Summary of key findings

All core functions such as the navigation bar, buttons, and links - performed without issues.

For the app's primary task of helping users navigate to exhibitions, we achieved an **85.2% success rate**, indicating that only minor refinements to the map are needed.

Testers

We collected a total of **27 responses** through Maze. Most testers were young adults between **20 and 29 years old**. They are our primary target users – who haven't been to OAG before and want to navigate quickly and efficiently through the gallery.

What the tasks were

Due to time constraints and the main purpose of OAG Explore app, we only conducted four main tasks:

- Starting a tour

- Finding ways to an exhibition

- Searching & getting directions to other exhibitions

- Browsing events list and getting directions

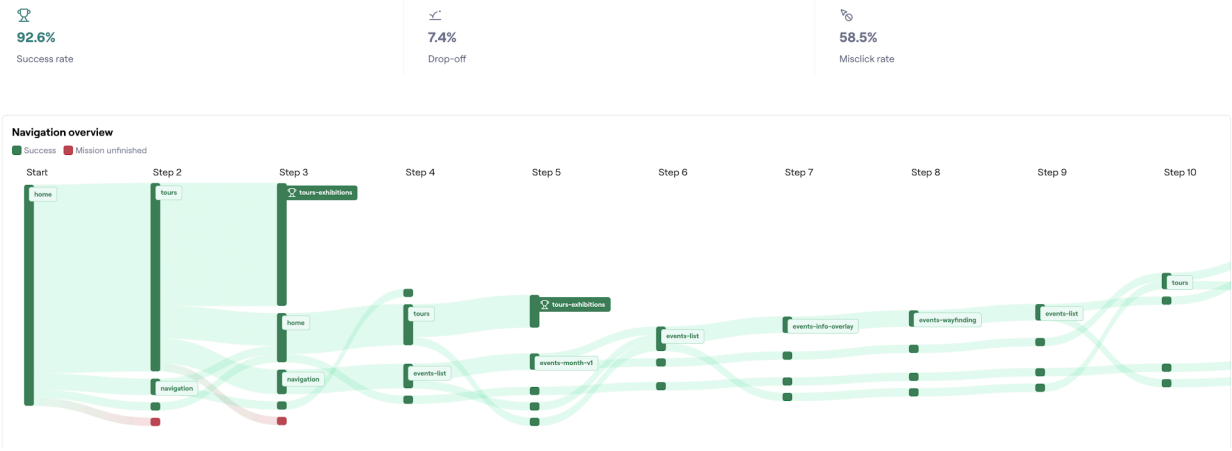
Results

Starting a tour

Prompt: "OAG Explore is a mobile application that helps you navigate the Ottawa Art Gallery and discover exhibitions, tours, and events.

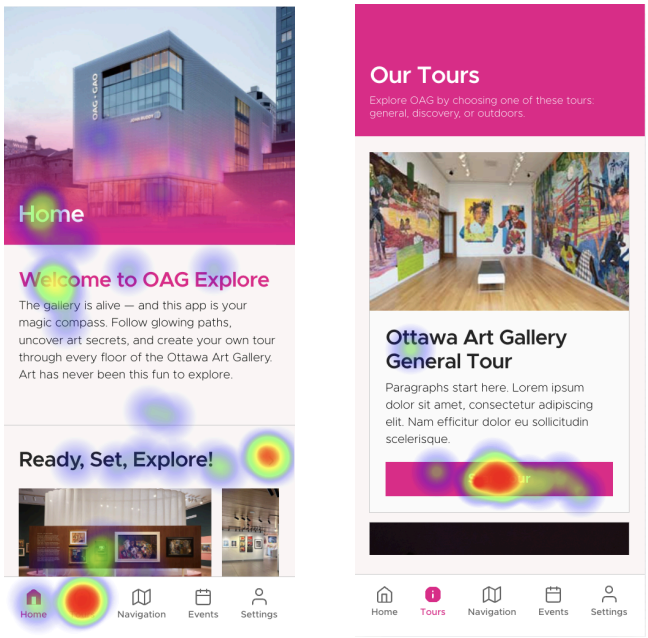
Imagine you've just stepped into the Ottawa Art Gallery and aren't sure where to begin. Luckily, the gallery offers the 'OAG General Tour' which guides you through almost every exhibition. So let's start with it!

*Your goal for this task is to **start the OAG General Tour**."*



Key findings:

With a **92.6% success rate**, it is clear that most testers had no difficulty navigating from the home page to the “Start Tour” button. The majority of misclicks (58.5%) were due to natural exploration, as some users wanted to look around the app before beginning a tour.



