Navigation Usability

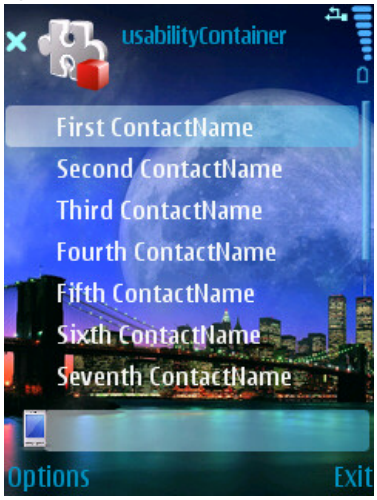
Descriptions

Navigation plays a crucial role in mobile applications. Usable navigation is something every application needs. It determines where users are led and how they interact with the different views. Without usable navigation, content becomes all but useless. Menus need to be simple enough for the user to understand, but also contain the elements necessary to guide the user through the application — with some creativity and good design thrown in. A huge factor in being user-friendly is providing simple and intuitive navigation. Major areas of navigation should be located consistently on all pages. Apply the navigation usability tips to your application that encourage user to visit your application again and again.

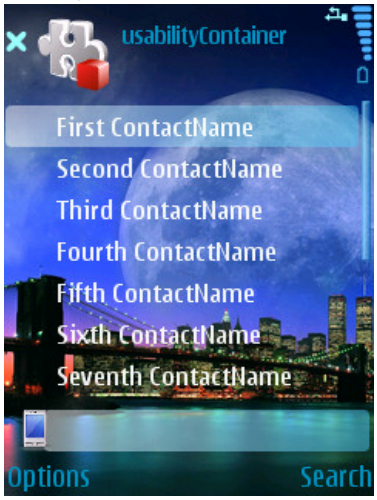
Some navigation usability tips

- A general rule of thumb is that any view in your application should be reachable with 2 clicks from your main view.
- Another important factor with navigation is that user's shouldn't have to guess where they will end up if they click on a item. Regardless of whether the item is part of a navigation menu, or if it is simply in the body of the text, visitors should understand where the item will lead them.
- Every view should have option to go back to main view directly.
- The main features should be available from the main view of the app.
- Softkeys, menus, shortcut keys etc should be similar to the preinstalled applications on the device.
- Must have a back option on all view.
- Be consistent, should use common navigation throughout the application.
- Exit function must always be available. User should be able to close the application without returning to the main page of the application.
- Make proper use of indicators.
- The labels and instructions should be short and simple.

Good navigation example with back option in view



Bad navigation example without back option in view



- Navigation labels should be short and easy to understand. The words used for the labels (menu item) should also be sufficiently descriptive to provide a clear indication of the view they link to.

Good navigation example with small labels

Bad navigation example with large labels

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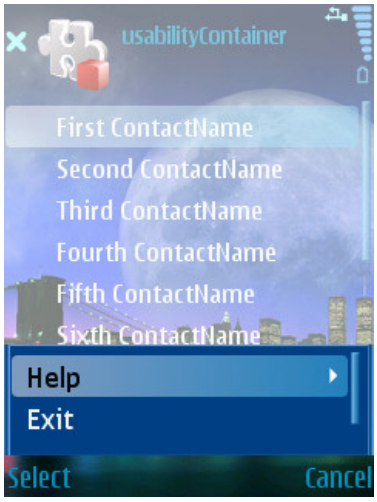
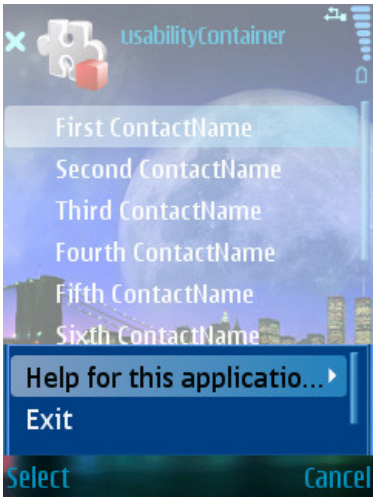
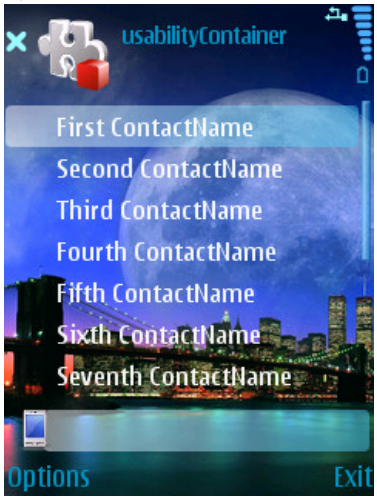


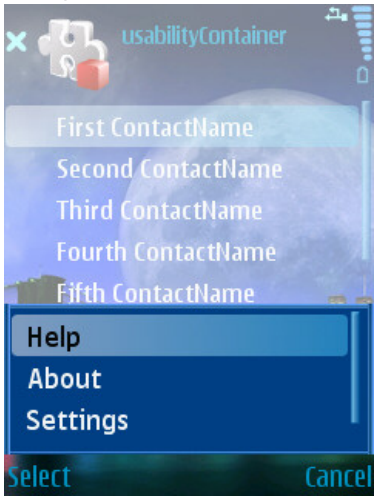


- All important view should have exit option to exit from application at any time.

Good navigation example with exit option in view



Bad navigation example without exit option in view



- Provide About/Help options

It is very important to provide the user a way to access the context sensitive through the application. The help would assist the user in making full use of the functionalities. User should also be able to know about the application, which should be accessible using the about option. More details can be had from *Things to remember when writing Help text or Manuals*. If the application has multi views, help should be possibly available on all view option menus, while about should be available only on the main view option menu.

An application without help/about options places a serious usability limitation.

Help/About options missing

Help/About options available

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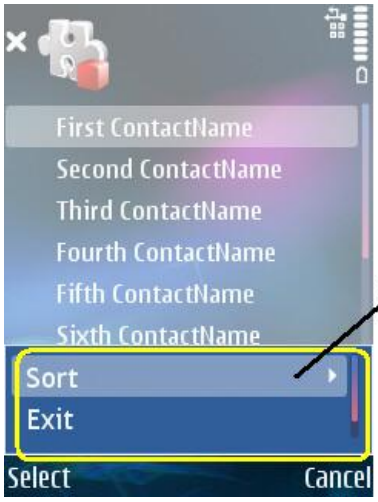
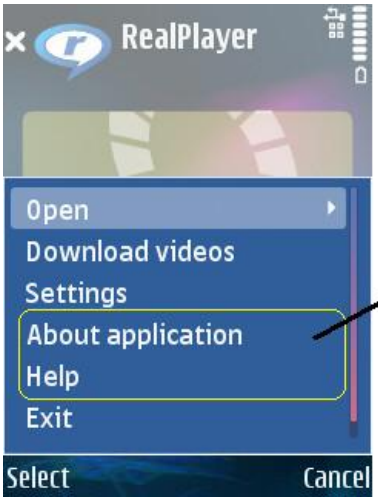


No about/help option available, bad usability



About and help options available to the end user

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