

BeerMe

Research Plan

Interviews

Background

Six people were interviewed in-person and over the phone. Interview times ranged from 30 minutes to over an hour. The primary goals of the interviews were to gain empathy and understanding for the audience, and form a picture of their current beer purchasing and drinking experiences, including any pain points.

Findings

- Trying new beer is a **hobby** for many craft beer enthusiasts.
- People usually **drink 2-4 beers a week**, more frequently on the weekends and while on vacation.
- People drink in a **variety of settings**, including at home with spouses or friends, out at restaurants or bars, on dates, at parties, at cookouts and sporting events, at happy hours and while doing housework.
- Beer drinkers often have **strong, established opinions on the beer styles and brewers** they love (and hate)
- People rarely purchase beer outside of either the styles and/or brewers they know they like (too risky)
- **Seasonality** plays a large role in beer selection – people seek out limited-time offerings and crave different kinds of beer based on the weather.
- Most people select beer by **eliminating styles/brewers they dislike**, then looking at styles and brewers they like for new (exciting sounding) options.
- People **don't buy bottled/canned beer in a restaurant** because it's available (for less) at nearby stores.
- People are more likely to try a new beer if a **single bottles** are available, or if it's on draught at a restaurant.
- Everyone has a **5/6 pack of beer collecting dust** in the back of the fridge or pantry that they tried and didn't like. **Swapping unwanted beer is awkward**, so they're waiting to pawn it off at a party or drink it in a post-apocalypse situation.
- **Cool labels** are appealing when picking a new beer in a store, while **intriguing names** are more appealing in a restaurant or bar.
- **Not knowing when (or if) your favorite beer will return** to your nearby store is a big frustration
- Most people feel like they remember beers they've tried, liked and disliked, but most also had a story where they bought a beer, tasted it and later realized they had it previously.
- **Local brewers** are attractions to out-of-towners as well as the local population.
- **Recommendations must be informed and personalized**, and should also factor in requests like seasonality and specific styles
- Many people **budget dollars and calories** to enjoy a beer
- **Beer delivery reactions are mixed**, depending on cost, frequency, and selection (individual's or random).
- **Many people don't use a beer app**, and instead try to remember what beers they like, select new beers within a strict set of preferences, or look for reviews and availability on desktop websites.

Questionnaires

Background

44 people completed a 9-question, online questionnaire about their beer preferences and habits, demographics, and their usage of beer apps. Five potential features were tested in a Kano analysis to determine which features would delight users, which are expected, and which features users are indifferent towards.

See the complete questionnaire and Kano analysis in the Appendix.

Findings

- Most people (82%) **try new beer at least once a month**, and 36% try new beer once a week or more.
- People **buy beer at a variety of locations**, most often at the grocery store, regularly at bars and restaurants, and less frequently at convenience stores.
- Most people **won't commute over 25 minutes to get their favorite beer** (64%), but a fair amount (23%) will commute 40+ minutes.
- Most people **don't use a mobile app** for beer at all (57%)
- Of those that use a beer app, **Untappd** was by far the most used (72%), followed by BeerMenus (16%)
- For those that use beer apps, the **most common reasons were to save favorite beers** (17 votes), see beer reviews (11 votes), discover and try new beers (10 votes), socialize with beer drinking friends (8 votes), learn more about a beer (ABV, tasting notes, etc) (7 votes), to locate beer (6 votes) to get beer recommendations (6 votes)
- Most people were **between 21 and 40 years old** (84%), with a handful of beer drinkers 40-50 (11%)
- **More men are beer drinkers** (61%) compared to women
- Most beer drinkers **live in large cities or suburbs** (93%)
- From the Kano analysis, the two features that are most attractive (and differentiators from competitors) are **ordering beer for delivery** and **checking beer stock at locations**.
- One feature got mixed responses in the Kano analysis – **getting recommendations from a list of available options**. Upon further questioning, many people misunderstood this question and thought it was just about getting recommendations in general, or scanning barcodes on a beer to get similar recommendations. Many people had a negative experience with recommendations from apps before.
- Two features that participants were **indifferent** towards were alerts when favorite beer is available, and selling/trading/donating unwanted beer.

Competitor Analysis

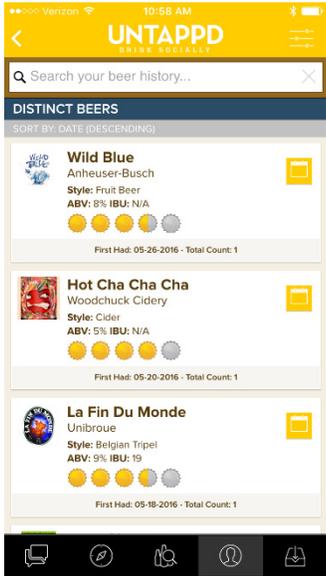
Background

Four competitor mobile apps were reviewed – Untappd, BeerMenus, BrewGene, and DoorDash (not a beer app, but reviewed for delivery purposes). These apps were analyzed against usability heuristics as well as user needs and priorities gathered through interviews and questionnaires.

