

HW2: Heuristic Evaluation (ChildFeed)

Check In/Out

1. It's not clear what action is the "commit point" when changing a child's state from "Checked Out" to "Checked In", or vice versa. Is it when the user drops the label into the appropriate section, or when they click "Ok"? When I drag a label into the "Checked In" area, I receive a notification saying "You just checked in <name>", which implies that the change has been saved; but if that's the case, what does the "Ok" button do?

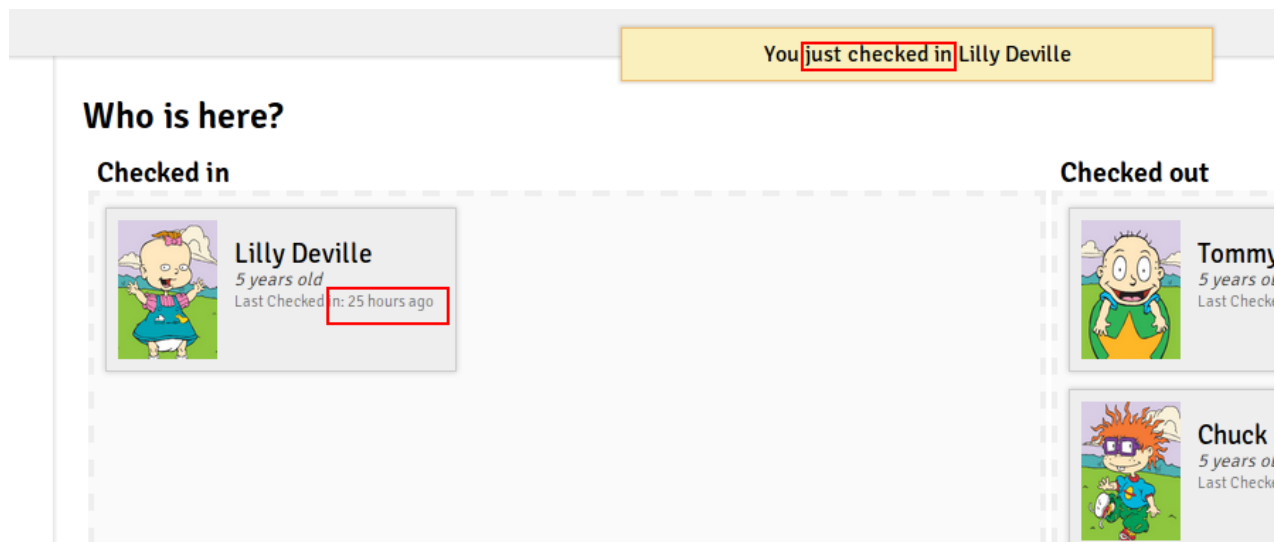
Heuristics: Visibility of System Status, Feedback

Severity: Major

2. When I drag a child label into the "Checked In" box, their "Last Checked In" time does not change. This information conflicts with the pop-up notification.

Heuristic: Visibility of System Status (again, is the child really checked in?)

Severity: Minor



ChildFeed is simultaneously saying that the last time I checked in Lilly was just now, and 25 hours ago.

3. If a large group of children come in at once, the only way to check them in is to drag and drop the labels one by one. Try checking in *all* the Rugrats - it takes longer than I would like. This could get slow, maybe you should provide a way to aggregate the operation, moving multiple children simultaneously. Drag-and-drop is nice for learnability (physical manipulation), but you'll have to balance it with the need for efficiency.

