App Development Team Meeting
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Heuristic Evaluation Report

HBO Max: TV and Movie Streaming App for Mobile

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PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EVALUATION OVERVIEW

- The overall **purpose** of the evaluation is to **find existing app issues** on the HBO Max Mobile App
- Findings from the website will be conducted using **Nielsen's Heuristic List** created by Jakob Nielsen

GOOD JOB!

- Style of presenting the shows/movies as movie posters/DVD sleeves
  - **Consistency between real world and the system**

- During the download process, the download icon was replaced with a pause or stop button
  - This indicates that the user could back out of the download if they changed their mind
  - Promotes **user control and freedom**

- Similar functions of other major streaming services
  - **Meets industry standards and maintains consistency**

NEEDS IMPROVEMENT

- Items in the downloading phase do not appear In the "Downloads" tab until the entire episode/movie is completed
  - Difficult to reference what was selected and is in the process of downloading
  - Does not show **visibility of system status**

- When I went back to watch the downloaded content, it had not download the captions, despite my captions being on in the settings
  - Need to be fixed to **prevent error**

- **No notifications when a device is unable to complete a download due to file size**
  - Notififying users of error can help them to recognize and recover quickly

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Context
- I have **applied 10 usability heuristics** to the HBO Max mobile app user interface design.
- I then **outlined a basic task** within the application and observed that task from the lense of the Nielsen Usability Heuristics List.

Goals
- Identify **strong features** of the HBO Max mobile app
- Identify **areas for improvement**
  - Rank areas for improvement using an identified scale

System Scope
- System Feature: **downloading content to watch offline** within the HBO Max app
  - Home Page
  - Downloads Page
  - Search Page
  - Specific Show Page
  - Specific Episode Pages

METHODOLOGY

SCENARIO & TASK

Scenario

A user is about to take an international flight and is worried about being bored on the plane. He remembers that his friends have been recommending the show "White Lotus", so he decides to download the HBO Max app on his phone, in hopes of downloading the first few episodes to his phone so he can watch them on the plane.

Task

Using the HBO Max mobile app, download episodes 1- 4 of White Lotus Season 1, and after selection, navigate to those downloads and play.

USABILITY HEURISTICS :
JAKOB NIELSEN'S 10 USABILITY HEURISTICS
FOR USER INTERFACE DESIGN

What a Usability Heuristic?

- Nielsen Norman Group Definition:
    - Jakob Nielsen's **10 general principles for interaction design**
    - They are called "heuristics" because they are **broad rules of thumb** and not specific usability guidelines.

What a Usability Evaluation?

- Nielsen Norman Group Definition:
    - involves having evaluators e**xamine the interface** and **judge its compliance with recognized usability principles (the "heuristics")**

JAKOB NIELSEN'S 10 USABILITY HEURISTICS FOR USER INTERFACE DESIGN

#1: Visibility of system status
- Design **keeps users informed** through a**ppropriate feedback** within a reasonable amount of time

#2: Match between system and the real world
- Use words, phrases, and concepts f**amiliar to the user**, rather than internal jargon
- Follow **real-world conventions**
- information appears in a **natural and logical order**

#3: User control and freedom
- Users need a clearly marked "emergency exit" to **leave the unwanted action easily** without having to go through an extended process.

#4: Consistency and standards
- No time spent determining if different words, situations, or actions mean the same thing.
- **Follow platform and industry conventions**

#5: Error prevention
- **Eliminate error-prone conditions**
- present users with a **confirmation option** before they commit to the action

#6: Recognition rather than recall
- Minimize the user's memory load
  - Make elements, actions, and options **visible**
- Information required to use the design (e.g. field labels or menu items) should be **visible or easily retrievable when needed.**

JAKOB NIELSEN'S 10 USABILITY HEURISTICS FOR USER INTERFACE DESIGN

#7: Flexibility and efficiency of use
- Shortcuts
  - Speed up the interaction for the expert user
  - Design can **cater to both inexperienced and experienced users.**

#8: Aesthetic and minimalist design
- **Does not** contain information that is **irrelevant** or rarely needed.

#9: Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors
- Error messages in expressed in plain language
- Precisely indicate the problem
- Suggest a solution.