Findings

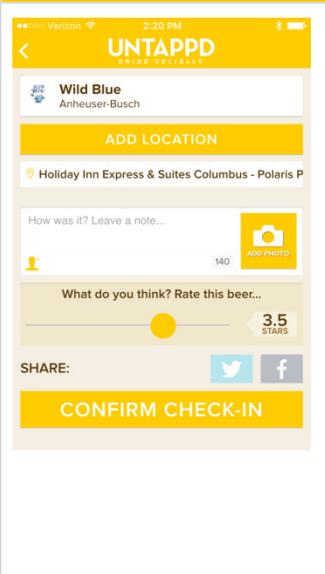
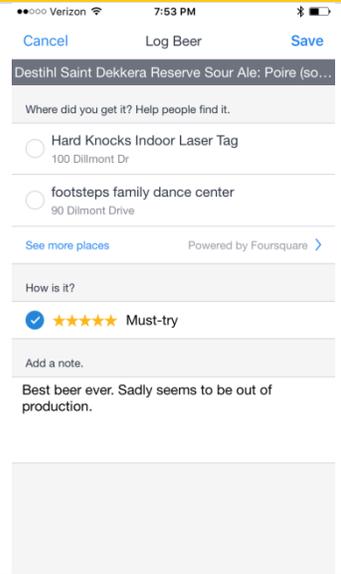
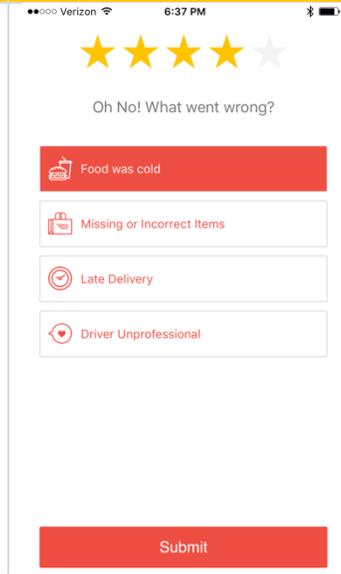
Favorites/My beer list

The favorites list is a primary reason people use beer apps, but many competitors do a mediocre job of implementing it. At minimum, it should be quickly accessible, show my rating and notes, and provide search, sorting and filtering options.

Untappd OK	BeerMenus Good	BrewGene OK	DoorDash Not available
			<p>N/A</p>
<p>List built by “checking in” beers – doesn’t work well retroactively. List shows average ratings (not my personal ratings). Searching for beers provides too many results, with the intended beer often past page 1.</p>	<p>List is simple, easily accessible and shows my rating and notes. Searching finds the intended beer quickly, but long names are truncated. Repeat beers show multiple times and can be rated differently, which seems unnecessary.</p>	<p>List shows my rating, but tasting notes are buried behind a click. List can be searched, sorted and filtered which is a nice touch. Searching for a beer is painful and often doesn’t find intended beer.</p>	<p>DoorDash is a food delivery service, and doesn’t provide any favorites functionality.</p>

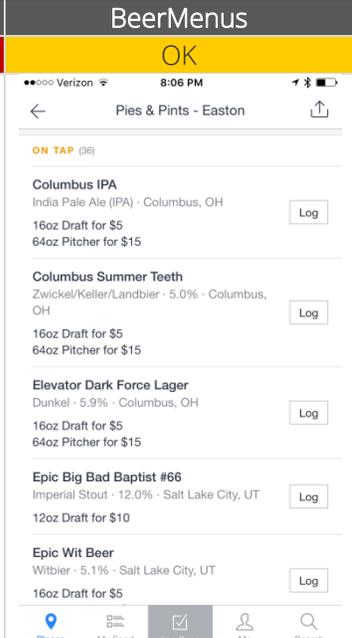
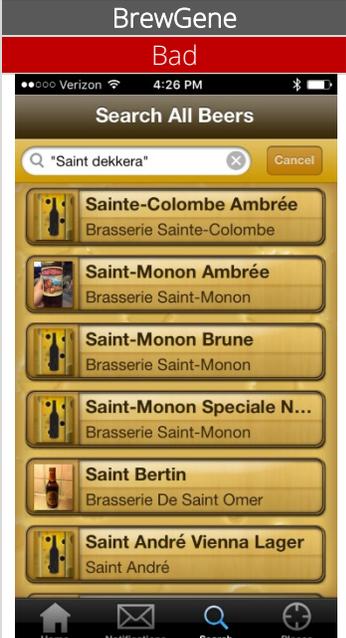
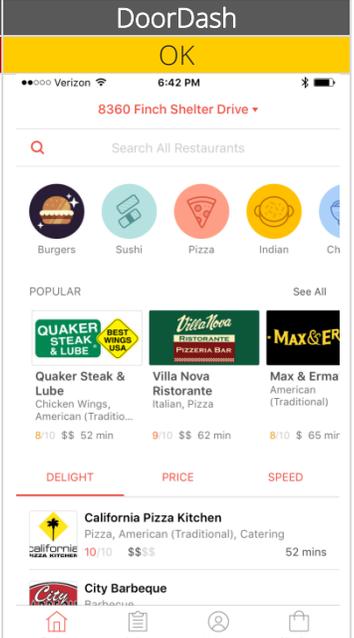
Ratings/reviews

Ratings and reviews are simple 1-5 stars with a notes section. Ratings from others are aggregated, but reviews from others are not. Advanced tasting notes and ratings like hop and body are not available.

