give me any decisive hint. Does this attribute mean the condition of the roads or the intensity of the tour?

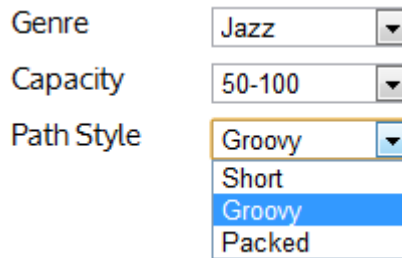


Figure 4 All the choices for the “Path Style” attribute.

9. Minor: The default information is not shown in the text boxes (help & documentation)

If the user clicks the “enter” button without providing any information about the dates and cities, a default map and calendar will show up (see Figure 5). The text boxes, however, are still empty at this point. The more helpful thing to do is to fill the boxes with the default information.

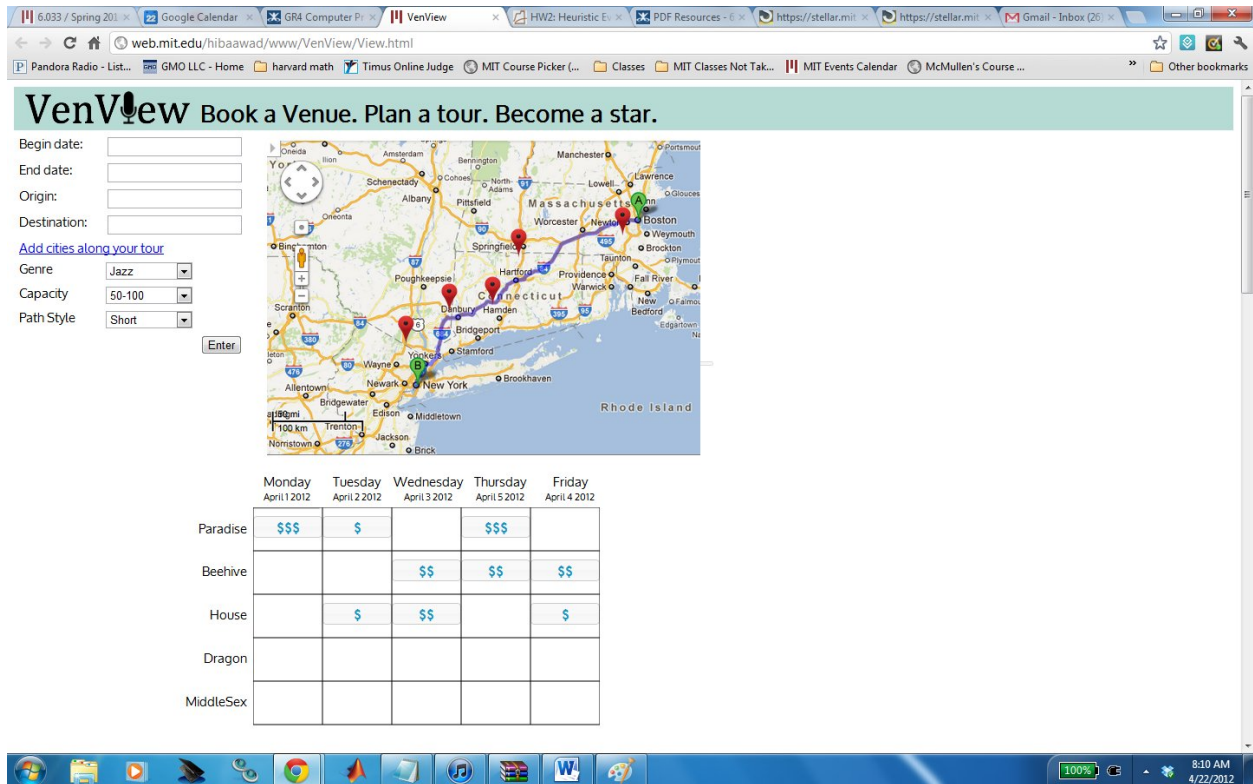


Figure 5 The default information is not shown in the text boxes.

