

Homework 2: Heuristic Evaluation of “Household Dashboard”

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(Collaborators: None)

1. Simple Overall Design

Heuristic: Aesthetic and Minimalist Design, Efficiency
Severity: Good

The overall design is aesthetically simple so that the user action flow is simple and clean, without having to do anything extraneous. The consistent visual metaphor and explicit visual highlighted cues aid in the user’s ability to quickly pick things up. There’s also enough contrast between the to-do list, the cork background, and individual items so that the user can easily make sense of the application.

2. Cannot Edit To-Do List Items

Heuristic: Safety, Reversible Action, User Control and Freedom
Severity: Major (Negative)

Once a task is added to the To-Do list, you cannot edit what the task is or its due date. Giving more control to the user who has added the task to the To-Do list will give the application overall flexibility; therefore, it can adjust to changing deadlines for tasks or allow for correction of user mistakes.

3. Cannot Delete To-Do List Items

Heuristic: Safety, Reversible Action, User Control and Freedom
Severity: Major (Negative)

Once a task is added to the To-Do list, you cannot delete the task from the list. Giving the user who added the task more control so that they can delete the task if they so wish would allow for preventing erroneous tasks from being added to the list, and also allow for a user to recover from mistakes.

4. Cannot Enter Empty Task

Heuristic: Safety, Error Prevention
Severity: Good



A user cannot add an empty task to the To-Do list: if a user hits enter without entering a task name, the text “Enter Task Name” will appear in red in the text input (as shown above). In this way, the application prevents users from making the error of adding an empty task, and also provides visual feedback to the user so that they know what kind of mistake they’re making.

5. Cork Bulletin Board Metaphor

Heuristic: Learnability, Match the Real World
Severity: Good

The application puts on the appearance of a communal Cork Bulletin board, which allows for the users to quickly get accustomed to how the interface works. This is conveyed through the cork background, the use of cues like sticky notes, bulletin pins, etc. The only issue with this metaphor is that staring at the cork background can be tiring (the cork design itself is pretty busy to look at), even though it does provide a great contrast to everything else that is on the interface.

6. No Confirmation Dialogs Regarding To-Do Items

Heuristic: Feedback, Safety, Error Prevention
Severity: Minor (Negative)

When a user adds an item to the To-Do list, there is no sort of feedback or confirmation dialogue that the item was added to the bottom of the list. There is also no kind of confirmation when a task is assigned to a particular user or when it is assigned a particular status (although if you look at the list, there is visual feedback in terms of the user picture appearing and the highlighted color of the item changing).