Untappd	BeerMenus	BrewGene	DoorDash
			
<p>Ratings are 1-5 stars with 0.25 increments (maybe too granular and hard to choose). Notes have 140 char limit and are quickly lost (don't stay in my list). Reviews from others are shown in a timeline w/ lots of unnecessary information – hard to quickly get feel for a new beer. No advanced rating for qualities (hop, body, etc.)</p>	<p>Ratings are 1-5 stars, tied to words (“must-try”, “no thanks” etc). Notes don't seem to have a limit and are easy to find in my list later. Ratings/reviews only come from me – none available from others. If you log a repeat beer, you're prompted to rate again (odd). No advanced rating for qualities (hop, body, etc.)</p>	<p>Ratings are 1-5 stars with 0.5 increments (hard to adjust w/ fat finger issues). No submit button which I kept forgetting, and many other actions can be taken from same screen which can be overwhelming. Adding notes is further down the screen and requires an extra click. Seeing other's notes requires several clicks. Notes can be public or private (I think?)</p>	<p>Ratings are 1-5 stars. Ratings are on a restaurant basis, not on individual food items or delivery person. This aggregate rating seems meaningless since a bad delivery person could tank the rating for a restaurant. You're prompted (repeatedly) to rate immediately after receiving food and whenever you open the app. For less than 5 star ratings, you have the option to report a problem to customer service.</p>

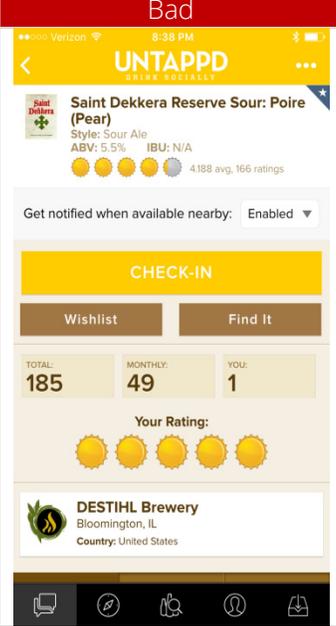
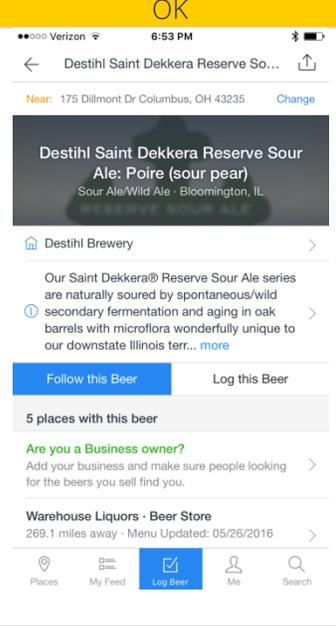
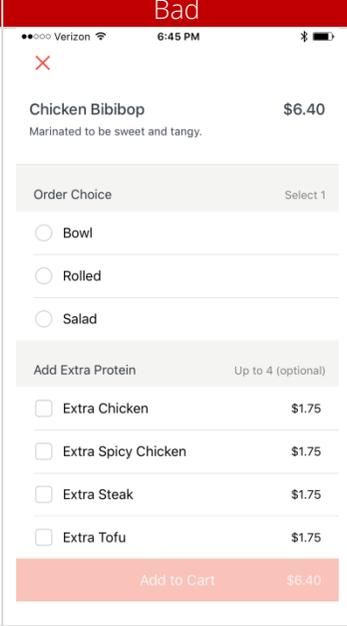
Discovering new beer

Suggestions don't seem personally tailored, and searching, sorting and filtering are limited. Most apps just suggest top rated or popular options.

			
<p>Recommendations and nearby options don't seem to be tailored to my tastes and can't be filtered in a meaningful way. Very few details about beer provided and reviews are sparse, making selection hard. Top rated and trending beers again aren't tailored to me.</p>	<p>No recommendations, so discovery comes from search or notifications about beer/bars you're following. Search works well, and beers have clear descriptions to help with selection, but there are no reviews from others to read.</p>	<p>Tries to help with discovery, but falls short in several areas. Searching is error prone and provides little feedback. Recommendations don't seem well-tailored. Can save beers on watch list but won't be notified if they're available. Can get recommendations from friends, top 100 list or random option, but not tailored to my tastes.</p>	<p>No recommendations, but home screen provides multiple ways to discover new food from home screen. Can also search within menus for certain items/ingredients. In SERPs, meta data helps you decide if you want to see full menu.</p>

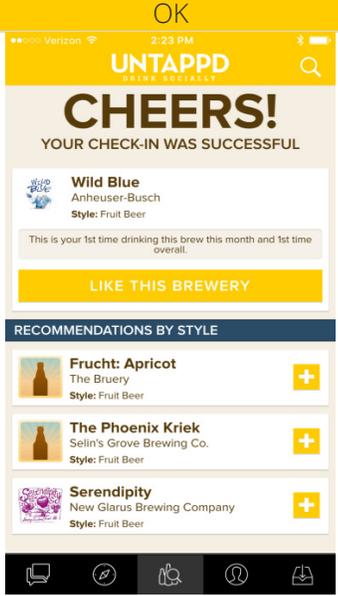
Learning more about a beer

Beer details are very limited, usually no more than you can find by reading the label or packaging. You can usually see an average rating, but more detailed reviews and tasting notes are sparse and hard to find.