10. Major: No bidirectional association between the map and the venue calendar (recognition, not recall)

When the user hovers over a red dot on the map, the name of the venue shows up (see Figure 6); this way, the map is associated with the calendar. There is no such association the other way around (from the calendar to the map), however. So the only way the user can obtain the location of a venue is to either memorize all the locations or to hover over the red dots one by one.

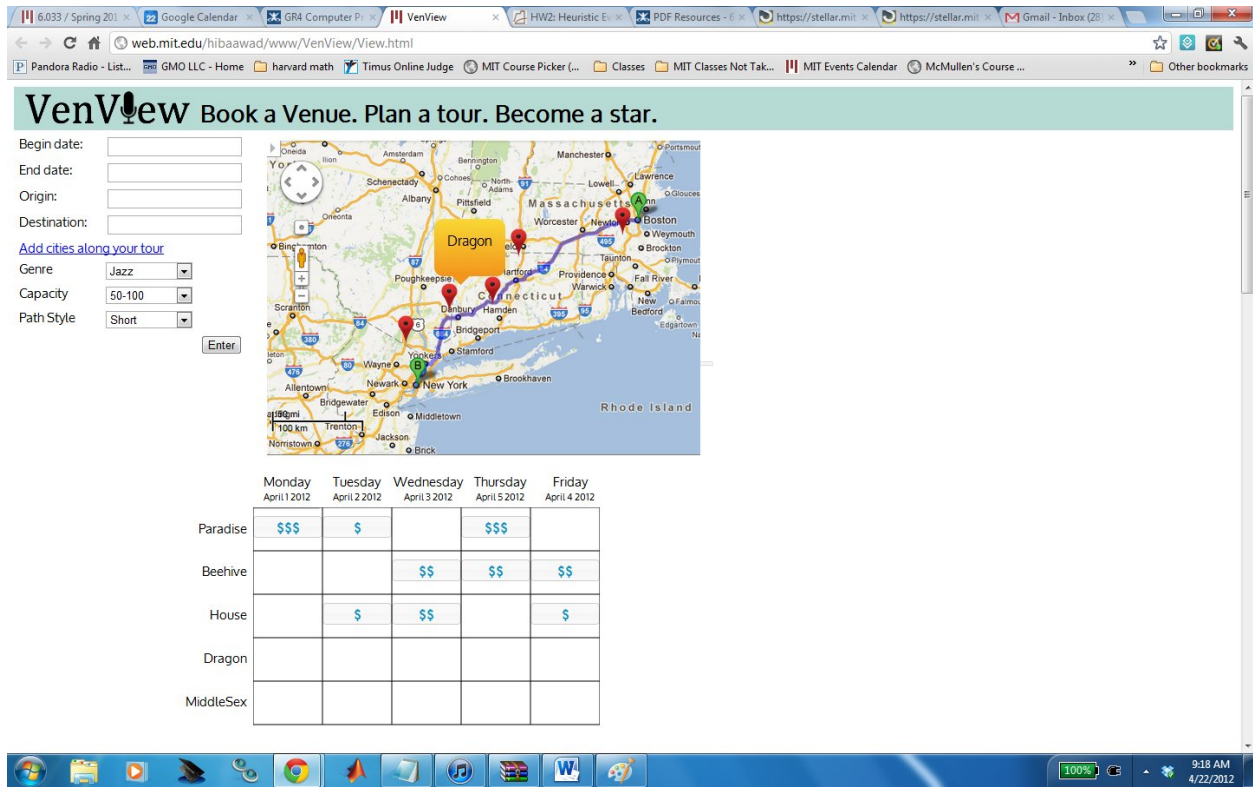


Figure 6 Hovering over a red dot on the map will bring up the name of the venue.

11. Catastrophic: There is no way to get out of the booking mode (user control & freedom)

When the user clicks on a cell in the calendar to book it, he enters the “booking” mode (see Figure 7). There does not seem to be any way out of the mode besides clicking the “book me, click me” button. A better approach is to allow the user to exit the mode if he clicks any white space.