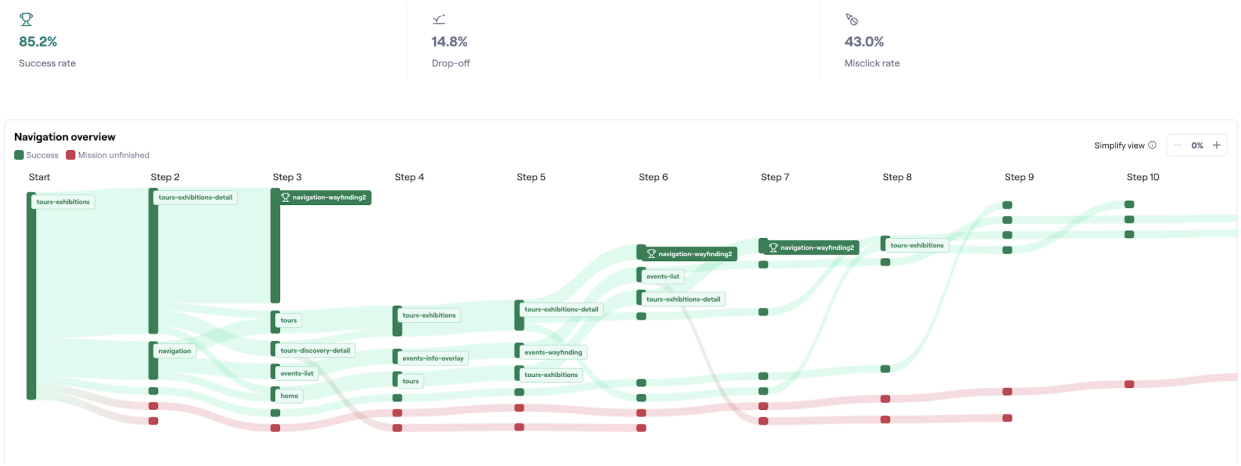
Recommendations:

To make this experience more seamless, we recommend adding a clear CTA - such as “Start a Tour Now” on the home page that links directly to the Tours page. Since first-time users land on the home page, this would guide them more efficiently toward the intended starting point.

Finding ways to an exhibition

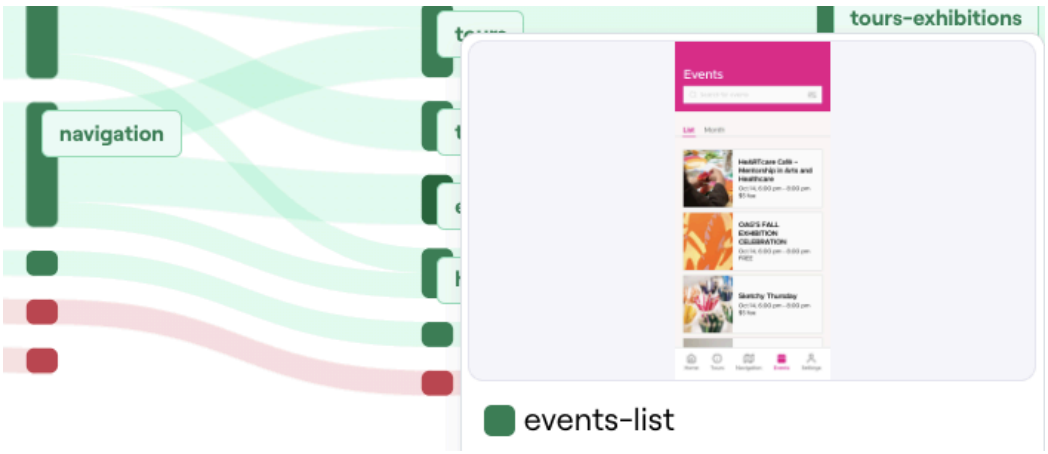
*Prompt: “Great! Now you’re interested in the **Endless Becomings** exhibition. However, you’re confused because you’re currently on Level 1, while this exhibition is on Level 4.*

*Please read more information about this exhibition and find a way to **get directions** to it.”*



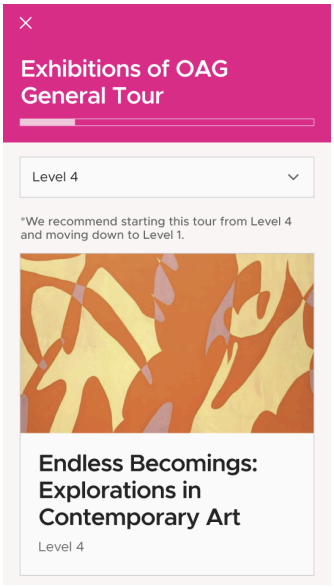
Key findings:

This flow was not difficult for users, shown by an **85.2% success** rate. Users only needed to select an exhibition card and continue through the steps. However, the **14.8% unfinished rate** occurred because some testers clicked the “Events” icon in the navigation bar instead.