Untappd	BeerMenus	BrewGene	DoorDash
<p>Bad</p> 	<p>OK</p> 	<p>Bad</p> 	<p>Bad</p> 
<p>Basic information is provided - name, brewery, style, ABV, IBU and average rating. No advanced tasting notes or description. Reviews scattered through a long timeline.</p>	<p>Basic information is provided - name, brewery, style, and ABV. Description from brewer also provided (same as packaging likely). No advanced tasting notes, and no IBU that I've seen. No reviews.</p>	<p>Basic information is provided - name, brewery, style, ABV, IBU and average rating. No advanced tasting notes or description. Reviews are hidden behind several clicks and only accessible one at a time.</p>	<p>Very minimal details provided by restaurant. No pictures.</p>

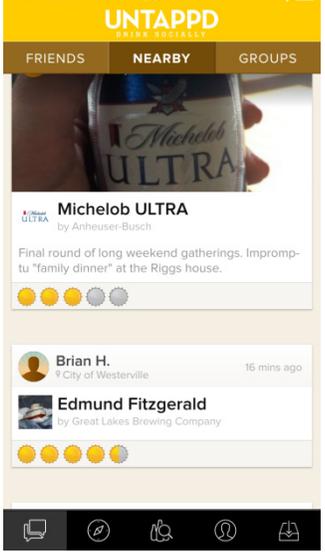
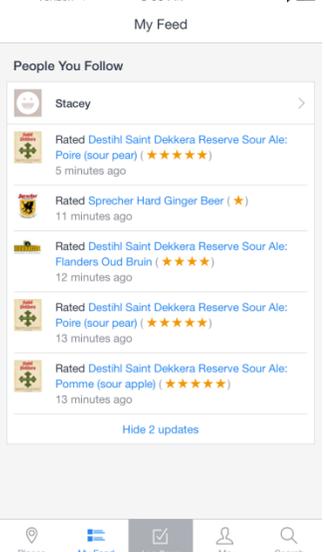
Recommendations

When provided, recommendations aren't accurately tailored to my tastes or the nearby availability. They're based on being a similar style, or having a high average rating by users in general.

Untappd	BeerMenus	BrewGene	DoorDash
 <p>OK</p> <p>Not available</p> <p>N/A</p>	 <p>OK</p> <p>Not available</p> <p>N/A</p>	 <p>OK</p> <p>Not available</p> <p>N/A</p>	 <p>OK</p> <p>Not available</p> <p>N/A</p>
<p>Recommendations by style are provided after you check in a beer, but there's no indication of how much I'd like it or if it's available nearby. You can add to a wish list using the + button. Recommendations may be included in the "nearby beers" listing but they don't seem tailored. You can also see top rated and trending beers, but again they are not tailored.</p>	<p>No recommendations provided.</p>	<p>Recommendations are (supposedly) based on my beer ratings, but after rating 5 beers they aren't very accurate. You can see a list of general recommendation but can't filter by style or availability. You can also see recommendations at the bottom of each beer listing, but it's based on ratings by users that also rated that particular beer (not on similar qualities or style).</p>	<p>No recommendations provided.</p>

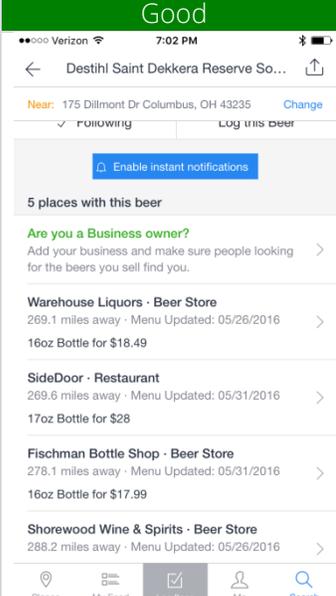
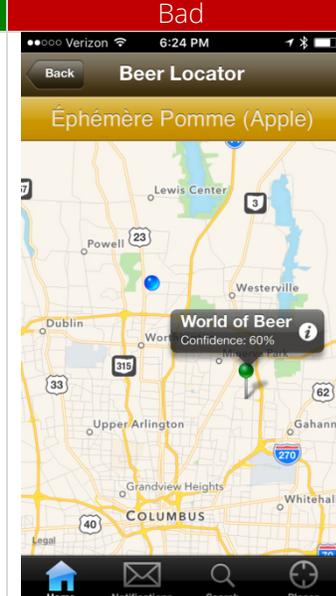
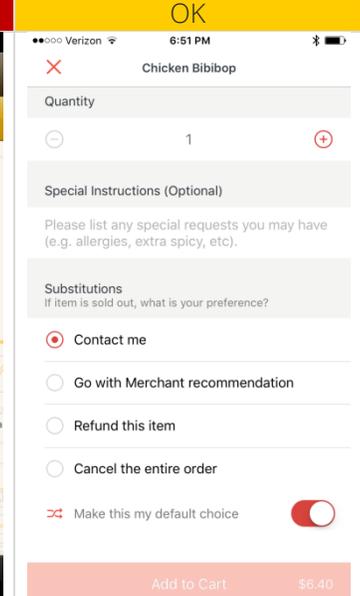
Social

Social is well integrated into Untappd where it's the primary function for the app. Others barely incorporate it as an afterthought.