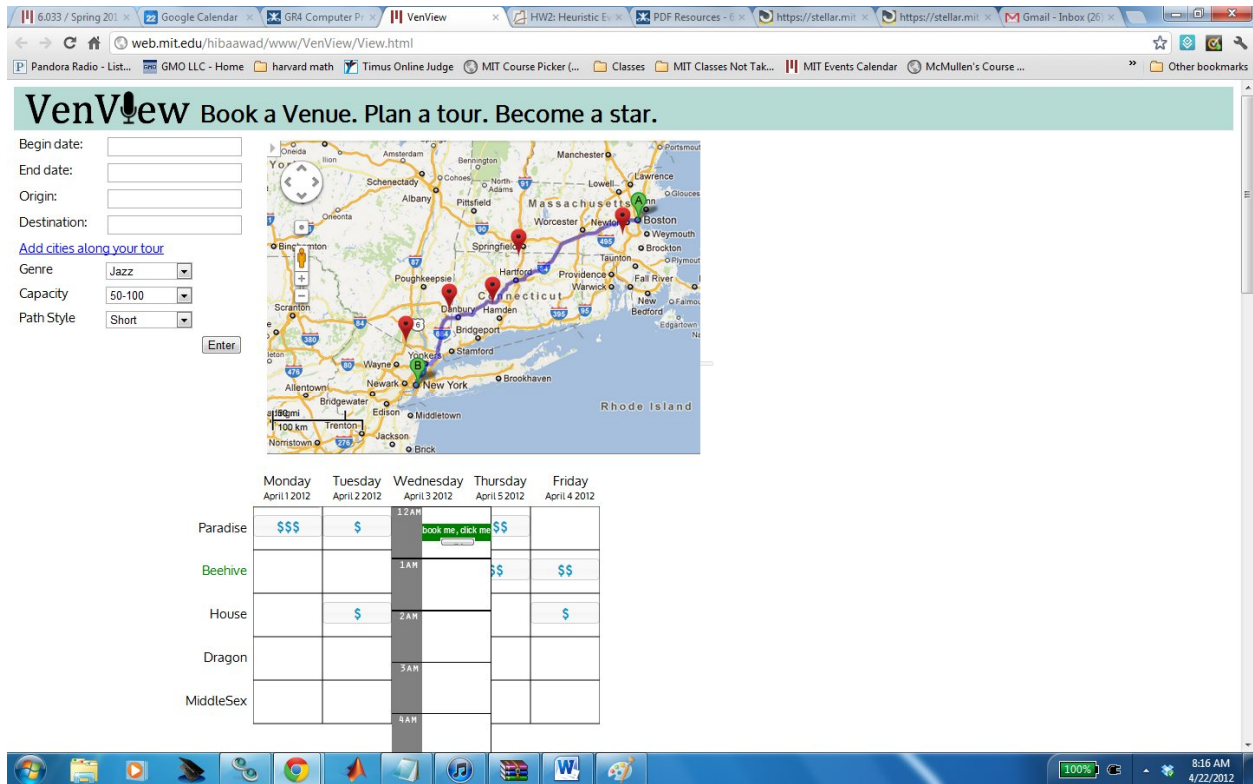


Figure 7 There is no way to exit the booking mode.

12. Major: The “book me, click me” button has different colors for different venues (consistency & standards)

As shown in Figure 8, the button for Paradise is red while the button for Beehive is green. However, because of the “booking” mode issue mentioned above, two buttons of different colors never appear together. Therefore, this color variation is not useful and introduces inconsistency instead.

	Monday April 1 2012	Tuesday April 2 2012	Wednesday April 3 2012	Thursday April 5 2012	Friday April 4 2012
Paradise	\$\$\$	\$		1.2 AM	
Beehive			\$\$	1 AM book me, click me	\$
House		\$	\$\$	2 AM	\$
Dragon				3 AM	
MiddleSex				4 AM	

	Monday April 1 2012	Tuesday April 2 2012	Wednesday April 3 2012	Thursday April 5 2012	Friday April 4 2012
Paradise	\$\$\$	\$		1.2 AM book me, click me	\$\$
Beehive			1 AM		\$\$
House		\$	2 AM		\$
Dragon				3 AM	
MiddleSex				4 AM	

Figure 8 The colors of the “book me, click me” button for Paradise and Beehive are red and green, respectively.