This indicates a common misunderstanding among a small group of users who assumed exhibitions were listed as events. There were also a small number of users who misclicked the exhibition card.

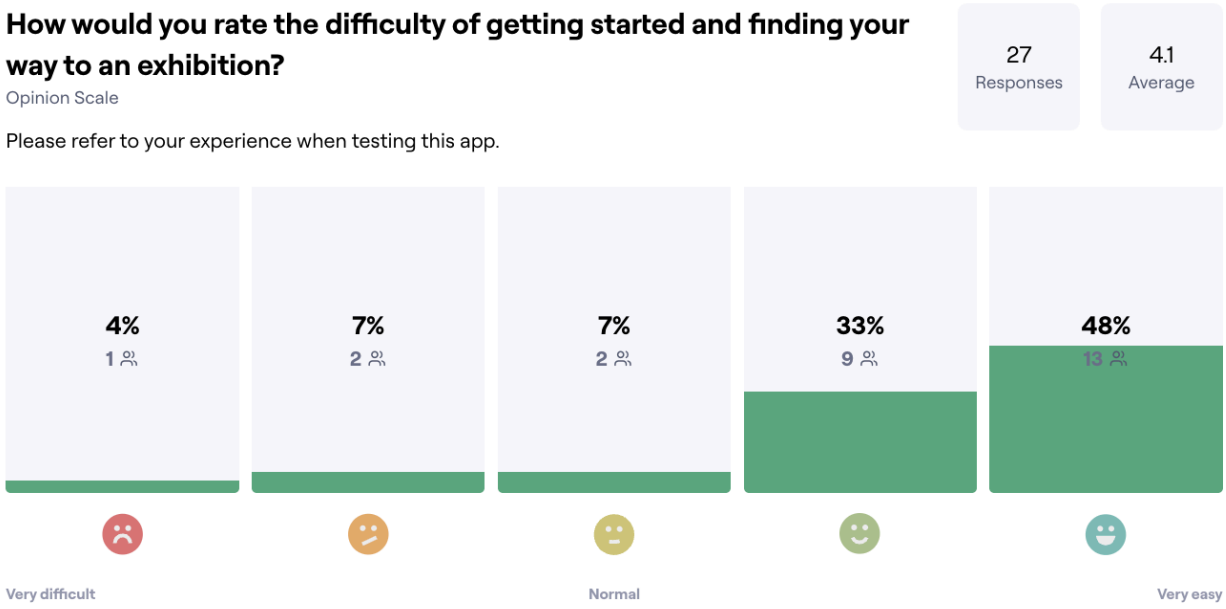
Recommendations:



To improve the experience, we recommend replacing the sub-information that shows the exhibition's floor level with a subtle CTA such as "Click to read more" since the level is already indicated in the dropdown menu above. This change can help reduce misclicks and minimize user confusion.

To address the confusion between "Exhibitions" and "Events," we plan to keep the page header visible and have it collapse into a smaller version as the user scrolls. This will help reinforce what content belongs on each page and reduce misunderstandings.

Overall experience from starting a tour to finding ways to an exhibition:



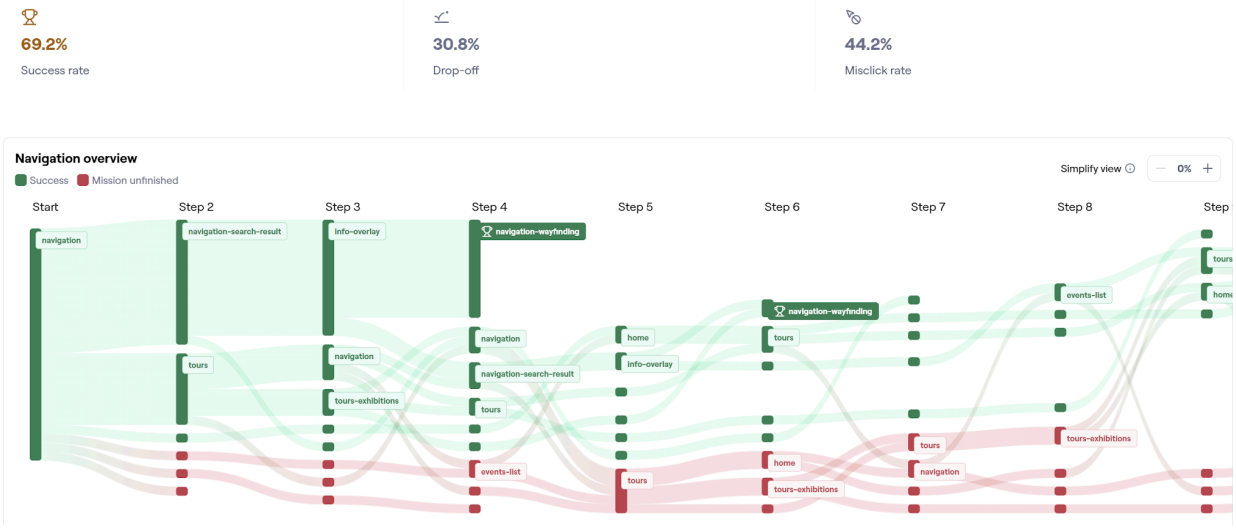
Out of 27 responses, **22 testers (81%)** agreed that finding their way to an exhibition was easy. This aligns with the high task-completion rate and the fact that most users could follow the intended flow without difficulty.

The remaining 5 testers who disagreed likely experienced confusion related to the misclick patterns observed earlier - particularly mistaking “Events” for “Exhibitions” or being momentarily unsure due to duplicated level information. Their feedback reflects the same usability issues highlighted in the testing behaviors above, rather than a failure of the overall navigation flow.

Searching & getting directions to other exhibitions

*Prompt: “You’ve now finished visiting the Endless Becomings exhibition. You’d also like to visit the **Firestone Gallery**.*

Your phone is still on the Navigation page, so let’s continue using it!”



Key findings

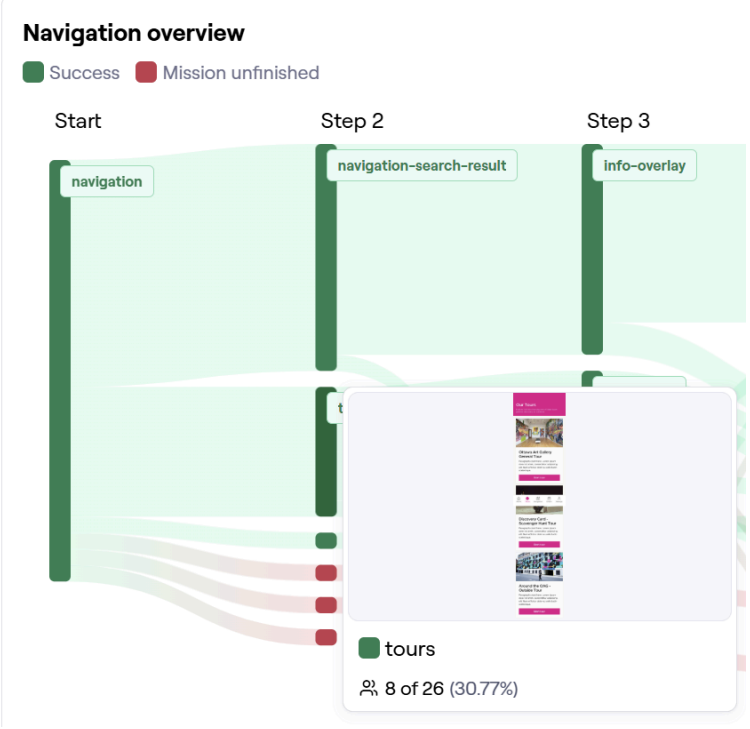
With an overall **success rate of 69.2%**, this task revealed several navigation patterns and user assumptions that helped us better understand how visitors search for their next exhibition.





1. *Confusion between the navigation page and the tours page*

30% of participants navigated to the Tours page instead of staying on Navigation.



This may be due to a misunderstanding of the task rather than a design flaw, since the Firestone Gallery can also be accessed through the Tours section.

This particular find strengthens our past design decision to make the exhibitions information available both on the Tours and on the Navigation pages.

2. *Heavy interaction with the floor dropdown*

Many participants spent a significant amount of time interacting with the floor-selection dropdown on the Navigation page. Instead of using the search bar at the top, which was the intended primary method for finding the Firestone Gallery, users attempted to browse floors manually and locate the exhibition through the map.