#10: Help and documentation
- It may be necessary to **provide documentation** to help users understand **how to complete their tasks**

SEVERITY SCALE

For this project, I am utilizing *Jakob Nielsen's Four Step Scale for Measuring Severity*

S0 I don't agree that this is a usability problem at all

S1 Cosmetic problem only: need not be fixed unless extra time is available on project

S2 Minor usability problem: fixing this should be given low priority

S3 Major usability problem: important to fix, so should be given high priority

S4 Usability catastrophe: imperative to fix this before product can be released

FINDINGS

POSITIVE FINDINGS (SO)

Note: Although this was an Internal Investigation, There was a competitive analysis to other streaming services throguhout the evaluation provess

- Style of presenting the shows/movies as movie posters/DVD sleeves
  - **Consistency between real world and the system**

- During the download process, the download icon was replaced with a pause or stop button
  - This indicates that the user could back out of the download if they changed their mind
  - Promotes **user control and freedom**

- Similar functions of other major streaming services
  - **Meets industry standards and maintains consistency**

Transparency of download status within episode screen
- "Download" icon changes to reflect a pause while an item is downloading
- Gives a timer with the download status so users know how much time is left

App maintains an **Aesthetic and Minimalist Design**
- We don't see any extra purposeless decorations
- Design elements all communicate relevant data

ISSUE #1: DOWNLOADING STATUS

S3

Issue: The item that is in the downloading phase does not appear in the "Downloads" tab until the entire episode/movie is completed.
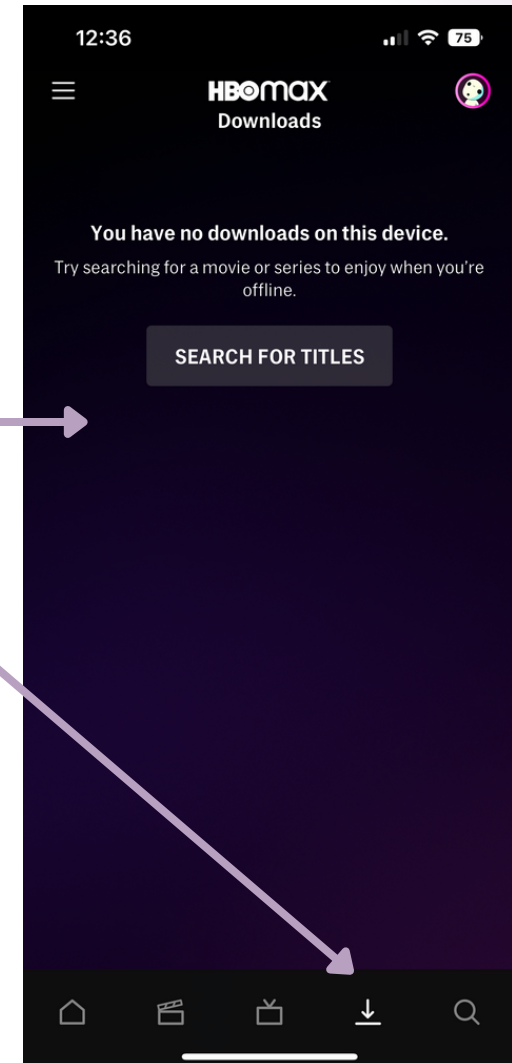- This makes it difficult to reference what was selected/in the process of downloading without referencing every show and season individually

Possible Solution: Show the items that are currently in the process of being downloaded to the device in the "downloads" tab

Heuristic in Violation:
Visibility of System Status
- The design should always keep users informed about what is going on through appropriate feedback within a reasonable amount of time

Show "downloading" content here

ISSUE #2: DOWNLOADING CAPTIONS

S3

Issue: When I went back to watch the downloaded content, it had not download the captions
- Captions are turned on for on-line viewing, but in the system settings it was off for downloaded content

Possible Solution: Prompt the user before beginning download, on first download, to select "download with subtitles" or "download without subtitles"
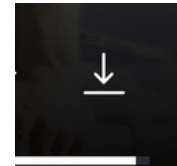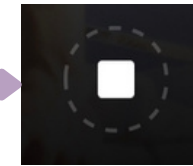- Let users choose a language for the downloaded subtitles