Heuristic: Efficiency

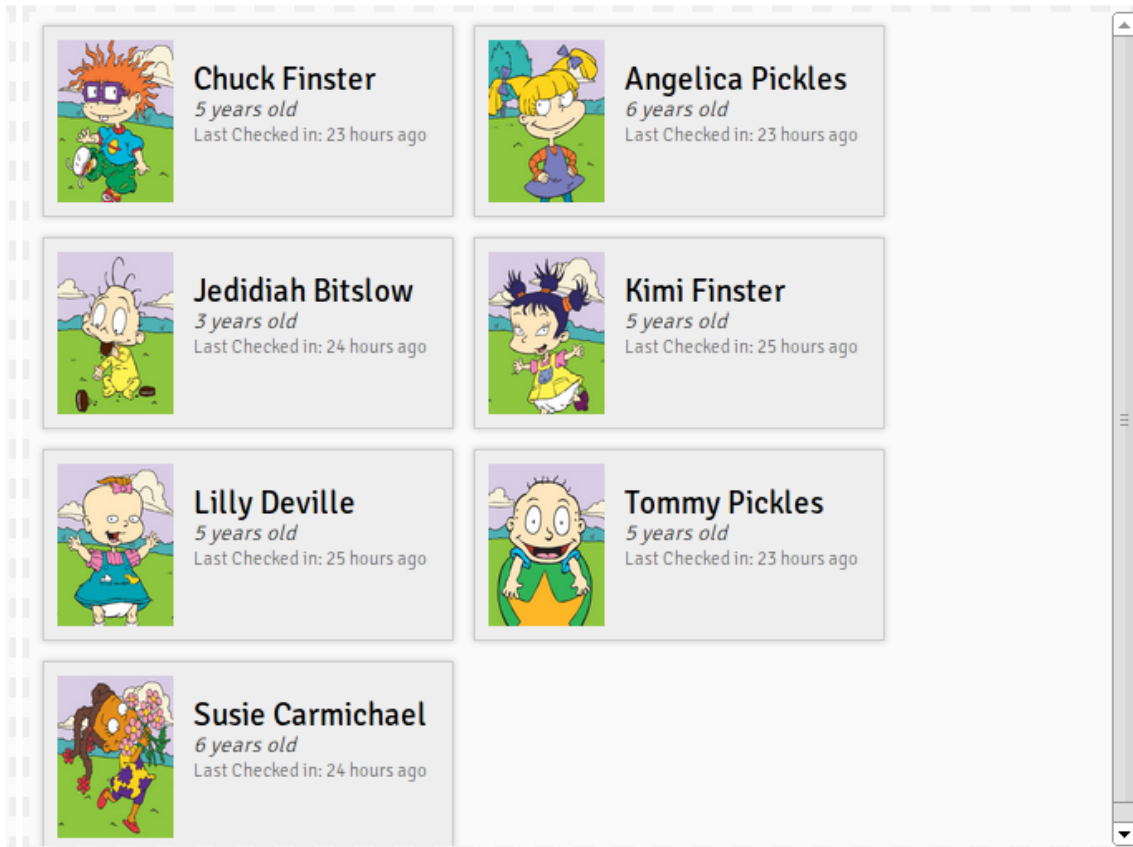
Severity: Major

4. Another scalability issue is finding specific kids in the boxes. It's not a problem here because all the Rugrats fit on the screen, but a larger daycare with 20+ charges might run into issues with scrolling and scanning. The labels don't appear to be in sorted order, and there's no search box. Also, when the number of labels gets large enough that you have to scroll to see them all, it might not be easy to tell whether someone is checked in or out (you'd have to scroll through both boxes, searching manually).

Heuristic: Efficiency, Visibility of System Status

Severity: Major

Checked out



I don't notice any rule used to order the labels. I can't sort them with the mouse either.

Share Story

5. The text box for the body of the story is a bit small, and makes it harder to write long stories. When editing text, users usually want to see as much text as possible to avoid scrolling. The box is resizable (which helps), but it would be better if it resized automatically or was just larger to begin with (there's plenty of room on the screen).

Heuristics: Efficiency, Visibility of System Status (the text that will be published)

Severity: Minor

ChildFeed

Check In/Out

Share Story

Report Lunch

Report Daily Log

Share a Story

Who?

Chuck Finster ×

+

What?

Don't worry, Paul and Patricia, I'll clean him up before you come.

▲

▼

✎

Add Photo

Publish Story


There's a lot of space at the bottom you could use for a bigger textbox.

- The "Who?" textbox provides both autocompletion of terms typed into the box, and a visual selection of names (by clicking on the +); this provides two very convenient ways to pick out names (and the user doesn't have to remember them!). If you could show images in the search box autocomplete (like you do for the +), that would be even nicer.

Heuristics: Flexibility & Efficiency, Recognition, not Recall, Error Prevention

Severity: Good

Share a Story

Who? 

What?



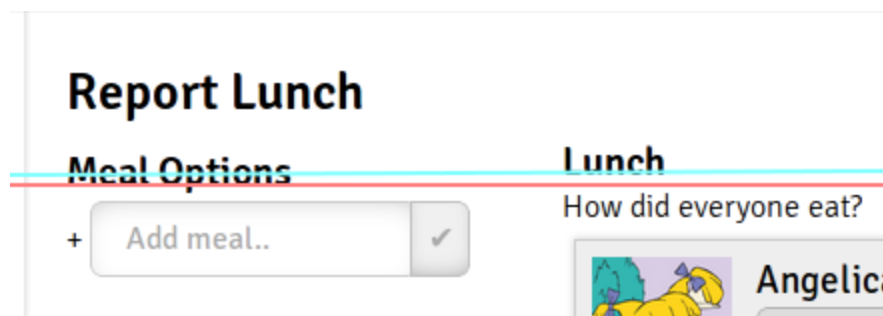
The + popup is great for learnability and efficiency. How will it display larger datasets that don't fit a screen?

