nebulaONE -
UX Heuristic Evaluation

A Case Study

by Chelsy Albertson

Project Overview

The project:

Help campus leadership decide which AI tool to invest in for all members of the university

Project duration:

December 2025 - January 2026

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Central Question

Is nebulaONE an easy-to-use AI agent creation tool that is worth university investment?

Project Overview

My role:

UX Researcher

Methods:

UX heuristic evaluation through a survey

Responsibilities:

Create a survey, based on UX principles, that asks testers of nebulaONE about their experience creating an AI agent

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Hurdles

Though my project team was tasked with evaluating if nebulaONE is worth university investment, the team had some uncertainty around whether our determinations would really sway university leadership’s decisions, or if leadership would simply choose the cheapest AI tool.

The university already invested in an AI tool, Copilot, so the reason for our team to test nebulaONE was unclear at first.

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Solution Approaches to Hurdles

I led the discussion in project meetings about how we can determine if university leadership will truly listen to our feedback. As a result, a team member reached out to the lead of our department to seek answers, and we learned that university leadership was willing to hear our research results and feedback, regardless of cost and budget.

Our project team learned that the university wanted to test other AI tools, aside from Copilot, to determine if they could find a lower cost AI tool to distribute to students, staff, and faculty for free.

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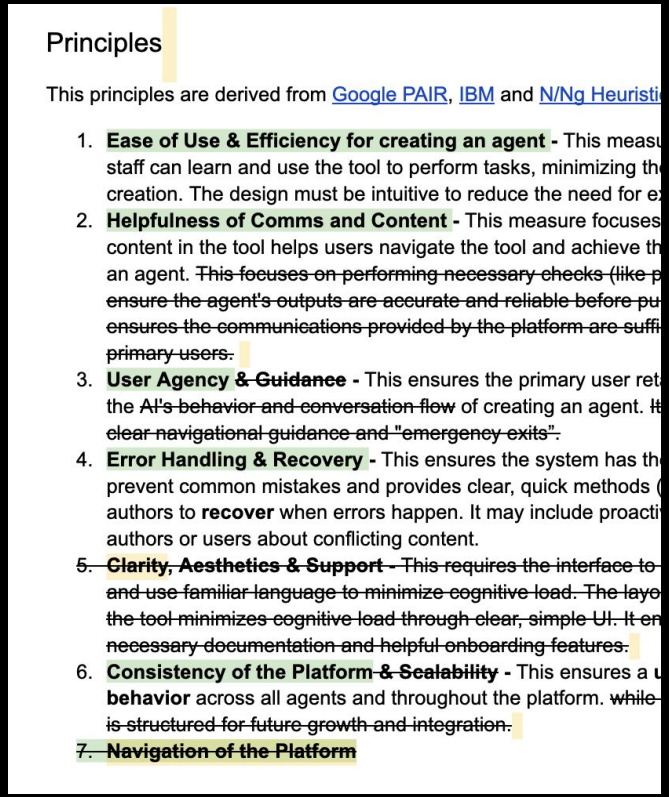
Process

My colleague and I collaborated on a UX Heuristic Evaluation that we pulled together from reliable UX resources (like NNG). We determined which principles we should focus on in creating the standardized survey for nebulaONE testers to take.



Principles

This principles are derived from Google PAIR, IBM and N/Ng Heuristi

1. **Ease of Use & Efficiency for creating an agent -** This measu staff can learn and use the tool to perform tasks, minimizing th creation. The design must be intuitive to reduce the need for ex
2. **Helpfulness of Comms and Content -** This measure focuses content in the tool helps users navigate the tool and achieve th an agent. ~~This focuses on performing necessary checks (like p ensure the agent's outputs are accurate and reliable before pu ensures the communications provided by the platform are suffi primary users.~~
3. **User Agency ~~& Guidance~~ -** This ensures the primary user ret the ~~AI's behavior and conversation flow~~ of creating an agent. ~~It~~ ~~clear navigational guidance and "emergency exits".~~
4. **Error Handling & Recovery -** This ensures the system has th prevent common mistakes and provides clear, quick methods (authors to **recover** when errors happen. It may include proacti authors or users about conflicting content.
5. ~~**Clarity, Aesthetics & Support -** This requires the interface to and use familiar language to minimize cognitive load. The layo the tool minimizes cognitive load through clear, simple UI. It en necessary documentation and helpful onboarding features.~~
6. **Consistency of the Platform ~~& Scalability~~ -** This ensures a **u behavior** across all agents and throughout the platform. ~~while~~ ~~is structured for future growth and integration.~~
7. ~~**Navigation of the Platform**~~