Heuristic in violation:
Error Prevention
- Good error messages are important, but the best designs carefully prevent problems from occurring in the first place
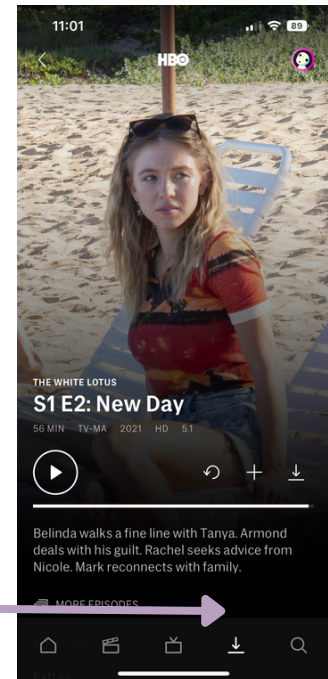
Prior to Download

During Download

Add prompt between these two modes

ISSUE #3: CONTENT TITLES

S3

Issue: Title of content is only present in the images
- When it took my screen a moment to load up I didn't know what shows I was looking at
  - No text to show while loading
- If the movie/show poster does not meet guidelines for color-blindness, or fails the contrast checker, **users may not be able to recognize the title**

Possible Solution: Replace the producing company below the title photo with the content title in an easy to read color such as white
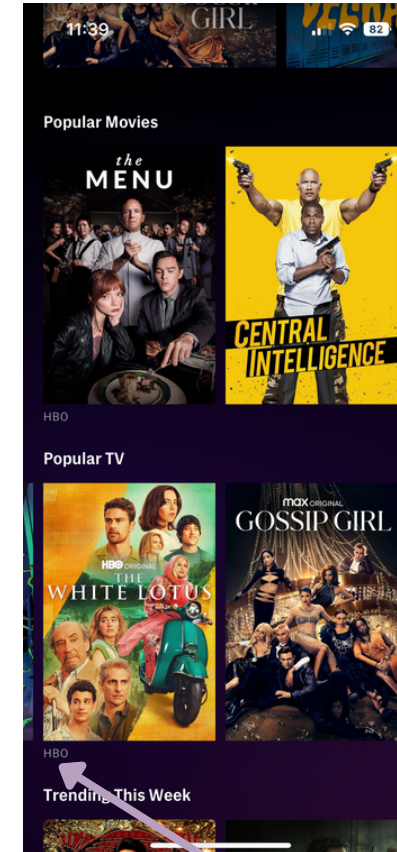
Heuristics in violation:
Error Prevention
- Good error messages are important, but the best designs carefully prevent problems from occurring in the first place.

Consistency and Standards
- Listing title in addition to movie poster to accommodate vision impairments

Add title here

ISSUE #4: SEARCH RESULTS

S1

Issue: **No separation of search results** with related/
recommended content
- No line or sectioning
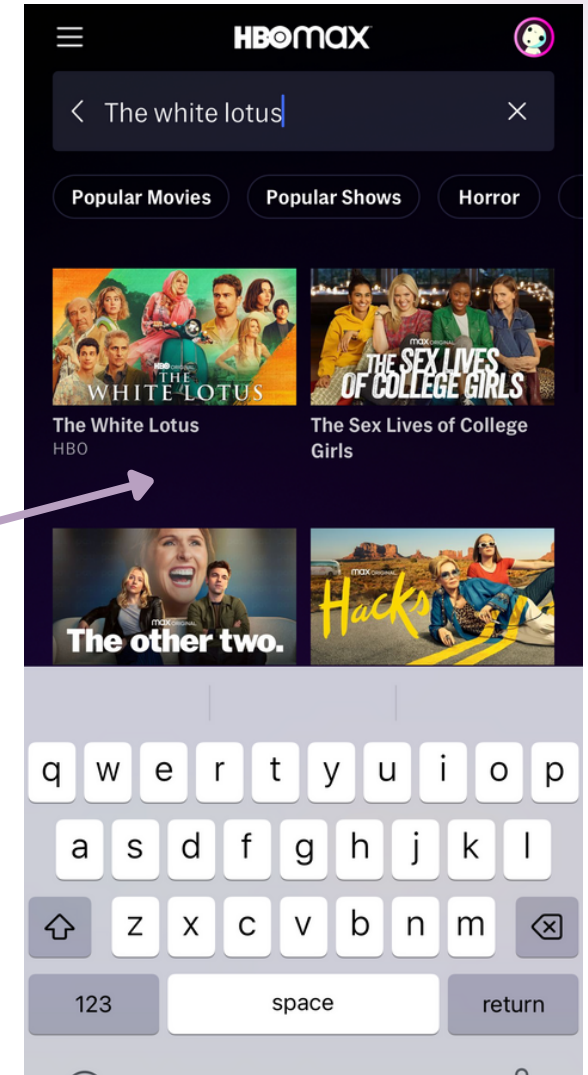- Difficult to distinguish from related and search results.