Report Lunch

7. "Meal Options" and "Lunch" aren't aligned ("Meal Options" drops down a bit lower), making the page layout appear more complex, inhibiting scannability.

Heuristic: Aesthetics & Minimalist Design

Severity: Cosmetic

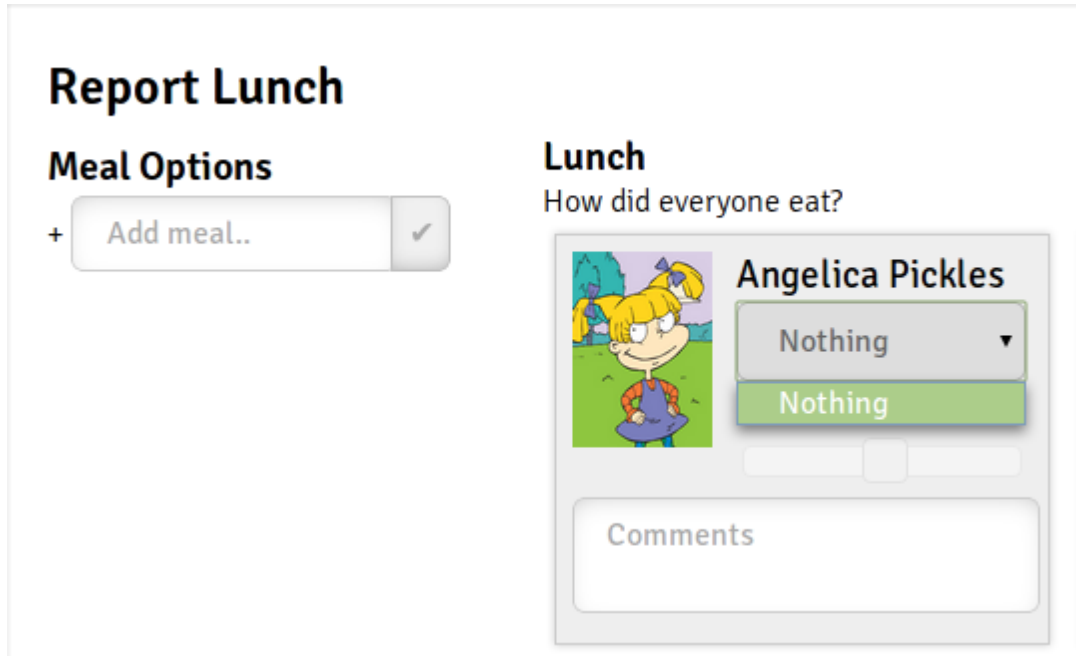


The baselines of "Meal Options" (red) and "Lunch" (blue) are different.

8. When I first opened this page, the first thing I did was go to the drop down menu to select a meal, but the only entry was "Nothing". While I understand that you need the user to add meals before selecting them, I think this should be streamlined more - it took me about a second of looking around before I realized I had to enter something in the "Add meal" textbox. It would help for the drop-down menu to refer me to the "Add meal" box; it might be even better if you combined adding and selecting meals into one input element (perhaps a text box with autocomplete).

Heuristics: Aesthetics & Minimalist Design, Flexibility & Efficiency, Match the real world (on a paper form, you can write down new foods on the fly without first adding them to a word bank)

Severity: Minor



The initial drop-down menu for food choices.

9. Is it really clear that the drop-down menu is supposed to indicate what food the child ate? I could infer it from your writings on the wiki, but I'm not so sure a typical user will realize this immediately. Before foods are added, all they'll see is a drop-down menu with "Nothing" as the only option.

Heuristic: Consistency & Standards (most form elements have labels), Help & Documentation (I got it from the wiki explanations instead of your interface)

Severity: Minor (After adding foods and using the "Fill All" button, it becomes more learnable)

10. The "Submit" button is not left-aligned with any other element in the form, nor is it centered. This makes the page layout appear more complex. The "Daily Log" form's "Submit" button is also oddly placed.

Heuristic: Aesthetics & Minimalist Design

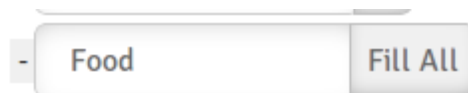
Severity: Cosmetic

The Submit button could be aligned with the leftmost column (the blue line), or centered (currently there's a bit more space on the left than there is on the right in the section right of the blue line)

11. The “Fill All” button, while not strictly necessary, is very useful for aggregating input. I can see this saving a lot of time when most of the kids ate the same thing (Fill All, then update any exceptions).