13. Catastrophic: A booked cell is highlighted only temporarily (feedback)

After the user books a cell, the cell becomes highlighted (see Figure 9). However, once the user hovers over the same cell later, it becomes de-highlighted and looks no different from an un-booked cell. The correct implementation should keep booked cells highlighted all the time.

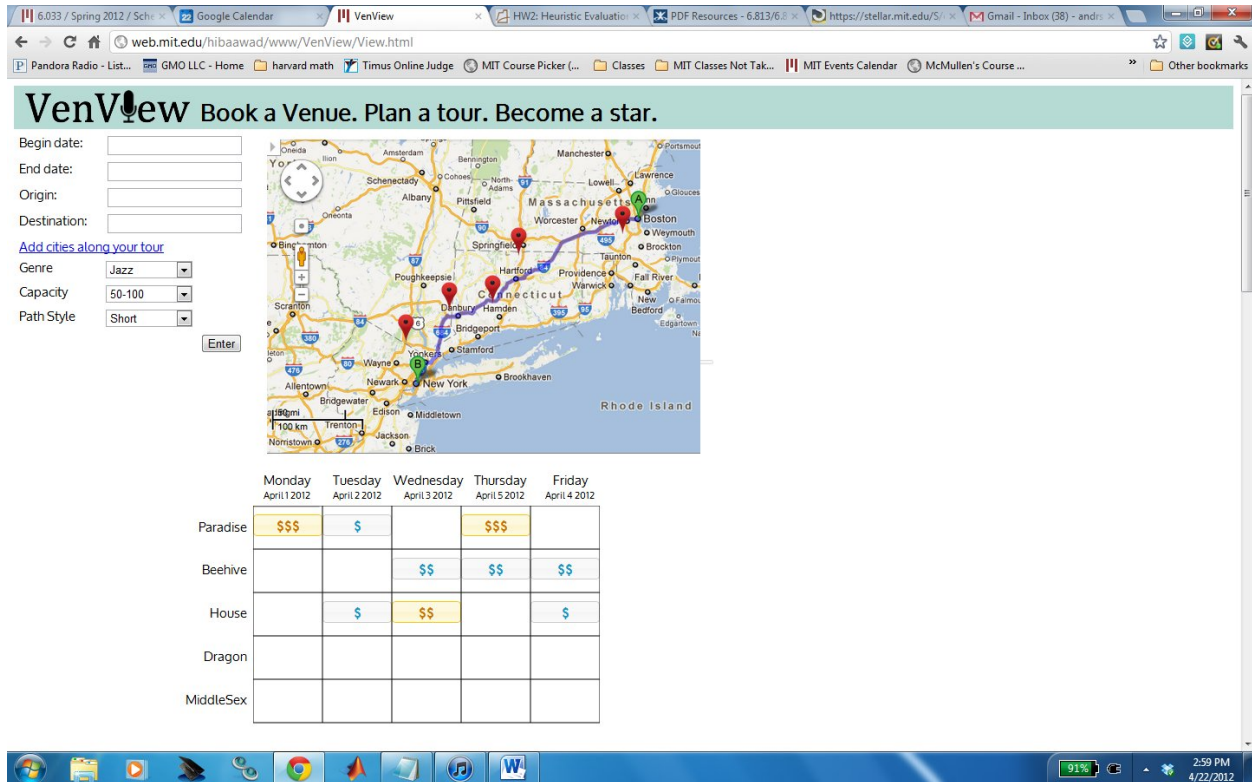


Figure 9 Three booked cells in the calendar are highlighted.

14. Catastrophic: Dates entered in a different format are not handled correctly (*error reporting, diagnosis, and recovery*)

If the user enters a date in the format of year/month/day, the text boxes will not "recognize" the date. Instead, the text boxes automatically set the date to the current date (e.g., 4/22/2012). To improve learnability, there should be some error message to inform the user about the right format, month/day/year.

15. Major: All the cities should be shown on the map as they are being added (*visibility of system status*)

The map only appears after the user has entered all the cities and pressed the "enter" button. It would be much better if the cities can be displayed together on the map as they are being added. There are two benefits in doing this: 1. the system status becomes visible, and 2. the user becomes aware of the relative distance among the cities and might be able to plan the tour better.