

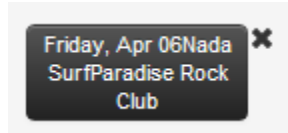
Heuristic Evaluation for ConcertBOS

by Robin Cheng

Thumbs-up #1: User can freely manipulate items in the interest list

Category: Safety

Heuristic: User control & freedom

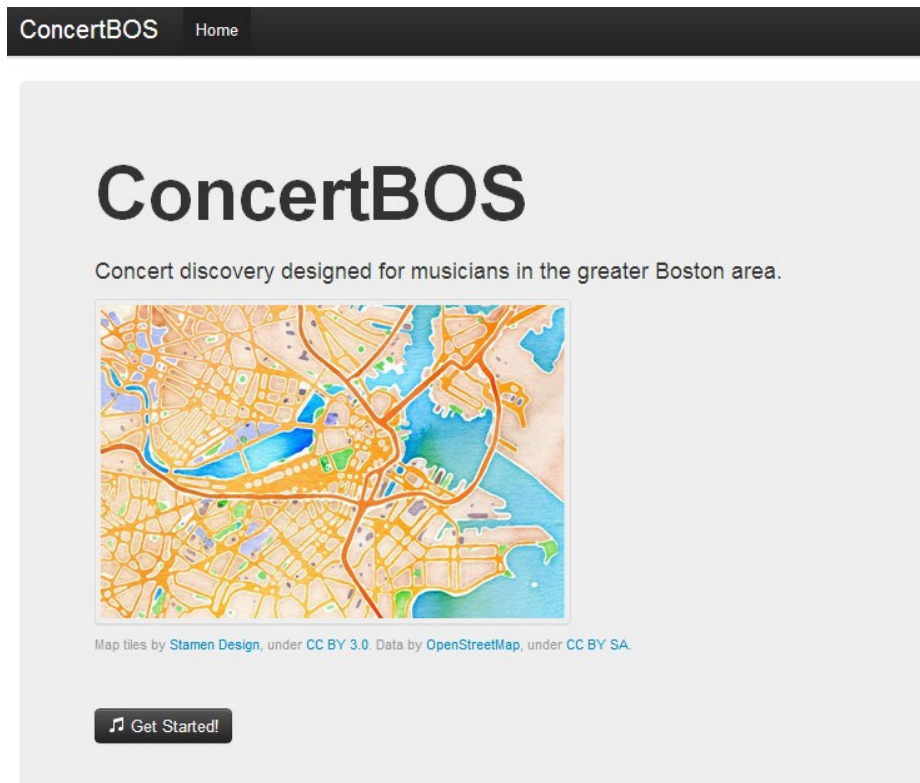


Description: The user can freely add or remove items in the interest list. This is good if the user wants to explore different options and filter them.

Thumbs-up #2: Home page is very intuitive

Category: Learnability

Heuristic: ----



Description: The intro page is very intuitive. It clearly states what the purpose of the site is, in one sentence, and it provides one simple button that says “Get Started!” There are no other buttons to click, so the user can’t make a mistake or be confused on the first page.

Thumbs-up #3: Design is aesthetically pleasing

Category: ----

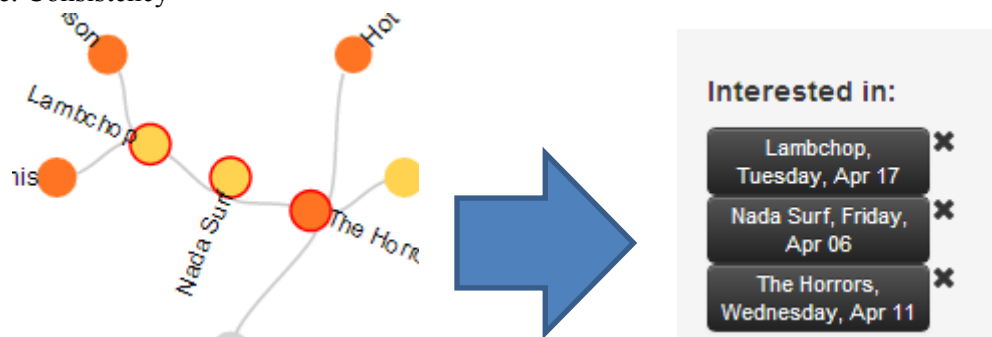
Heuristic: Aesthetic & minimalist design

Description: The design uses a simple color scheme, and does not overuse colors. It doesn’t use saturated colors either.

