HW2: Heuristic Evaluation of menu.io

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Problems:

1. First page doesn't do anything except determine your current location, and doesn't search for restaurants near that location until you click. Unless there's going to be an option to look for restaurants in other locations (which I think there should be, for trip planning purposes), the searching should be done automatically. Flexibility and Efficiency. Major.
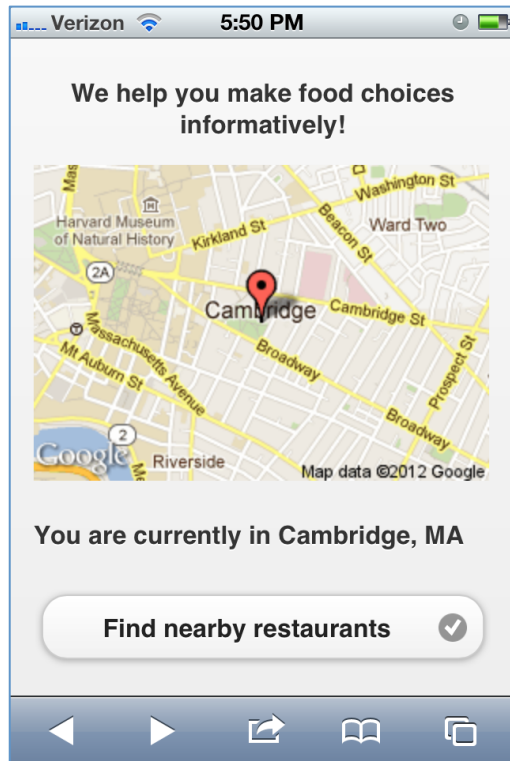

Figure 1. First screen offers only one option and does nothing until user selects it.

2. On restaurant selection page, the search box isn't either at the bottom of the list of restaurants or at the bottom of the page, but just hovering in the middle. See Figure 2. Aesthetics and minimalist design. Cosmetic.

3. The search box says "Search for a Restaurant." Your wiki page says you can search for a restaurant by name, but users might think they're able to search for a genre of food as well. "Search for a Restaurant By Name" would still fit in the search box, at least on my phone. See Figure 2. Help and Documentation. Minor.
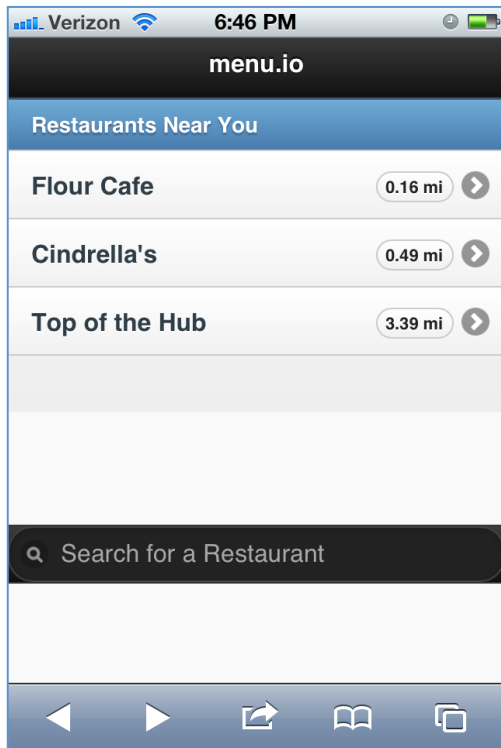
Figure 2. Restaurant listing and search interface.

4. You can't tell which filters are applied from the homepage without scrolling through the filter list. In Figure 3, "Nut Allergies" is selected but you can't tell. Maybe the list could re-sort so that all active filters are at the left of the list. Visibility of system status. Major.