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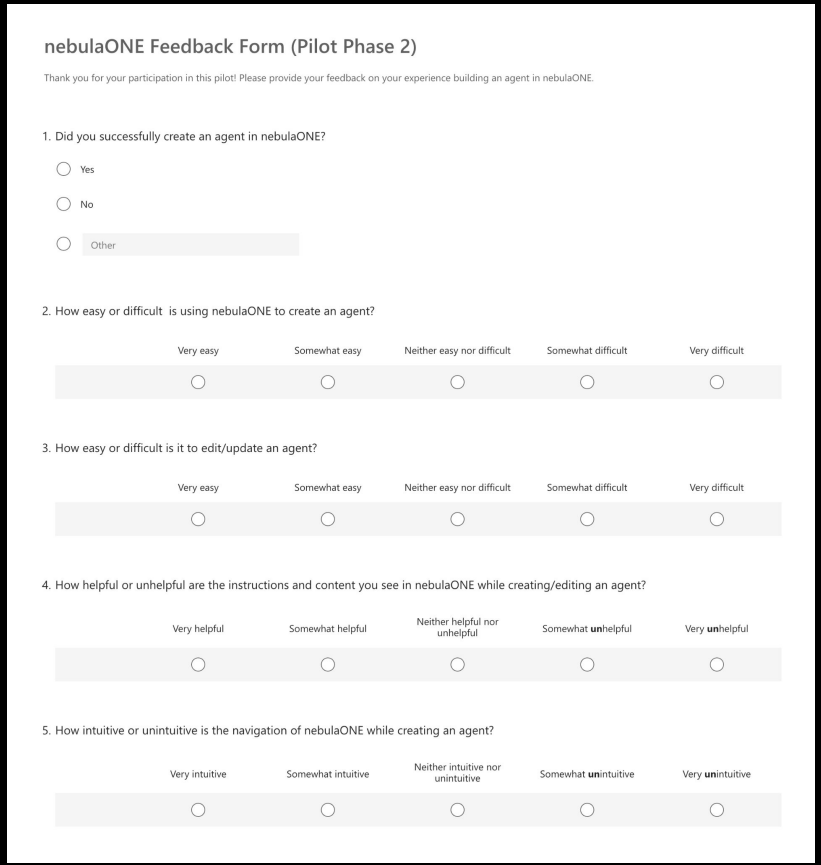
Process

After determining which heuristic principles to focus on, I created a survey that was distributed to all testers of nebulaONE. With this survey, testers of the nebulaONE tool were able to give feedback in a standardized manner that helped our project team determine if nebulaONE was worth university investment.



nebulaONE Feedback Form (Pilot Phase 2)

Thank you for your participation in this pilot! Please provide your feedback on your experience building an agent in nebulaONE.

1. Did you successfully create an agent in nebulaONE?

- Yes
- No
- Other

2. How easy or difficult is using nebulaONE to create an agent?

Very easy	Somewhat easy	Neither easy nor difficult	Somewhat difficult	Very difficult
○	○	○	○	○

3. How easy or difficult is it to edit/update an agent?

Very easy	Somewhat easy	Neither easy nor difficult	Somewhat difficult	Very difficult
○	○	○	○	○

4. How helpful or unhelpful are the instructions and content you see in nebulaONE while creating/editing an agent?

Very helpful	Somewhat helpful	Neither helpful nor unhelpful	Somewhat **un**helpful	Very **un**helpful
○	○	○	○	○

5. How intuitive or unintuitive is the navigation of nebulaONE while creating an agent?

Very intuitive	Somewhat intuitive	Neither intuitive nor unintuitive	Somewhat **un**intuitive	Very **un**intuitive
○	○	○	○	○

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Result

All testers took my survey, and the project team determined that nebulaONE was **not** a user-friendly AI tool in which the university should invest. Interestingly enough, right when our project team determined that, university leadership canceled our project, notifying us that they decided to invest in ChatGPT Edu.

What I Learned

- How to run a heuristic evaluation on an AI tool
- How to create my own AI agent
- How to communicate about political decision making at high levels of leadership

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The End