Untappd	BeerMenus	BrewGene	DoorDash
Good	Bad	OK	Not available
			<p>N/A</p>
<p>Social is Untappd's focus. The main interaction is checking in when you drink a beer at a location. You can also toast (like) check-ins and meet up with friends at nearby locations. You can also cross post check-ins to Twitter and Facebook. Breweries participate as well, and it was super cool to get a toast from my favorite brewery!</p>	<p>No clear social integration. You can follow people and see their actions in a feed, but there's no clear way to find or follow people. Check-ins appear to be powered by FourSquare, but again if there is an integration I couldn't find it.</p>	<p>You can invite friends to use the app, and share tasting notes and recommendations. Finding friends is clunky and error-prone. You can also tweet or create a Facebook post from a beer listing.</p>	<p>No social features provided.</p>

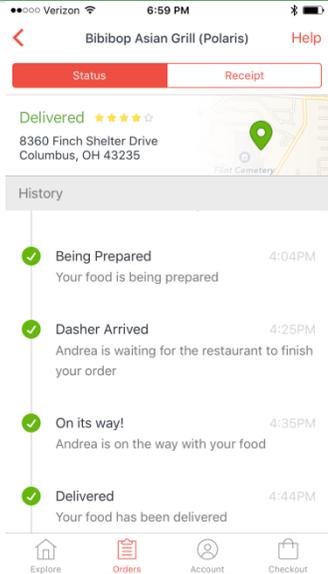
Stock and availability

Availability is crowdsourced, so accuracy varies depending on check-ins. Including the business owners seems to help accuracy. Stock isn't available across the board.

Untappd	BeerMenus	BrewGene	DoorDash
 <p>The screenshot shows the Untappd app interface. At the top, it says 'OK' in a yellow bar. Below that, it says 'FIND BEER AROUND YOU: 75 MILES'. There are two beer listings: 'Temperance Row Brewing' and 'Uptown Deli and Brew'. Each listing includes the name, address, category, and a note about how many people have had the beer.</p>	 <p>The screenshot shows the BeerMenus app interface. At the top, it says 'Good' in a green bar. Below that, it shows a beer listing for 'Destihl Saint Dekkera Reserve So...'. It includes the address, a 'Log this beer' button, and a list of 5 places with this beer. There is also a section for business owners to add their business.</p>	 <p>The screenshot shows the BrewGene app interface. At the top, it says 'Bad' in a red bar. Below that, it says 'Beer Locator' and shows a map of Columbus, Ohio. A specific beer, 'Éphémère Pomme (Apple)', is highlighted on the map. A 'World of Beer' badge is visible on the map with a 'Confidence: 60%'.</p>	 <p>The screenshot shows the DoorDash app interface. At the top, it says 'OK' in a yellow bar. Below that, it shows a 'Chicken Bibimbop' item. The quantity is set to 1. There are options for special instructions, substitutions, and contact information. The item is priced at \$6.40.</p>
<p>Stock isn't provided, and availability is based on recent check-ins (crowdsourced). Locations shown are primarily bars and restaurants, not grocery stores where people buy beer more frequently.</p>	<p>Stock isn't provided, but availability, bottle size or draught and cost are all listed. Data is crowdsourced from users and businesses, and seems recently updated. Can't filter results or search at a different address, and for popular beers the availability listing is crazy long.</p>	<p>Stock isn't provided, and availability is sparse and out-of-date. On the map results, it even says "Confidence: 60%". In many cases, trying to locate a beer throws an error that not enough data is available. This feature really should be removed since it's so inaccurate.</p>	<p>Stock isn't provided. If a restaurant shows in the listings, it's usually available to order from but sometimes restaurants show as closed or pre-order. You chose how to handle out-of-stock items when adding them to your cart, and can also set this option by default. Some menus contain items that are no longer sold, and there's no way to report that.</p>

Delivery

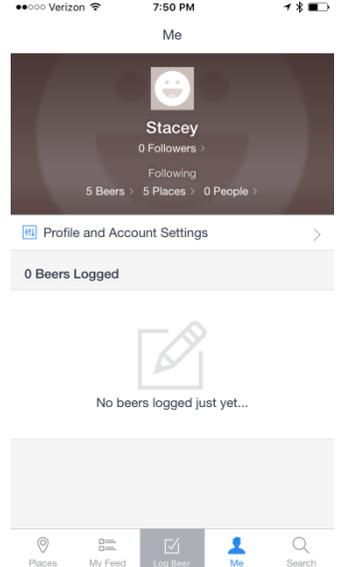
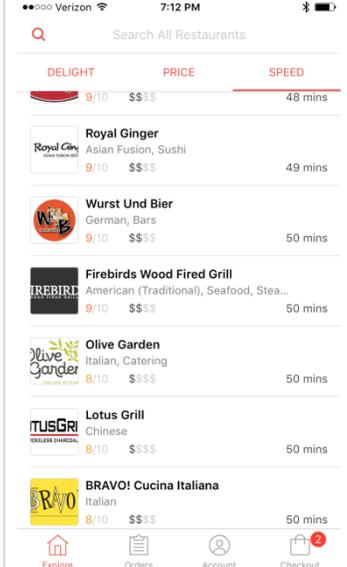
Delivery isn't offered for any beer apps near my location, but it is provided by Saucey, Delivery.com and others in different parts of the country. I evaluated my favorite food delivery app instead to get a good baseline for functionality.