5. Gray color on filter items could make them appear inactive and unclickable instead of not currently selected (Figure 3). Consistency and Standards. Cosmetic.
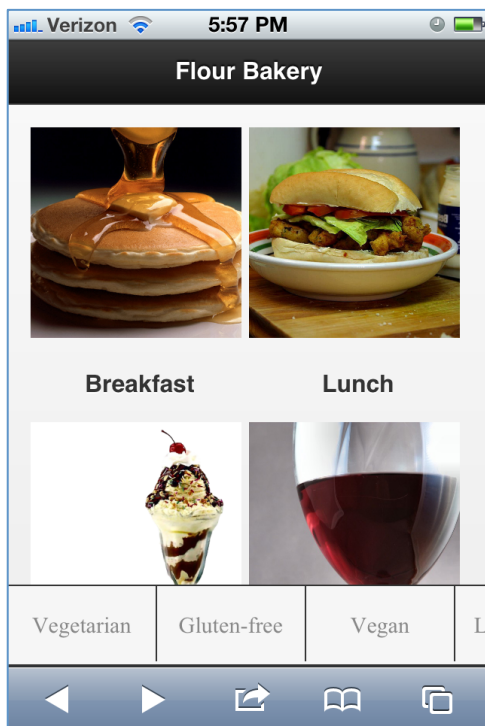

Figure 3. Restaurant menu categories and filtering options.

6. The interface for flipping through the menu items (Figure 4), with the plus and minus sign to advance through the items, looks more like a volume control. Maybe use < and > instead of – and +. Consistency and standards. Cosmetic.

7. I'm not sure how the flipping interface (Figure 4) would display with more menu items than you could fit little squares across the screen, but I don't imagine that being anything good. If it expands into multiple rows, then it violates Aesthetics and Minimalist Design. If it makes you scroll across the flipping interface to see more options, then you lose Flexibility and Efficiency since the user can no longer click on arbitrary menu items. Not sure about the severity since I can't actually see the behavior.

8. Users can only see the information for one menu item at a time, with the full information visible. Users must page through the full information for each item to see the entire menu (Figure 4), since there isn't a mode that lets users skim through many options. User Control and Freedom, Flexibility and Efficiency, Match the real world (isn't like paper menus). For more realistic menus with lots of things in each category, I would say this is a catastrophic issue.

9. The flipping interface and the item description both obscure part of the picture of the food (Figure 4). Aesthetics and minimalist design. Cosmetic.
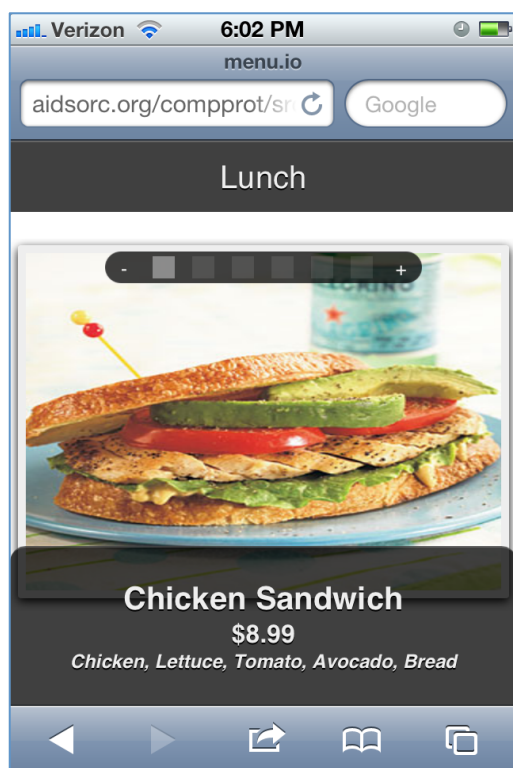

Figure 4. Interface to view all food items in a menu category.

10. The text that shows you what options you have selected (Figure 5) might not be meaningful to average users. "Filters activated: Vegetarian" is pretty technical, and might even confuse people into thinking you're filtering out vegetarian options instead of filtering out meat. Help and Documentation. Minor.