This behaviour suggests that:

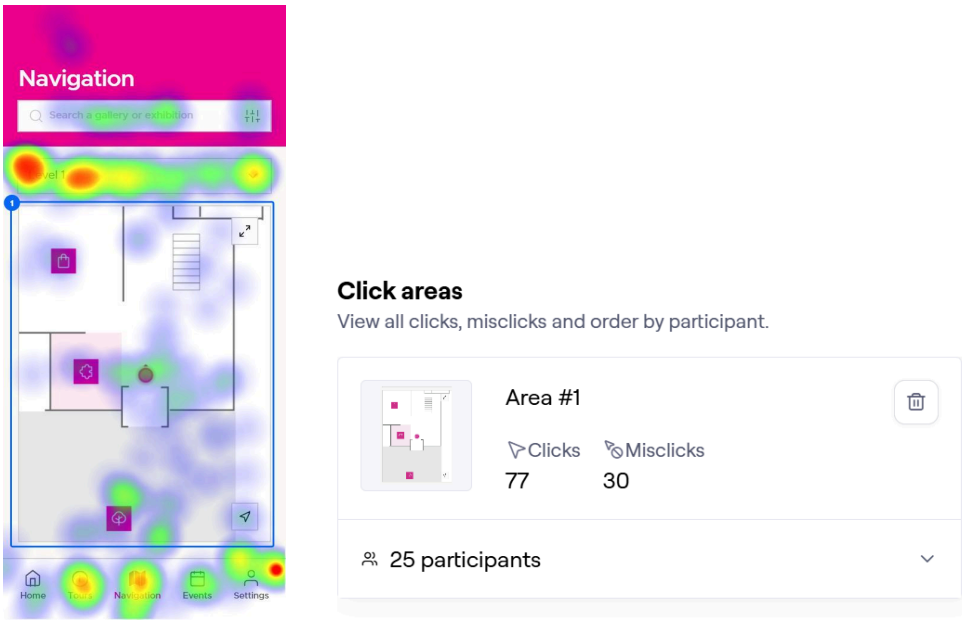
- Users did not immediately notice the search bar, or
- They did not understand that it could be used to search for specific exhibitions, or
- The map and floor system felt like a more obvious or intuitive way to look for galleries.

One solution to that is making the map interactive. Users seem to want to interact with the map and click icons and choose floors. The final version of the app will have this functionality.

3. *Attempted interaction with non-clickable map icons*

Many users tried tapping icons on the map (rooms, labels, points of interest).

These icons were not interactive in the prototype but will be clickable in the final product, making this behavior both encouraging and expected.



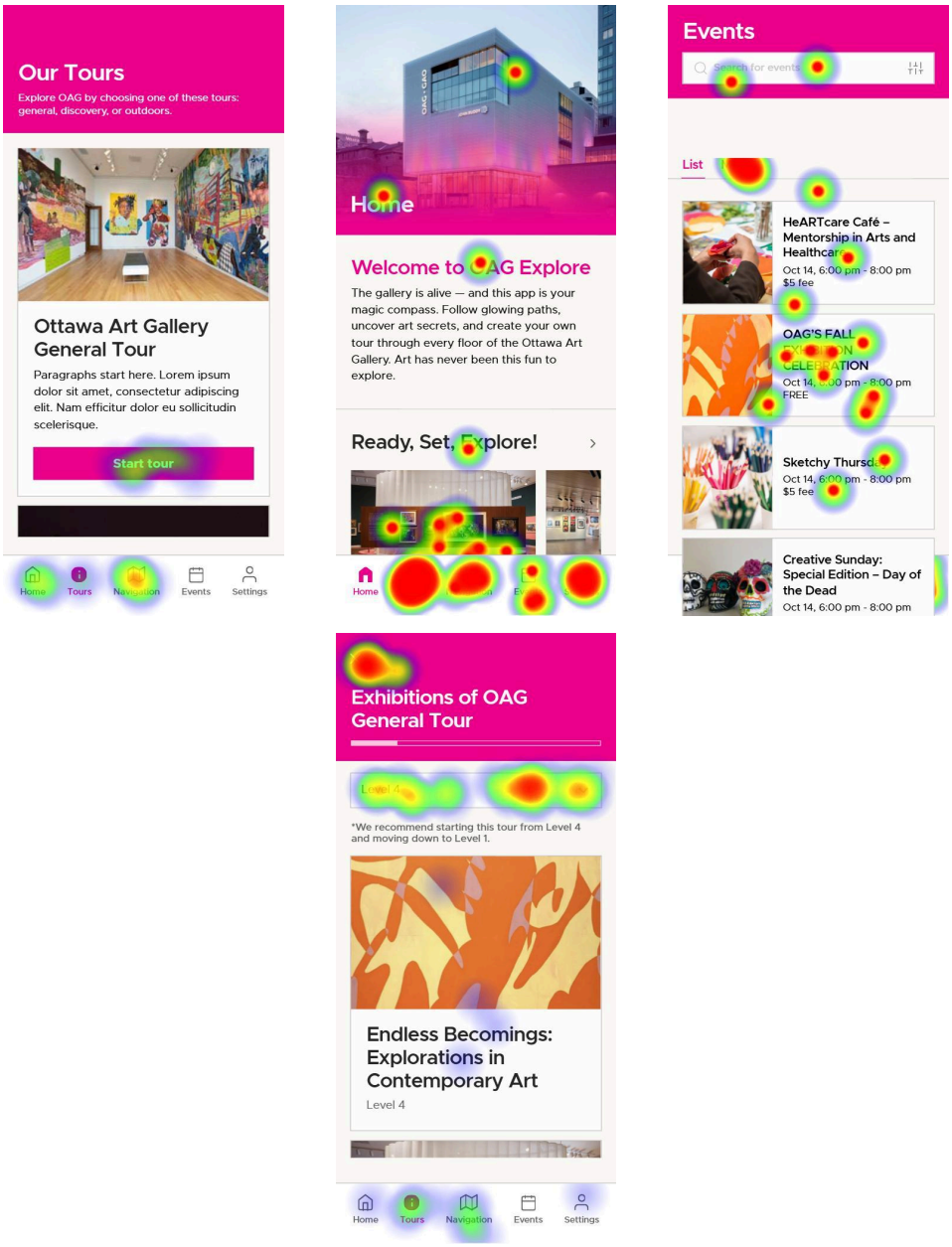
The high number of taps here contributed significantly to the misclick rate (44.2%).