7. Color Highlighting of To-Do List Items

Heuristic: Efficiency, Track State, Visibility of System Status
Severity: Good

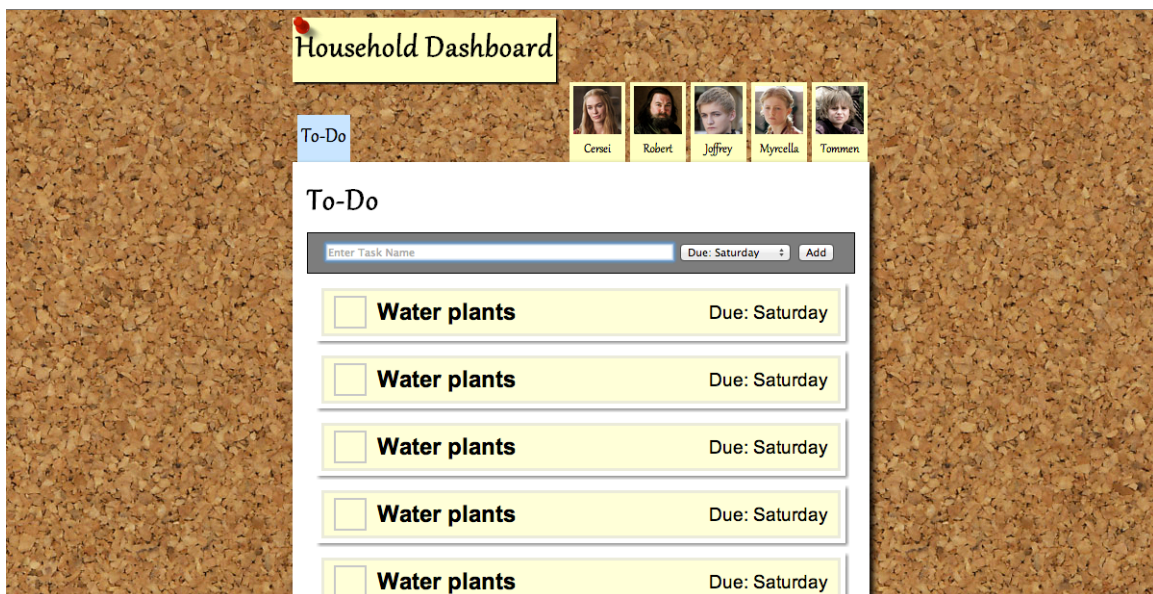


Highlighted colors give great visual cues to the user as to the complete/assign status of each item. This aids in efficiency, as the user does not have to read the status of each item to know whether it is complete, being worked on, or up for claiming. There is some consistency that aids in learnability where green is used to highlight completed items.

8. Can Add Same To-Do List Item Multiple Times

Heuristic: Safety, Error Prevention

Severity: Minor (Negative)



The same task with the same due date can be added to the To-Do list—which brings a great deal of confusion as the interface can allow for multiple users to claim the same task at once.

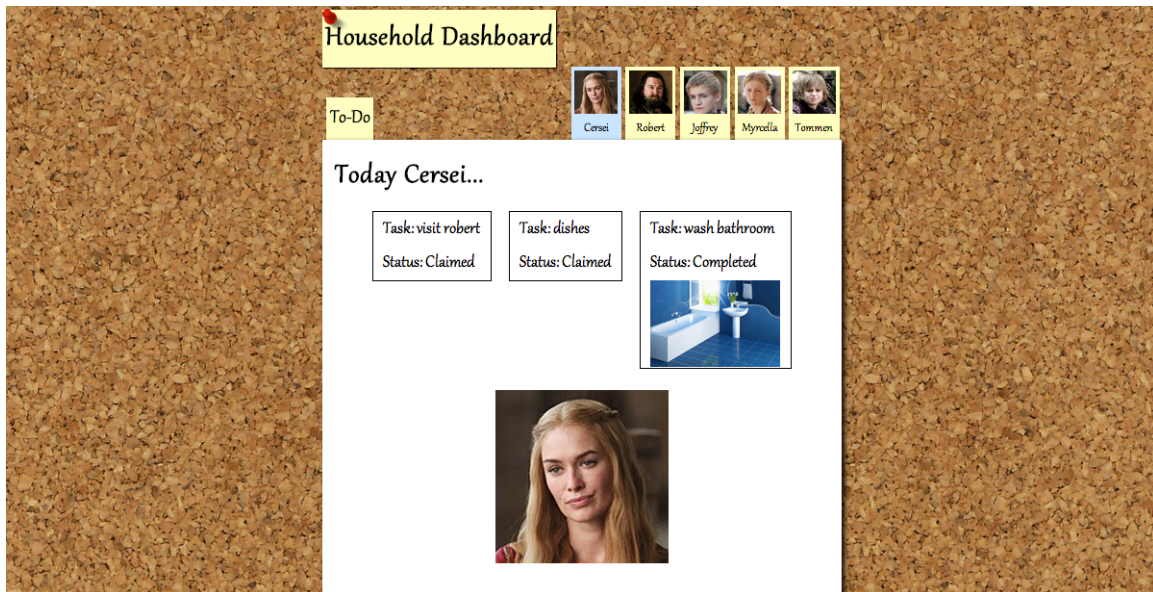
9. Overwrite Claimed Task with Different User Claim

Heuristic: Safety, Protect User's Work
Severity: Major/Minor (Negative)

Even if a particular user claims a task, the task can be easily overwritten and another user can claim it. This will be confusing, as it can be hard to keep track of who is working on what task if users can overwrite tasks in this way.