11. It's inconvenient that if, for instance, you want to look at all the low-calorie vegetarian options and then just vegetarian options, you have to go back to the restaurant's home page to change your filtering selections. Flexibility and Efficiency. Minor.
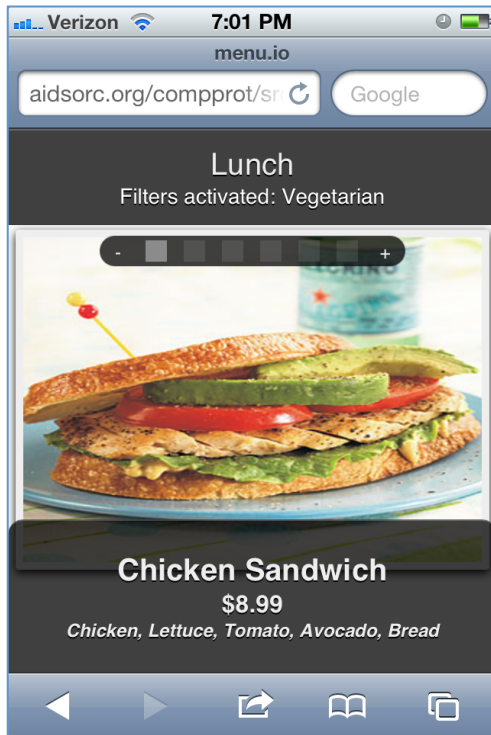

Figure 5. Menu category interface with an active filter.

12. When food has an especially long description, the description gets higher on the page and obscures part of the food's picture (Figure 6) instead of making the user scroll down or click something to see it. Aesthetics and minimalist design. Major, since the whole picture could be obscured by especially long descriptions.
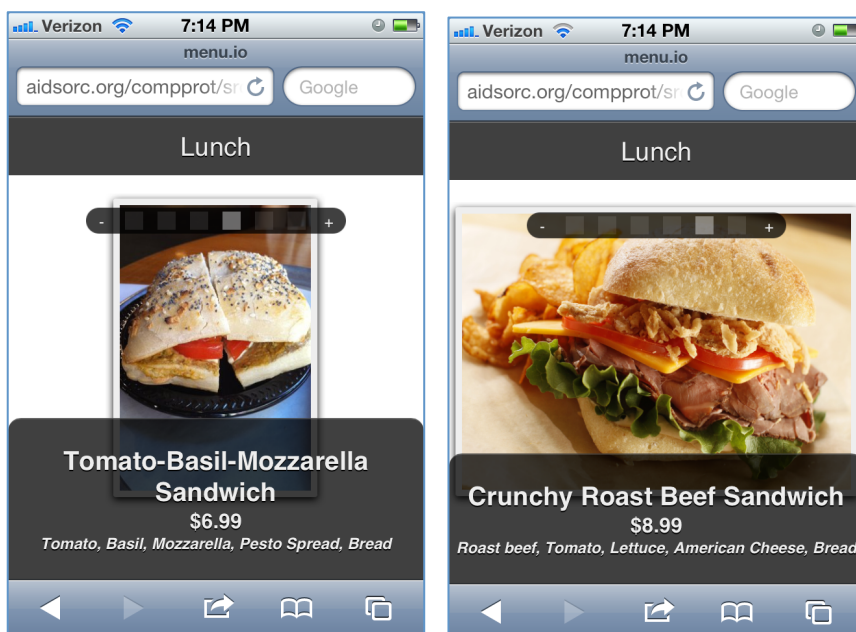

Figure 6. The longer the food's description is, the more the picture is obscured.

Good Things:

13. Partial visibility of additional filters and menu categories on the page means that users know there are more options for them to scroll through (Figure 3). Visibility of system status.

14. Listing of restaurants in order by distance, with the distance listed provides good information transfer. (Figure 2).

15. You can flip through menu options (Figure 4) using the standard side-swipe touchscreen interface as well as the app's own flipping interface. Consistency and Standards .