Aesthetic Analysis

I chose Wendr, an iPhone app for making plans with friends. This was probably the closest match to the idea I had in mind (functionally), of creating an app that helps people make plans for the night with their friends.

I also chose hoodere which is another plan making app, but slightly different from the one I have in mind, as it packs in way more features than the minimalistic version I have in mind.
I find that the app focuses on aesthetics through usability. The intention seems to be to give users a clean, intuitive and seamless experience while achieving their desired goals, which it achieves to some extent. The flow is pretty methodical.

However, the layout and experience comes across as a little too rigid and compartmentalized to me. The emotion it incites in me is of being constrained. I would say the design is successful in terms of functionality and neutral in terms of aesthetics/beauty, the latter being a very relative idea.

The overall experience, to me, is functional, not necessarily beautiful.
Analysis 1

Examples

The UI uses a lot of visual listins and hierarchies to order the information logically. It also visually classifies information through compartmentalization using layout and color cues.

The UI gives a great deal of control to the users at every stage and calls it out explicitly.

The UI allows exploration, navigation, organization and choice.

1) Social engagement, control

The UI gives a great deal of control to the users at every stage and calls it out explicitly.

2) Discovery

The UI allows exploration, navigation, organization and choice.

3) Organization, choice

Examples

The UI uses a lot of visual listins and hierarchies to order the information logically. It also visually classifies information through compartmentalization using layout and color cues.
Objectives

wendr

The UI was intended to help the user to navigate through the different information related to making plans (places, events, friends, activities, preferences) more efficiently and to organize that information.

The UI helps users to interact with these different factors, weigh choices and make decisions.

Specifically, the operations intended are: setting preferences on type of plan from a set number of options (going out, staying in, open to options), viewing others’ preferences, finding matches, finding places/events/activities, organizing social contacts, etc.
Users

wendr

People use this app to make and/or discover and plans by themselves or with friends and share these as desired. They use this on the go while going about their usual activities, probably squeezing in the time on the app between other work/activities. The app makes the process of making plans probably less spontaneous and more planned, which some people like and some don’t. It creates new possibilities and new types of experiences. It definitely reduces time and clicks through several different apps.
Color Palette

The choice of color palette is not very appealing to me. It seems too safe and boring, like they didn’t put enough heart and soul into it, which runs very contradictory to the goals people want to achieve through the app. The color scheme makes this app more utilitarian than aesthetic or creative.
I think the choice of color was based on some values or ideas or aesthetic the founders or organization imbibe(s). It definitely needs to have some meaning and tie back with the brand somehow, I am not just sure how. They could also have used green to come across as upbeat and in motion, feelings usually associated with creating plans.

Alternatively, it is entirely possible that they used a tried and tested color palette. This palette reminds me of Whatsapp, Evernote, Google Hangouts, all of which follow this palette. Except Evernote, they are all apps for a great deal of social engagement, and I wonder if that plays out in the choice of color palette. Personally, I would associate these colors with an app for organization rather than for social interaction and engagement.
Typography

wendr

Type Inventory:

I can identify at least 5 different fonts, but even whatthefont couldn’t help me identify them, and I am not an expert at fonts so could not recognize them myself. I can identify at least 7 different sizes of fonts.

The different sizes are used to create a logical hierarchy for the information. Fonts at the same level of hierarchy are consistently of the same size throughout the app UI. Fonts are used to differentiate the branding, status, people names, people’s statuses, etc. from each other. Sometimes caps are used where I don’t expect them, which I can’t seem to rationalize. The choice of fonts, like the colors, seem to communicate an upbeat emotion, especially the font in the main app logo.
It looks like the font in the logo is meant to convey a visual message of youthfulness and playfulness associated with making night plans with your friends. This seems like a successful design to me, as it does invoke those feelings. They definitely prioritized functionality in this, but the functionality wasn’t compromised. They didn’t capitalize anything in the logo name, which was noteworthy as it looks casual and informal – the perfect note for this app.
Analysis 1