Possible Solution: separation of recommendations/related shows
and search results

Heuristic in Violation:
Recognition rather than recall
- Minimize the user's memory load by making elements, actions, and options visible
- User should not have to remember information from one part of the interface to another

Add separator

ISSUE #5: PREDICTIVE SEARCH

S2

Issue: When searching for a TV show in the search feature, the search bar did not auto fill or make anticipatory recommendations
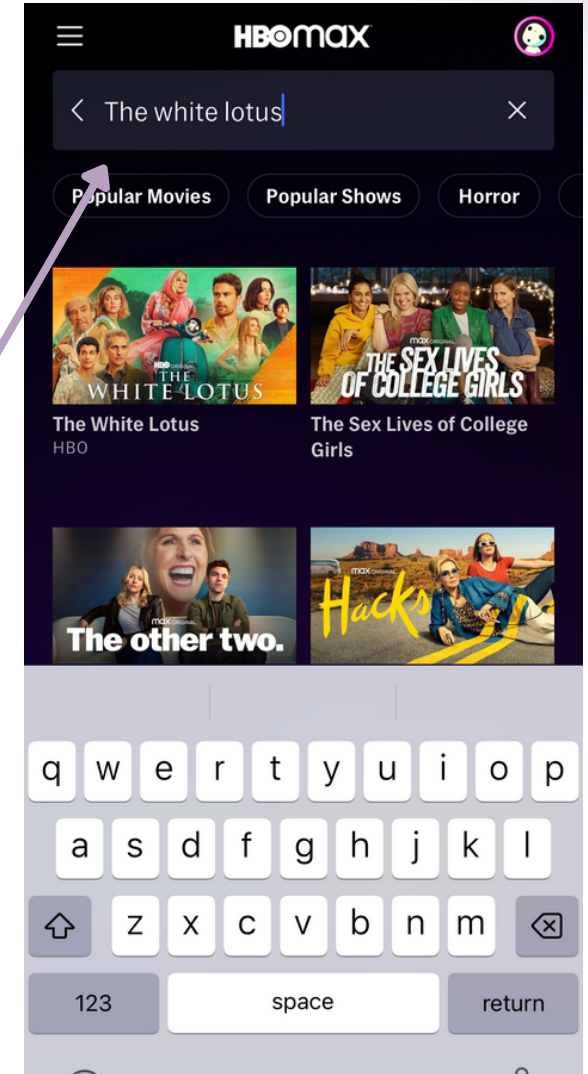
Possible Solution: Predictive auto-complete suggestions

Heuristic in Violation:
Flexibility and efficiency of use
- Shortcuts speed up the interaction for the expert user
- Design can cater to both inexperienced and experienced users.
- Allow users to tailor frequent actions.

Add predictive text

ISSUE #6: DEVICE STORAGE

S4

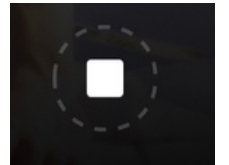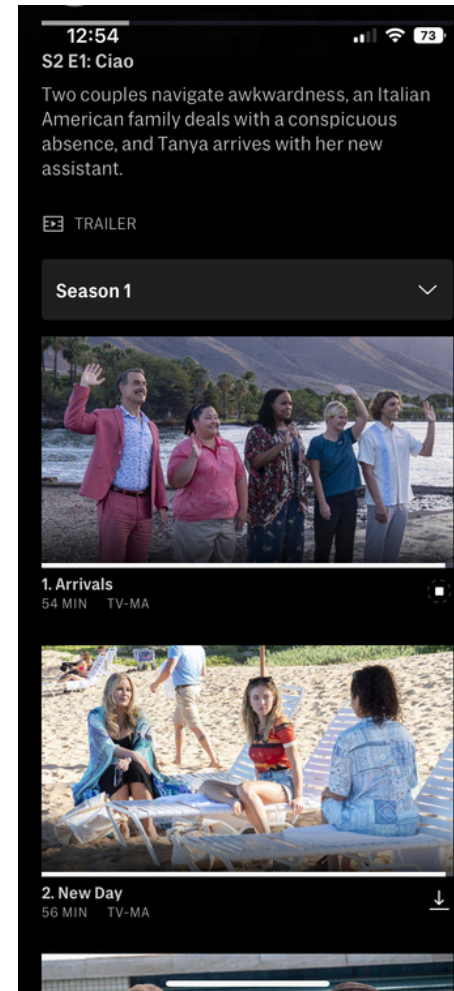**Issue:** **Download was stuck** due to not having enough device storage
- No notification about the size of the file or update on the download status being effected