Issue #1: Clicking a node adds an event instead of an artist

Category: Learnability

Heuristic: Consistency

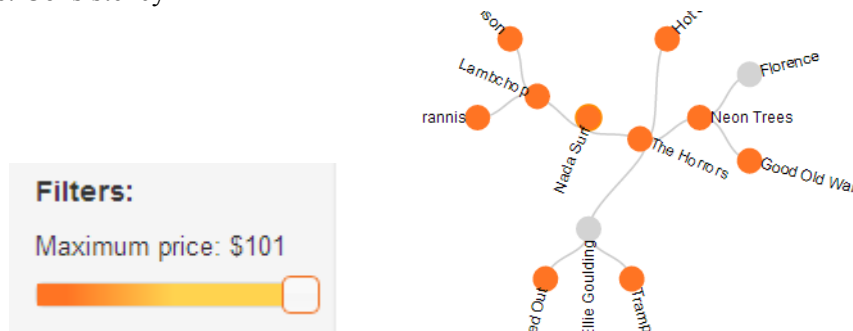


Description: I am asked to search concerts by artists similar to Nada Surf. So I visualize the concerts by artist similarity. Then I click on Nada Surf as well as two adjacent artists. However, I am surprised that what is added in my “Interested in” list was not a list of artists, but a list of artist events. The artist similarity graph shows nothing that suggests this behavior.

Issue #2: Node color inconsistent with slide bar color

Category: Learnability

Heuristic: Consistency

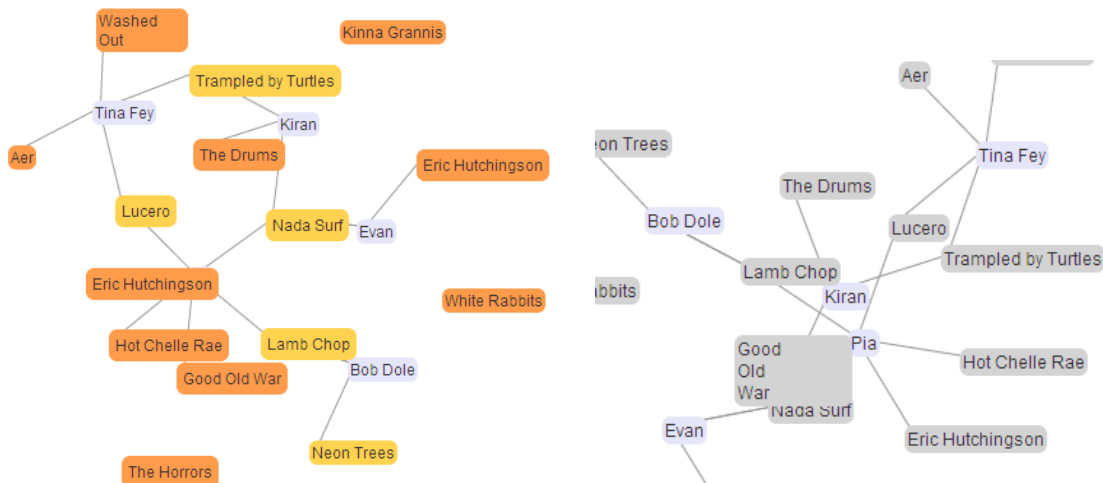


Description: It is not immediately obvious what exactly the colors of the nodes mean, especially when the slide bar that filters for maximum price uses the same color spectrum. If I look at this spectrum it would indicate that red nodes represent cheap concerts and yellow nodes represent expensive concerts. However, playing around with the slider shows that the color of the nodes probably means the number of concerts instead.

Issue #3: Difficult to distinguish artists from friends

Category: Learnability

Heuristic: Consistency



Description: When visualizing by friends, it is not obvious which nodes are friends and which nodes are artists (this is particularly the case since I am not familiar with many artists' names). Only when sliding the price bar to \$1 did I find out that the nodes "Tina Fey", "Kiran", "Evan", and "Bob Dole" are likely the "friends", and before that, I did not realize that the friends' color was a different kind of gray.

When the nodes are colored with three different colors, it is difficult to tell that one particular color means "friends". It may be a better idea to use visual cues other than color to indicate that a node represent a friend.