Assets

wendr

Running Application for iPhone

Interface Aesthetics
Spring 2015
Elisabeth Prescott & Kimiko Ryokai
Analysis 1

Imagery

wendr

wendr

find your night

Nick Kaye
Base jumping off the statue of li...
19 MINUTES AGO

Raven Keller
Nitehawk Cinema @ 10
6 MINUTES AGO

Ben Zises
Working through the night.
JUST NOW

Brian Fallon
Writing code
3 MINUTES AGO

Running Application for iPhone

Interface Aesthetics
Spring 2015

Elisabeth Prescott & Kimiko Ryokai
The images of people associated with either their profile or groups are merely visual cues, so this serves a purely functional purpose. Sometimes seeing the person’s face might change one’s decision about whether to involve that person in the plans. Other images are images of places on Foursquare, etc., all just pulled from that respective app that wendr syncs with. The only other images are the logo and branding material. The picture with the night skyline does a great job of hitting the right emotion from the word go.
I think Hoodere takes the exact opposite approach of wendr. The UI seems to have been designed with emotion first and utility taken care of later. The result is a beautiful balance of aesthetics and functionality, with both adding to each other. I like how they pack in so many more features than wendr but the end result is still cleaner, more pleasant and less cluttered. Wendr invokes a ‘buzzing with activity’ feeling while hoodere invokes a ‘welcome, let’s chill together’ type of feeling.
Analysis 2

Examples

Hoodere allows a number of different activities through its interface, as shown in the images. The UI organizes the information in an interesting manner, for example, in the second screen called ‘Plan View’. It is interesting how it tells you about run-ins, something that is a spontaneous and surprise element in going out otherwise. This is one example of a completely new type of interaction facilitated by the app.

The plan aggregator screen allows you to see all plans in one place and the plan making screen allows you to choose from a finite, small number of categories, both relatively unimagininitive features.

Running Application for iPhone
Hoodere

The first screen of the app keeps it simple and straightforward by allowing you to achieve one of four objectives:

Objective 1: Making a plan
Objective 2: Finding a plan
Objective 3: Recording that you are meeting someone
Objective 4: Recording that you are going somewhere

All actions seem to be tied to these four objectives at the root level. The activities the UI further allows are finding people you might run into, record your status/location while going to a plan to reduce confusion, navigate through plans of friends or friends of friends and make a decision to join or pass, etc.
Hoodere

Hoodere is used by people who presumably have a very social life and want to keep it organized. Their goals tie very closely to the objectives describe for the app above. I assume they use the app on the go to efficiently use that time.
Color Palette

They chose to keep the app a stark white for the most part, with warm, earthy accents in ochre and rust. There are some functional screens that use grey, but I wish they had used something more consistent with the theme, like some shade of burnt brown, or even just black.
I think the choice of colors was influenced by the brand’s mission of connecting people physically much more in an increasingly socially isolating world. The colors stand for ‘warm, inviting’ which are the kind of emotions the app aims to incite.
Typography

Type Inventory:

For the most part, the app uses a single font consistently throughout the app, using 3-4 different sizes to create a logical hierarchy. Font weight is used very sparingly, and is almost absent. Fonts are san serif and convey a casual, laidback vibe, frequently associated with social interactions. The fonts, like the color palette, aim to create an inviting, welcoming feeling to keep the user engaged with the app.
The typefaces, as I described above, are used strategically to create a casual, informal atmosphere and be warm and inviting. This could be a combination of functionality and aesthetic towards a common emotional goal. I am personally satisfied by the typography in the app and wouldn’t change much.
Analysis 2

Assets

Hoodere

Plan Finder  Hoodere  My Plans  messages

Plan

Auto  Food  Drink  Bar  Nightclub

What are you planning to do?

Desi week dinner

in Chateau de Tavers
Sat 17 May, 2014, 7:00 pm, till Sat 17 May, 2014, 8:00 pm

Know where you are going? (optional)

Going with someone? (optional)
Analysis 2

Imagery

Hoodere

“The social platform for real-life plans”

HD101: Intro to Hoodere

Running Application for iPhone
The logo and branding seem to capture the social aspect of the app very aptly. Other than that, the app uses a lot of icons to represent different actions/features. The images are minimal, except for people and places, both of which usually need visual reinforcement cues in apps for people to consume the information more effectively.