Recommendation: Provide error alerts if there isn't enough device storage and alert users prior to download regarding the size of the file

Heuristic in Violation:
Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors
- Error messages should be expressed in plain language
- Precisely indicate the problem and suggest a solution

Stuck in this phase without update
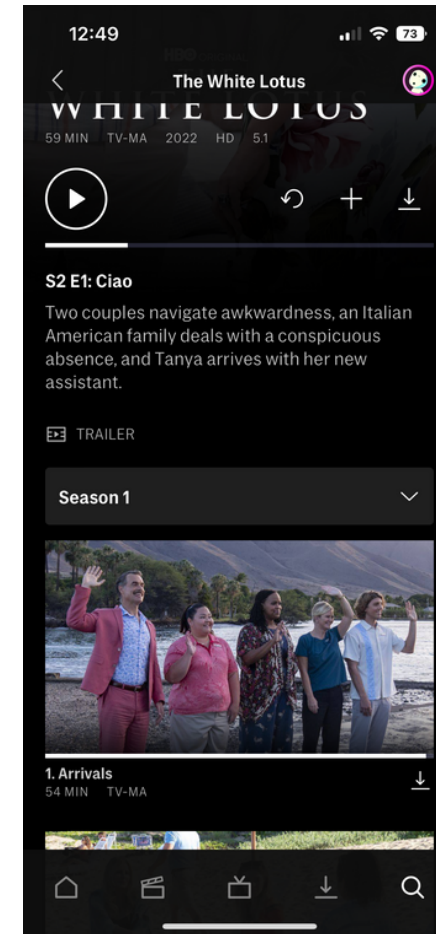
ISSUE #7: TOO MANY DOWNLOAD BUTTONS

S2

Issue: Download button was not labeled beyond having an icon and hard to distinguish between 2 different buttons
- What button is for downloading seasons and what is for downloading episodes?

Recommendation: Label download buttons underneath with "download series", "download season" or "download episode"

Heuristic in Violation:
Help and documentation
- It's best if the system doesn't need any additional explanation.
- It may be necessary to provide documentation to help users understand how to complete their tasks.

Download Button

Download Button

PRIORITY LIST

Severity

S0 S1 S2 S3 S4

Low   High

Issue #6: Device Storage
If a user doesn't have enough device storage, how will the user be alerted that the download cannot take place?
S4

Issue #2: Downloading Captions
How will the user know whether or not they have downloaded captions with their content or not?
S3

Issue #1: Downloading Status
How will the user know their selected items are still downloading without having to revisit the specific media?
S3

Issue #3: Content titles
If users are having a hard time loading the media images, or have a hard time reading a title from a poster, how will users know what show/movie the image was representing?
S3

Issue #5: Predictive Search
If a show is hard to spell, or the user isn't completely sure of the show title, how will they know what to type without predictive auto-complete selections?
S2

Issue #7: Too Many Download Buttons
How will users know which download button is relevant to the content they want to download?
S2

Issue #4: Search Results
When searching for a show, how will the user distinguish from the search results and the recommendations/related shows?
S1

CONCLUSION

NEXT STEPS

I would recommend **starting with the easy to fix items** on this list, such as adjusting the search results screen. Next, work as a team to determine what tasks can be delegated out, **prioritizing the ones with highest severity ranking.**

Further research might want to be done **via user study**
- Look at user pathways while completing this same task
- Look into how different devices handle this same task
  - ex: iOS vs Android

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Insight

This was my first ever heuristic evaluation for creating usability insights. I believe that by using Jakob Nielsen's methodology, most major issues were addressed. By consulting the framework throughout the process, it worked as a major aid into discovering new issues that I may not have noticed at first glance. I felt like at times I was possibly being too picky, but I would compensate by ranking it as a low severity case. By completing this analysis I feel more confident in utilizing the Nielsen Methodology and recognize heuristic analysis as a valuable for tool for testing and usability studies. In the future, I would like to use this method to test usability tasks prior to presenting them to human participants, however, this method could be utilized at any testing phase of the UX process.