Heuristic: Flexibility & Efficiency, Error Prevention

Severity: Good



Aggregation of input gets the job done faster and prevents human error.

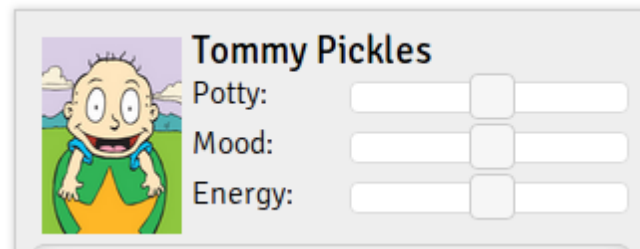
Daily Log

12. You use sliders to set several parameters, including “Mood”, “Energy,” and “How Much [food consumed]?” on the “Report Lunch” form. Sliders are generally used to set continuous numerical data, and there’s an impedance mismatch when using them for qualitative input arranged in discrete steps. I see multiple issues:
 - Users can’t easily tell by looking at the slider what value the input is set to (they have to estimate its distance from the edge or mouseover to get the exact value).
 - The slider doesn’t move continuously with the mouse because the spectrum is discrete.
 - Setting the input to a new value requires moving the mouse through each intermediate value; clicking somewhere in the bar does move the slider there, but it’s hard to tell which value that area corresponds to (again, users have to estimate distance from the edge).

Heuristics: Efficiency, Error Prevention (jumping to a setting is inaccurate), Match the real world (real sliders are continuous), Consistency & Standards (most other interfaces use (discrete) radio buttons for this type of input), Visibility of System Status

Severity: Major (this interface component performs the necessary functions, but it’s the

one I like the least).

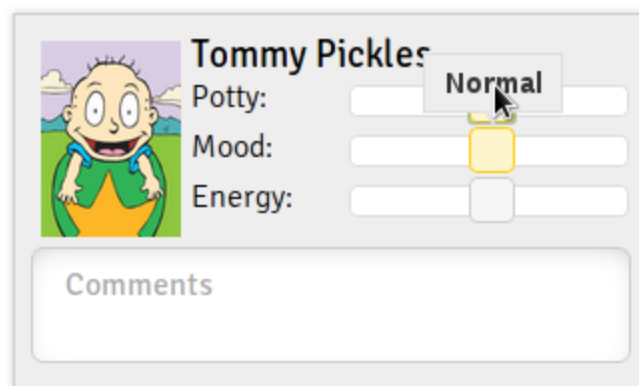


Describing Tommy's state with sliders has several issues as mentioned above.

13. The slider tooltips help by showing system state, but they have an issue of their own. If two sliders are vertically aligned, and I try to slide the top one (but my mouse passes over the bottom one on the way there), the bottom slider's tooltip obscures the top slider (see diagram), and clicking and dragging the mouse moves the bottom slider, not the top one. I have to move my mouse off the tooltip and wait for it to disappear before I can slide the top slider.

Heuristics: Efficiency, Error prevention

Severity: Minor



The "Mood" slider tooltip interferes with my attempt to slide the "Potty" slider.

All Pages

14. There's a navbar on the left side of the screen allowing the user to jump between pages. It's nice that a rectangular region around the box is clickable, but you could have done an even better job of optimizing for Fitts' Law by making the rectangle extend all the way to the left side of the window (see diagram) - this would make it impossible to overshoot horizontally and the user would only have to worry about overshooting vertically.

Heuristics: Flexibility & Efficiency, Error prevention (forgive overshooting)

Severity: Cosmetic (it's already fairly easy to aim the mouse, this just makes it easier).

ChildFeed

Check In/Out

Share Story

Report Lunch

Report Daily Log

My mouse is aiming at the “Check In/Out” link, but it’s not clickable because I overshooted. I can’t go to the edge of the screen.

15. I like your color choices (mostly grayscale, except for the images). They draw user attention towards the data, and away from mundane interface components; an effective use of contrast to focus users.

Heuristics: Aesthetics & Minimalist design, Visibility of system status (you don’t want the UI to draw attention away from important data!)

Severity: Good

16. You omitted Undo/Redo functionality in these pages: “Check In/Out”, “Report Lunch”, and “Report Daily Log”. I realize this is a shallow prototype (and thanks for clarifying that they weren’t in the interface in your wiki page), but GR4 asked you to include *every* feature that your scenario needs, and Undo/Redo are very important components of data entry interfaces, so I feel like they should have been present. They would also have clarified my “commit point” question from note 1. You could have done 3 tasks instead of 4, if you needed more time.

Heuristics: Error prevention, Error recovery, User control & freedom

Severity: Major