Untappd	BeerMenus	BrewGene	DoorDash
Not available	Not available	Not available	Good
N/A	N/A	N/A	
No delivery provided.	No delivery provided.	No delivery provided.	<p>ETA is provided upfront, and drivers often arrive early, which feels great. Status updates are clear and provided at just the right steps, and you can turn on push or text notifications. You can contact your driver and vice-versa if needed. The only areas for improvement are an updated ETA after food is picked up and GPS tracking.</p>

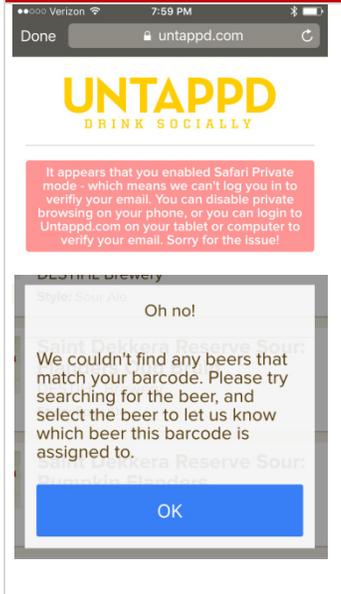
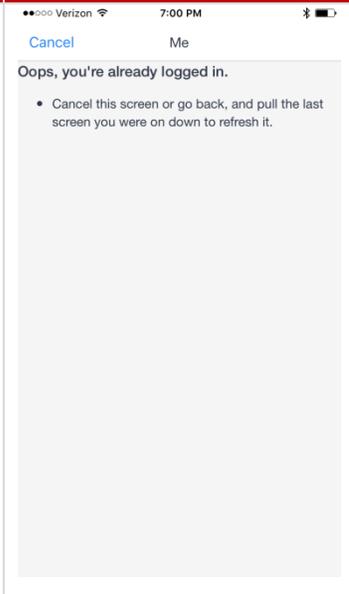
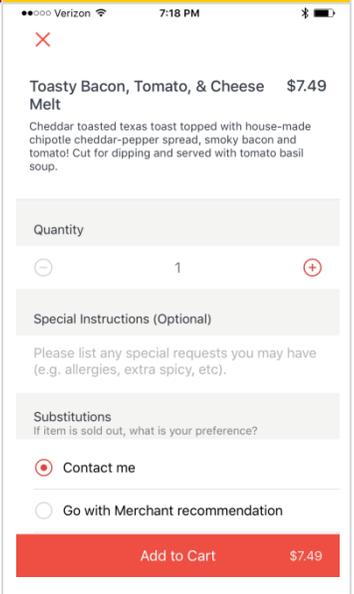
Heuristic: Visibility of system status

Untappd OK	BeerMenus Good	BrewGene OK	DoorDash Good
<p>Hard to remember which screen I'm on or how to get to where I want, causing a lot of pogo-sticking. Adding a recommended beer to the wish list provides very little feedback, and I only stumbled on the functionality on accident.</p>	<p>It's always clear what's going on in this app. They make great use of subtle animations to give just enough feedback without being disruptive. Search is particularly well handled.</p>	<p>Rating a beer provides no feedback – there's not even a submit button. I regularly found myself looking for one after (secretly) rating a beer already. Search provides little feedback as well, either showing no results or the wrong results without any indication as to why.</p>	<p>Status is always clear in the app, with a few minor areas for improvement like an updated ETA when food is picked up and GPS tracking. One other minor area for improvement are restaurants that are closed or taking pre-order. It would be nice to know when the next time it will be open at a glance.</p>

Heuristic: Consistency and standards

Untappd	BeerMenus	BrewGene	DoorDash
			
<p>The top, right menu changes appearance and functionality on almost every screen. I still can't remember which menu does what after using the app for a few hours.</p>	<p>Desktop site and mobile app have drastically different functionality. Can't log beer from desktop site.</p>	<p>Doesn't follow many modern mobile app conventions, but it may not have been updated recently. Home screen contains several buttons for key functions, but today this would likely be a hamburger menu for easier access.</p>	<p>Consistent with platform conventions and within itself. Impressive considering how many different restaurant menus they support.</p>

Heuristic: Error prevention

Untappd	BeerMenus	BrewGene	DoorDash
			
<p>Lots of errors during initial set-up and also while searching or scanning barcodes. Errors are overly wordy, don't provide clear next steps, and several seem like they could be easily prevented.</p>	<p>Repeated errors while trying to log a beer, and restarting the app and phone made no difference. Took over an hour to find a way to get around this error with just brute force trial and error.</p>	<p>Searching for beers and finding friends produced the most errors. During first use (and until you create an account), almost all clicks cause this pop-up to happen. While these aren't technically errors, the constant pop-ups sure make me feel like I've made a mistake. If an account is required to do pretty much everything, you should be prompted to login/sign up first rather than this behavior.</p>	<p>When menus aren't accurate, there is no way to report this to DoorDash. This error doesn't get caught until the driver arrives at the restaurant, delaying the whole order. Even then DoorDash does not seem to take (quick) action to revise the menus. Drivers also cause errors, either not handing over the right order (one guy gave me his personal Arby's order instead of the Carrabba's I ordered), or not confirming the food is all there while at the restaurant.</p>

