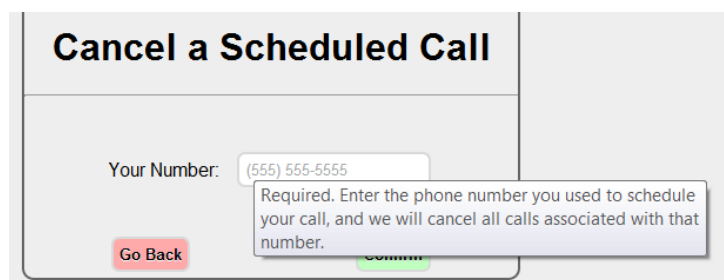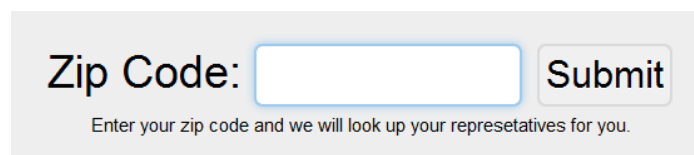Sarah Cheng

4/22/12

6.813

Heuristic Evaluation: Expect Us

I tested Expect Us in Chrome. The following are my comments on the interface, first the negative then the positive.
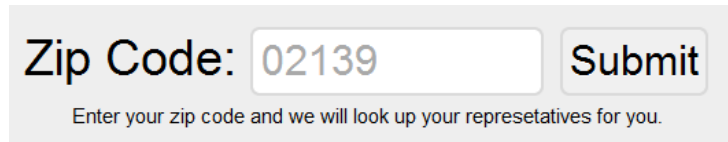
1. Major – "Cancel a scheduled call" cancels *all* calls instead of a single call. The actual behavior is too hidden, as it is only indicated in the tooltips and in the dialog box after confirmation. (error prevention)

2. Major – There is no way to see your scheduled calls. This feature is necessary not only for the user to remember her appointments, but also for her to make sure they have the correct information. (visibility of system status, error prevention, error diagnosis)

3. Cosmetic – The default zip code does not appear until after the textbox loses focus. This reduces its usefulness for learnability and is not consistent with the rest of the site. (internal consistency, learnability)

4. Minor – The default zip code is not usable. It seemed like the default was taken from my current location. Whether that is the case or not, the user should be able to just press "Enter" to use the default zip code. (efficiency, standards)
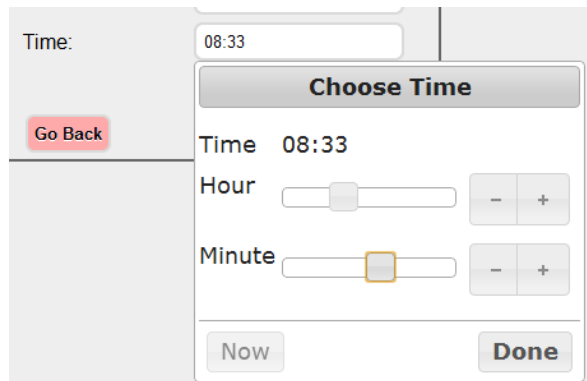

5. Cosmetic – The names of congressmen are too small. They should stand out a bit more – perhaps try a larger font and/or bold. (graphic design)
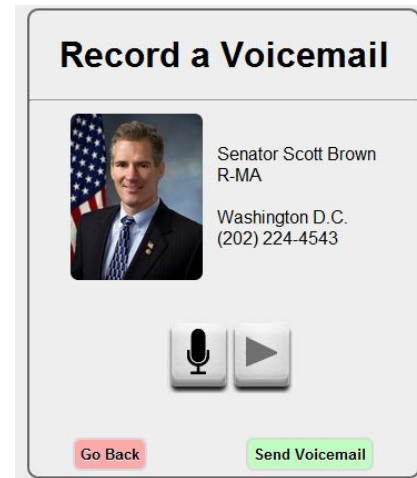

6. Cosmetic – Selecting the time is too complicated. While it's nice to give users freedom, the number of ways to change the time here is unnecessarily large. Its busy appearance makes it daunting to learn. Since you already have automatic formatting in the textbox, perhaps you can just let the user type in a time (with some indication that you use the 24-hour system). (simplicity, learnability)
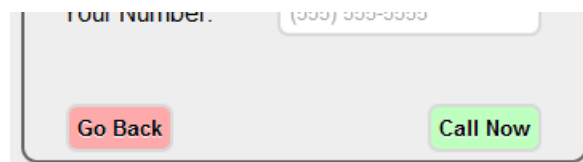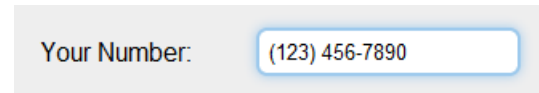
7. Minor – "Send Voicemail" should not work if nothing was recorded. You should not let the user send empty messages. You can disable this button whenever the play button is disabled. (error prevention)

8. Cosmetic – There is no visual feedback for the volume of the voicemail or the microphone. This would be an easy way to be sure your message is being correctly recorded by the site. (visibility of system status, feedback)

9. Cosmetic – There is no visual feedback for the length of recorded voicemail. To match other audio playback interfaces, there should be a line with an icon that moves across it when the user presses play. (external consistency, visibility of system status, feedback)

10. Good – Colored buttons, especially the green and red ones, decrease the user's likelihood of pressing the wrong one. Though this feature does not help those who are red-green colorblind, the absence of this feature does not detract from the usability of the interface, and changing the colors would make them less useful for users who are not red-green colorblind. (match the real world, error prevention)
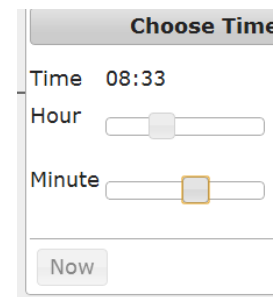
11. Good – Automatic formatting tells the user exactly what information is expected and prevents her from giving the wrong amount or type of information. (learnability, internal & external consistency, efficiency, error prevention)
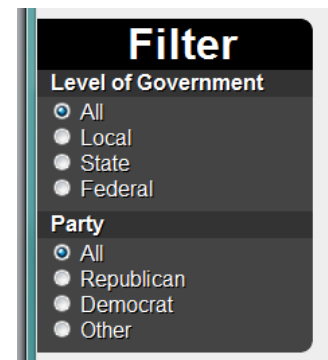

12. Good – The congressman profiles give the user just enough information in a way that is consistent with the external world. For example, "D – MA" is common shorthand for a Democrat from Massachusetts. (match the real world, minimalist design)

13. Good – When selecting a time, the "Now" button inserts the current time. This is a clever way of greatly increasing efficiency. (efficiency)

14. Good – The policy maker filters are a highly visible and convenient way for the user to control the content of their results. (user control)

15. Good – Clicking on the title ("Expect Us")

returns the user to the home screen. This is a

much-appreciated and useful shortcut to restart

this application. (standards, shortcuts)

16. Good – The tooltips that appear for every textbox are short and helpful. (learnability, help

& documentation, standards)