10. No Sense of Hierarchy on User Page

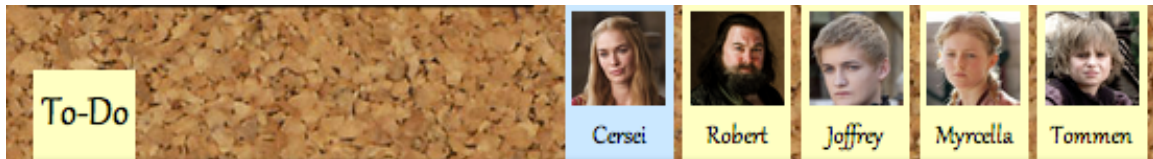
Heuristic: Graphic Design, Readability
Severity: Cosmetic (Negative)



It seems to lack external consistency to have the profile picture in the bottom middle, where it is usually expected to be at the top of the page (usually the top center, or top left of a page). There also does not appear to be any kind of organization or sorting of the tasks on a user page (whether by status, or by deadline).

11. Tabs Highlight Current View

Heuristic: Safety, Error Prevention
Severity: Good

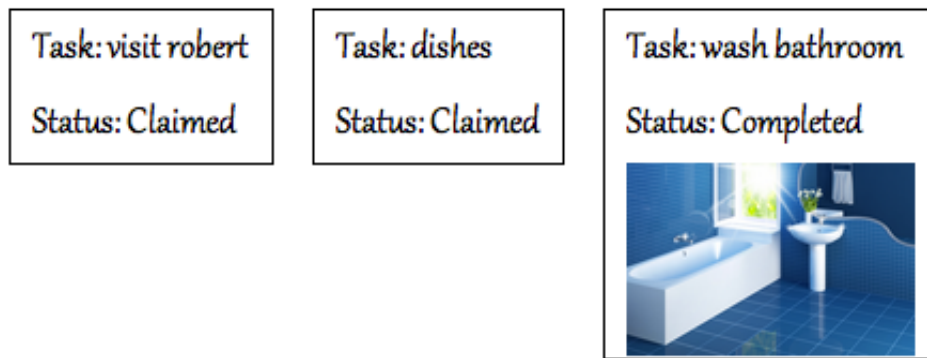


As shown in the above screenshot, the tabs (which look like sticky notes) are highlighted in light blue so that a user knows which view they are currently on in the interface. In this way, it provides a visual cue so that a user cannot confuse user profiles with each other.

12. Inconsistency with Item Pictures on User Page

Heuristic: Learnability

Severity: Cosmetic (Negative)



There is a lack of internal consistency in that it looks as if some user items have pictures of the tasks, while others don't. It may be that only completed items have pictures, but that is not immediately obvious and it is not clear from the interface why that is.

13. Cannot Undo User Assignments

Heuristic: Safety, Reversible Action

Severity: Major (Negative)

Once a user is assigned to a task, there is no way to undo this assignment so that a user is no assigned and the task is once again "unclaimed." You can only overwrite a claimed task so that a different user claims it; however, there is no way in the interface to make the same task "unclaimed" again unless you add the task again to the To-Do list.

14. Empty Box of Unassigned To-Do Tasks is Confusing

Heuristic: Learnability

Severity: Minor (Negative)



Currently, when you mouse over a task and it changes to a hand, it is clear that the item is clickable. However, the empty box next to the task name “Water the plants” makes the box in the task item look like a check box, as one might associate with a To-Do list. Instead when a user clicks the box it brings a pop up to assign a user to claim the task—only once the task is claimed, is it clear that the box is meant to showcase that user’s profile pic.

15. To-Do Task Text Not Resizable

Heuristic: Consistency, Readability

Severity: Cosmetic (Negative)



The window for the text does not appear to be resizable or adjustable, so when one enters the name for a task that is too long, it overwrites the due date or completion status of the task. This creates inconsistency and affects the general readability of the To-Do list.