Heuristic: Aesthetic and minimalist design

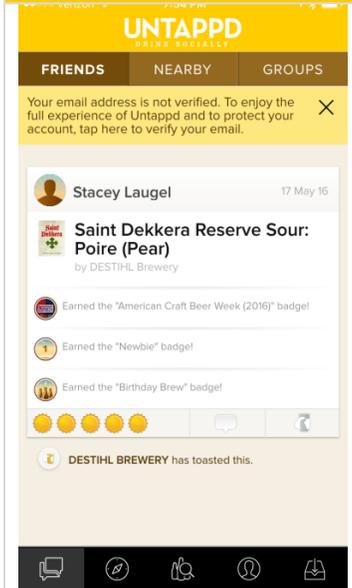
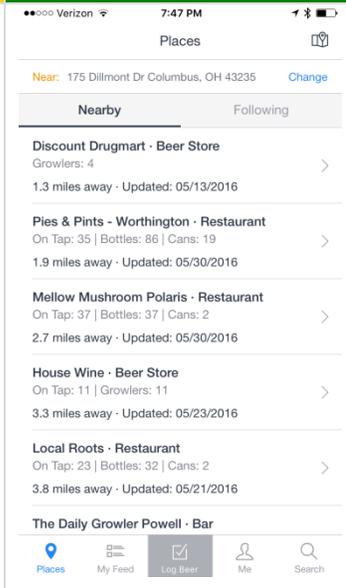
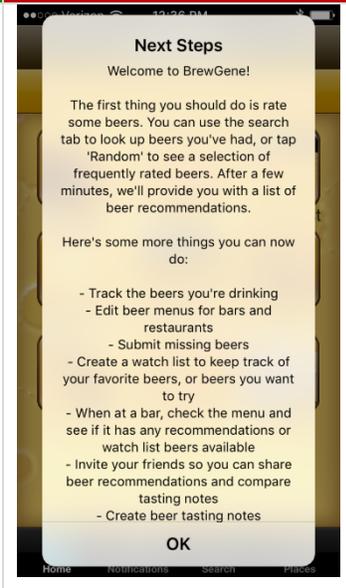
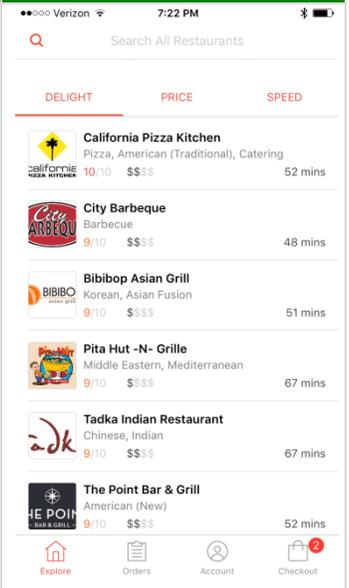
Untappd	BeerMenus	BrewGene	DoorDash
 <p>OK</p> <p>UNTAPPD DRINK SOCIALLY</p> <p>FRIENDS NEARBY GROUPS</p> <p>Your email address is not verified. To enjoy the full experience of Untappd and to protect your account, tap here to verify your email.</p> <p>Stacey Laugel 17 May 16</p> <p>Saint Dekker Reserve Sour: Poire (Pear) by DESTIHL Brewery</p> <p>Earned the "American Craft Beer Week (2016)" badge!</p> <p>Earned the "Newbie" badge!</p> <p>Earned the "Birthday Brew" badge!</p> <p>DESTIHL BREWERY has toasted this.</p>	 <p>Good</p> <p>Places</p> <p>Near: 175 Dillmont Dr Columbus, OH 43235 Change</p> <p>Nearby Following</p> <p>Discount Drugmart · Beer Store Growlers: 4 1.3 miles away · Updated: 05/13/2016</p> <p>Pies & Pints - Worthington · Restaurant On Tap: 35 Bottles: 86 Cans: 19 1.9 miles away · Updated: 05/30/2016</p> <p>Mellow Mushroom Polaris · Restaurant On Tap: 37 Bottles: 37 Cans: 2 2.7 miles away · Updated: 05/30/2016</p> <p>House Wine · Beer Store On Tap: 11 Growlers: 11 3.3 miles away · Updated: 05/23/2016</p> <p>Local Roots · Restaurant On Tap: 23 Bottles: 32 Cans: 2 3.8 miles away · Updated: 05/21/2016</p> <p>The Daily Growler Powell · Bar</p> <p>Places My Feed Log Beer Me Search</p>	 <p>Bad</p> <p>Next Steps</p> <p>Welcome to BrewGene!</p> <p>The first thing you should do is rate some beers. You can use the search tab to look up beers you've had, or tap 'Random' to see a selection of frequently rated beers. After a few minutes, we'll provide you with a list of beer recommendations.</p> <p>Here's some more things you can now do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Track the beers you're drinking - Edit beer menus for bars and restaurants - Submit missing beers - Create a watch list to keep track of your favorite beers, or beers you want to try - When at a bar, check the menu and see if it has any recommendations or watch list beers available - Invite your friends so you can share beer recommendations and compare tasting notes - Create beer tasting notes <p>OK</p> <p>Home Notifications Search Prices</p>	 <p>Good</p> <p>Search All Restaurants</p> <p>DELIGHT PRICE SPEED</p> <p>California Pizza Kitchen Pizza, American (Traditional), Catering 10/10 \$\$\$ 52 mins</p> <p>City Barbeque Barbecue 9/10 \$\$\$ 48 mins</p> <p>Bibibop Asian Grill Korean, Asian Fusion 9/10 \$\$\$ 51 mins</p> <p>Pita Hut -N- Grille Middle Eastern, Mediterranean 9/10 \$\$\$ 67 mins</p> <p>Tadka Indian Restaurant Chinese, Indian 9/10 \$\$\$ 67 mins</p> <p>The Point Bar & Grill American (New) 9/10 \$\$\$ 52 mins</p> <p>Explore Orders Account Checkout</p>
<p>Too many prompts and notes that hang at the top of screens with little value. Timelines (where reviews are listed) are cluttered with unnecessary badges and blurry, repetitive pictures.</p>	<p>Design is very clean and minimal – almost too sparse. No unnecessary information.</p>	<p>Riddled with pop-ups at every turn. Most of the time this information would be better built into the screen or not provided at all. This introduction screen would be best as a swipe-able tour on first launch.</p>	<p>Clean design without much unnecessary information. I would argue that aggregate restaurant/delivery ratings are meaningless, and get rid of the "Delight" sorting option. The only other area of waste are the substitution options, which could be collapsed to a single line when a default is chosen.</p>