Issue #4: Visualization not based on interests

Category: Learnability, Safety

Heuristic: Consistency, Visibility of System Status

Interested in:

- Lambchop, Tuesday, Apr 17 ✕
- Nada Surf, Friday, Apr 06 ✕
- The Horrors, Wednesday, Apr 11 ✕

Visualize these by:

- [Artist Similarity](#)
- [Friends](#)
- [Date](#)

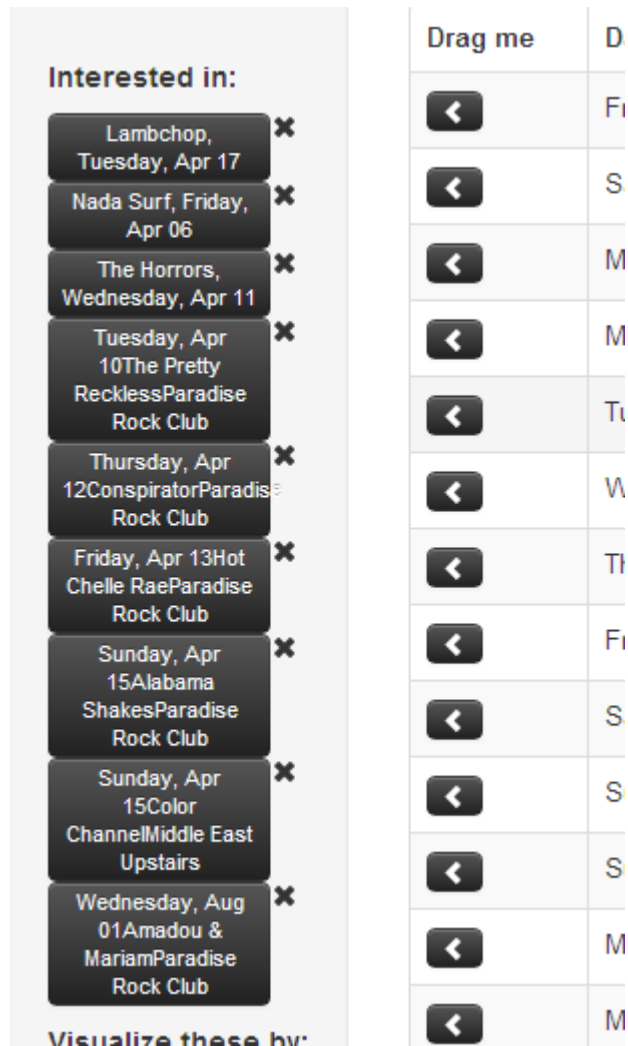
Drag me	Date	Artist
◀	Friday, Apr 06	Nada Surf
◀	Saturday, Apr 07	Aer
◀	Monday, Apr 09	RJD2
◀	Monday, Apr 09	The Ting Tings
◀	Tuesday, Apr 10	The Pretty Reckless
◀	Wednesday, Apr 11	The Horrors
◀	Thursday, Apr 12	Conspirator

Description: On the left panel there is a “Interested in” list. Underneath, it says “Visualize these by”. It is intuitive to think that “these” means the events listed above, but in fact that isn’t the case. When visualizing by Date, for example, I see all sorts of artists, not just the ones I selected.

Issue #5: Cannot see which concert events are selected

Category: Safety

Heuristic: Visibility of System Status



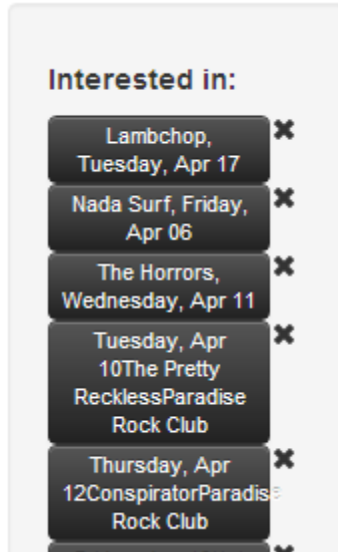
Description: I visualized concerts by date, and dragged a few of them into my interest list. Now I can't see in the big list which ones I actually added. The only way to find out is to read each added item and match it against the big list, which is slow and unpleasant.

It may be better to highlight ones that are already in the interest list.

Issue #6: Events in the interest list represented in different formats

Category: Learnability

Heuristic: Consistency



Description: In this interest list shown above, the top three items are added from the “Artist Similarity” visualization. The next two are added from the “Date” visualization page. They have different formats. The top three are in the format of “Artist, Date”, whereas the next two are in the format of “Date, Artist, Venue”.

To increase learnability, and potentially efficiency, the formats should be in the same order. Also, they should either both include the venue or both not.