4. *Exploration outside the intended task flow*

Heatmap screenshots show users exploring the map and other app sections before completing the task.

This suggests a natural curiosity and desire to understand the app's structure, rather than confusion – and at the same time it also contributes to the high misclick rate.

Examples of some other pages that were clicked for exploration in this task:



Summary and recommendations:

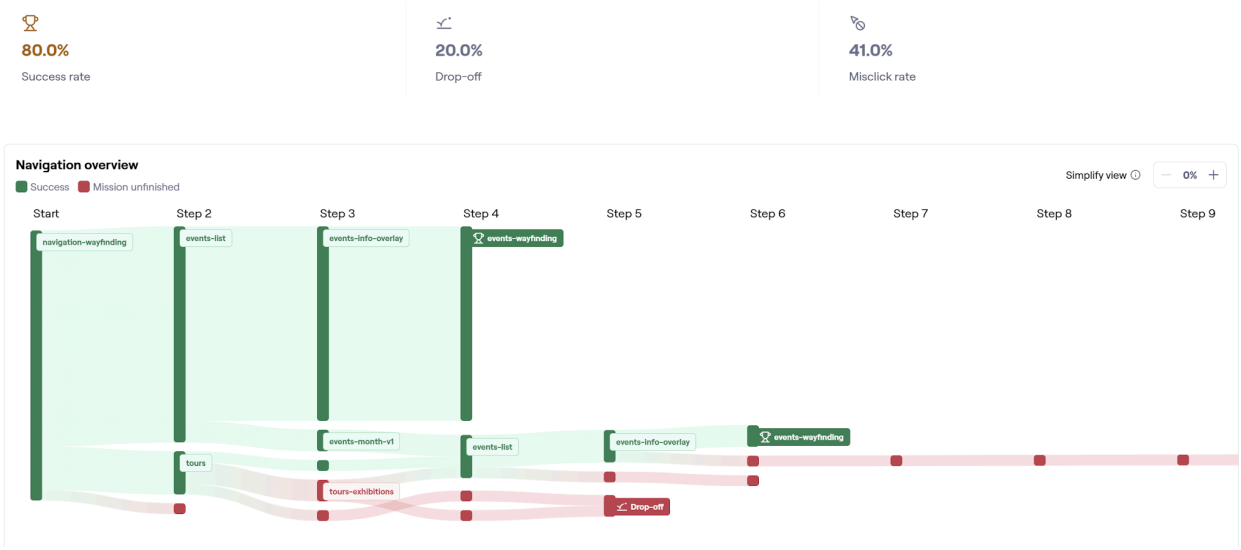
Most usability friction in this task came from exploratory behavior and non-clickable prototype elements, not from major design problems. Or from users that want to explore differently than the task commands – for example, trying to find the exhibition via tours, and not via map.

To enhance the user experience, the map will be interactive, with clickable icons that show the name of the salons and amenities.