Photo Ethnography

Background

Photos were taken while interviewing, beer shopping and beer sampling with friends. The goal was to capture the feeling of selecting, purchasing and enjoying beer.

Findings

- Craft beer is a fun, social hobby shared by many
- Beer options can feel overwhelming, even in a local grocery store
- In a restaurant, beers are usually categorized by draught or bottle, and then by style
- In a store, beers are usually organized by domestic/import, and also separated by make-your-own 6 packs, bombers (larger, more expensive bottles), and by 6 pack and larger cases.
- Learning about beer is often social, either with a beer tasting club or course, or more casually by sampling friends' beers.



Appendix

Questionnaire



Beer survey

Do you like to drink beer? Would you like to try new beers and locate beers you love? Complete this brief survey to help build a better beer app!

* Required

How often do you try new beer? *

- Once a week or more
- 1-3 times a month
- Every 2-3 months
- A couple times a year
- Rarely or never

How often do you buy beer at these locations? *

	Always	Often	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
Grocery Store	<input type="radio"/>				
Convenience Store	<input type="radio"/>				
Restaurant	<input type="radio"/>				
Bar	<input type="radio"/>				

How long would you commute to get your favorite beer? *

- I wouldn't commute at all
- Less than 15 minutes
- 16 - 25 minutes
- 26 - 40 minutes
- 40 - 60 minutes
- Over an hour

Do you use any of the following beer apps? *

- AnyBeer ABV
- Beer Satchel
- BeerBuddy
- BeerMenus
- Brewery
- BrewGene
- Drizly
- Thirstie
- Untappd
- I don't use any beer apps
- Other: _____

Why do you use beer apps? *

- To save my favorite beers
- To see beer reviews
- To locate beer
- To socialize with friends or family
- To get beer recommendations
- To learn more about a beer (ABV, tasting notes, etc)
- To get notified when my favorite beers are available or nearby
- To discover and try new beers
- To find local breweries or beers
- To find popular beers
- I don't use any beer apps
- Other: _____

How would you feel if you had a beer app that: *

	I would love it	I would expect it	I am neutral	I wouldn't like it	I would hate it
Can scan options and provide recommendations?	<input type="radio"/>				
Cannot scan options and provide recommendations?	<input type="radio"/>				
Can order beer for delivery?	<input type="radio"/>				
Cannot order beer for delivery?	<input type="radio"/>				
Can check beer stock at locations?	<input type="radio"/>				
Cannot check beer stock at locations?	<input type="radio"/>				
Can alert you when your favorite beer is available?	<input type="radio"/>				
Cannot alert you when your favorite beer is available?	<input type="radio"/>				
Can sell/trade/donate unwanted beer?	<input type="radio"/>				
Cannot sell/trade/donate unwanted beer?	<input type="radio"/>				

How old are you? *

- 21 - 30
- 31 - 40
- 40 - 50
- 51+
- Prefer not to disclose

What is your gender? *

- Male
- Female
- Trans
- Prefer not to disclose
- Other : _____

Where do you live? *

- In a large city
- In a town or suburb
- In a rural area

SUBMIT

Kano Analysis

Features list		GRADE	A	M	I	O	R	Q
1	Scan options and provide recommendations	I	14	2	23	4	0	1
2	Order beer for delivery	A	21	1	17	5	0	0
3	Check beer stock at locations	A	22	0	14	7	0	1
4	Alert you when your favorite beer is available	I	9	0	30	4	0	1
5	Sell/trade/donate unwanted beer	I	9	0	30	4	0	1
		GRADE	A	M	I	O	R	Q

Satisfaction	Dissatisfaction
0	-0.139534884
0	-0.136363636
0	-0.162790698
0	-0.093023256
0	-0.093023256
Matzler & Berger scale	