Issue #7: “Drag” and “Go” arrow buttons unintuitive

Category: Learnability

Heuristic: Match the real world, External consistency, Internal consistency

Drag me	Date	Artist	Venue	Go
◀	Friday, Apr 06	Nada Surf	Paradise Rock Club	▶
◀	Saturday, Apr 07	Aer	Paradise Rock Club	▶
◀	Monday, Apr 09	RJD2	Paradise Rock Club	▶
◀	Monday, Apr 09	The Ting Tings	Paradise Rock Club	▶
◀	Tuesday, Apr 10	The Pretty Reckless	Paradise Rock Club	▶

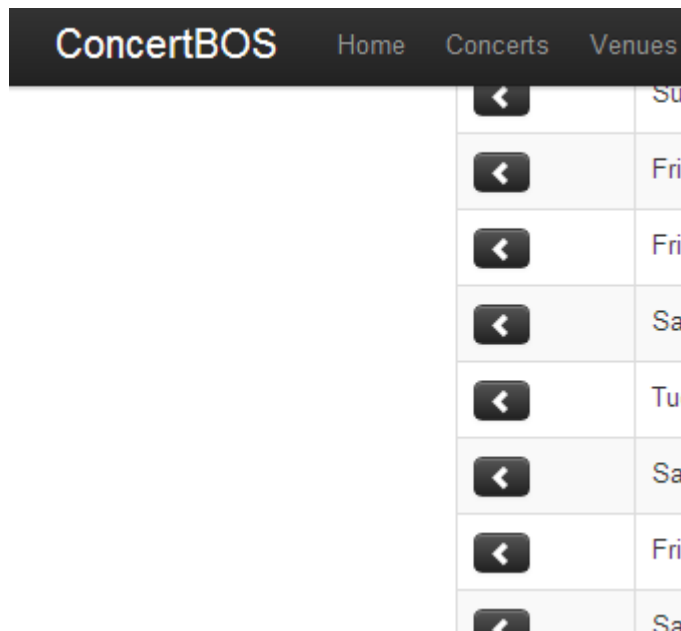
Description: Each item in the “Date” visualization page has two arrow buttons, one on the left pointing leftward, and one on the right pointing rightward. Without looking at the “Drag me” and “Go” text, it is intuitive to think that these two buttons indicate direction, so that if I click the left arrow it should go to a somewhat previous item, and if I click the right arrow it should go to a somewhat next item. In fact, the left arrow should be dragged to the interest list, and the right arrow should be clicked which leads to a details page. There are three problems with this design:

1. “Go” doesn’t really mean “I want to go”. It rather means “Show me more details.”
2. Web apps generally don’t use a left arrow to indicate dragging. Users would have to learn something new here.
3. The left arrow and the right arrow are handled differently despite their similar appearance.

Issue #8: Dragging can be potentially inefficient

Category: Efficiency

Heuristic: Flexibility & Efficiency



Description: Requiring the user to drag every listed concert event can potentially lead to inefficiency. The user may not be accustomed to dragging (especially old users), and may be used to ticking a checkbox.

Also, when the user scrolls down the page, the interest list is no longer in the view, so the user would have to drag an item upward and wait for the page to scroll, then put it in the interest list. This is inefficient, and can lead the user to lose track of where he/she was.

Issue #9: Must go through home page

Category: Safety, Efficiency

Heuristic: User control & freedom, Flexibility & efficiency



Description: When the user enters the site, there is a button that says “Get Started!” This is good. However, when the user is already familiar with the user interface, he/she still needs to go through the home page and pick an option after clicking the button. This can be inefficient, especially if the user doesn’t actually want to look for a concert but wants to look up a particular venue.

The other issue is that if the user accidentally clicks the Home link or the logo, the user is trapped in the home page, and must go through the button and the three choices again.

Issue #10: Website description misleading

Category: Learnability

Heuristic: Grammar

ConcertBOS

Concert discovery designed for musicians in the greater Boston area.

Description: I’m assuming this website is for general concert audience, instead of musicians. Should it rather be “Concert discovery for people looking for musicians in the greater Boston area”?

Issue #11: Search by multiple criteria

Category: Efficiency

Heuristic: Flexibility & efficiency

You care about . . .

- the *artist* that's playing
- what your *friends* like.
- *when* the concert is.

Description: After pressing “Get Started”, I am stuck on this page. I have to make a choice. I can only make one choice. It asks me what I care about. But I care about all of them. What should I do?

It is probably better if it says “You care the most about...”, or provide checkboxes that the user can specify what they care about, and provide a mechanism for searching with multiple criteria.

Issue #12: Cannot sort venues

Category: Efficiency

Heuristic: Flexibility & efficiency

Description: While trying to find venues that have less than 400 in capacity, I tried to sort the venues by capacity. However I cannot do that. Sorting is a frequently supported feature whenever there is a list involved, and can dramatically improve efficiency.