Browsing events list and getting directions

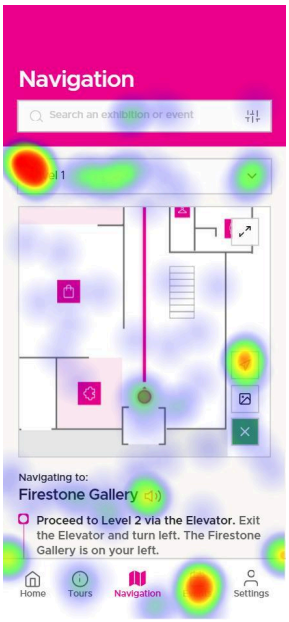
Prompt: “OAG usually hosts many events each week—sounds fun! You’re curious about what’s happening right now. They must have a list of events somewhere.

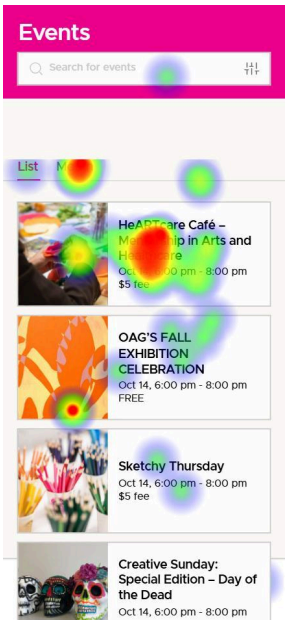
*Please select the **first event** you see and **get directions** to it.”*

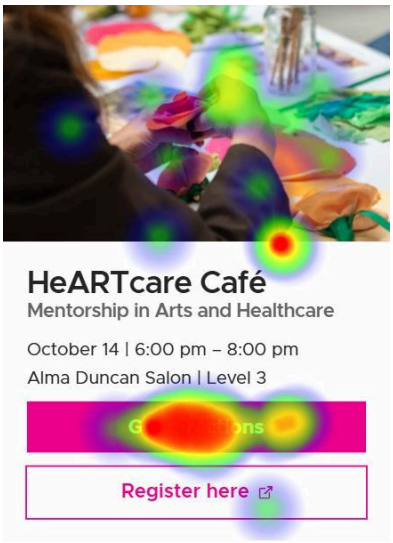


Key findings:

With an overall **success rate of 80%,** this task showed that most users were able to locate the events section and proceed to get directions without major issues.





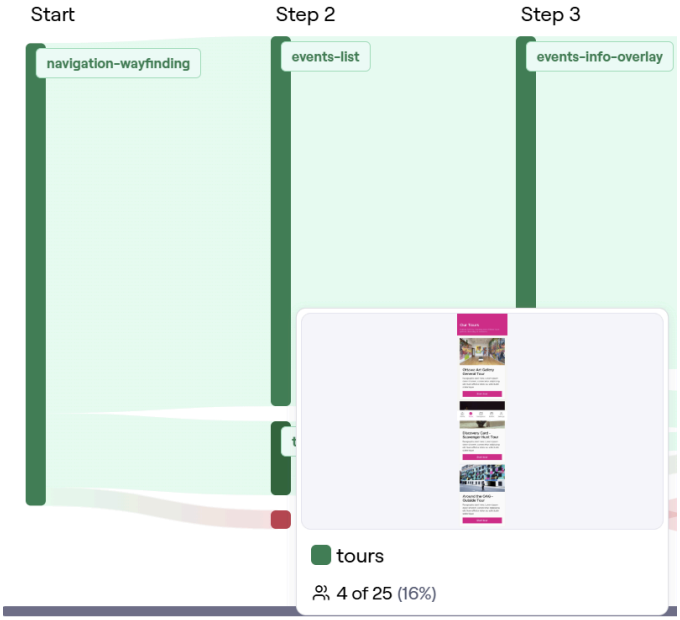


1. *Confusion between the Events page and the Tours page*

16% of participants initially tapped on Tours instead of the Events tab. Half of those corrected themselves by navigating from Tours back to Events.

This behaviour suggests:

- Some users may conceptually associate “events happening now” with general activity happening in the gallery, which could fall under Tours in their mental model.



2. *High misclick rate driven by exploration*

The misclick rate for this task was 42%, and the majority of these misclicks came from users interacting with other navigation elements unrelated to the task (map itself, audio tour button, other events, other parts of the screen). These clicks can be observed on the images displayed right under the "Overall Success Rate."

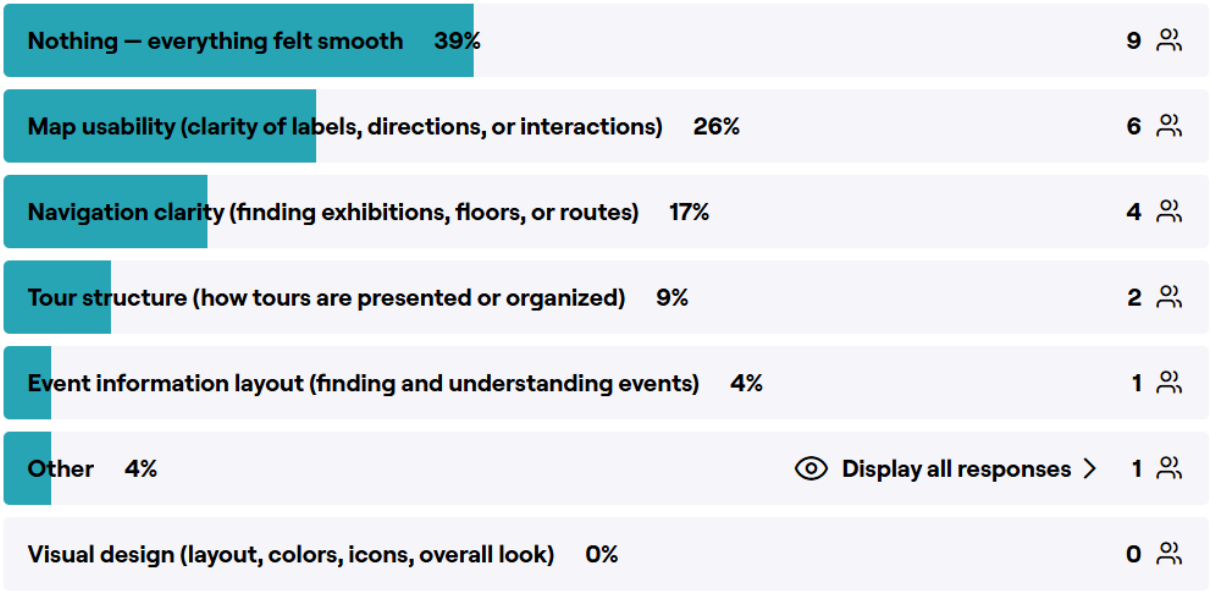
Summary:

This task performed well overall, with most usability friction stemming from natural exploratory behaviour rather than actual interface issues. Participants occasionally confused Tours with Events, but quickly self-corrected. The high misclick rate is largely due to the interactive appeal of the map and other UI elements on the page.

These findings indicate that the Events feature is easy to find and straightforward to follow along.

Feedback

Question: What do you think we need to improve?



The responses show that overall satisfaction with the app is high, with **39% of testers** (9 people) indicating that “nothing — everything felt smooth.” This aligns with our strong success rates in the core tasks and confirms that the majority of key interactions are intuitive.

However, the remaining feedback highlights a few specific areas where users experienced friction:

1. *Map Usability — 26% (6 testers)*

This is the largest category of improvement suggestions. It aligns with the earlier findings where some users struggled with reading or interpreting the map.

Interpretation: Users may need clearer labels, more intuitive map markers, or improved clarity in how the route is displayed.

2. *Navigation Clarity — 17% (4 testers)*

This directly connects to the 14.8% unfinished rate where users mistook “Events” for “Exhibitions”, or “Tours” for “Navigation”.

Interpretation:

- Some users were confused about where to find exhibitions or which section to click.

- Reinforces the idea of improving category labeling, headers, or CTAs.

3. *Tour Structure — 9% (2 testers)*

There is a small group mentioning the way tours are presented.

Interpretation:

- These testers may have preferred clearer steps, a more guided flow, or a more obvious starting point.
- This relates to the earlier suggestion about adding a CTA like **“Start a Tour Now.”**

4. *Event Information Layout — 4% (1 tester)*

A very small number struggled with how event details are shown.

Interpretation:

- This is consistent with the observed confusion between “Events” and “Exhibitions.”
- The problem is minor but still worth addressing through clearer page hierarchy or headers.

5. *Visual Design — 0%*

No one selected visual design as an issue; therefore, users are satisfied with the layout, color palette, and aesthetics. This also confirms that the UI is visually appealing and not a barrier for task completion.

Conclusion

The usability test showed that core functions worked smoothly, and most users successfully completed key tasks, especially starting a tour and navigating exhibitions. However, there were some users struggling with map clarity or overlooking the search bar. Overall, improvements should focus on navigation clarity, clearer CTAs, and enhancing the map’s usability and interactivity.