

Competitive Analysis



CareerFoundry
UX Immersion
Thinking Like a Uxer: Task 1.7
Ahoy! Boating Web App
Jay Lawlor

Competitive Analysis

Here I present an analysis for two boating weather apps, *BoatUS: Boat Weather & Tides* and *Buoyweather: Marine Forecasts*, as potential competitors for the *Ahoy!* boating weather app. These two apps include features important for the *Ahoy!* app. Following a general competitive analysis of both apps, I conduct a UX analysis of the BoatUS app.



BoatUS

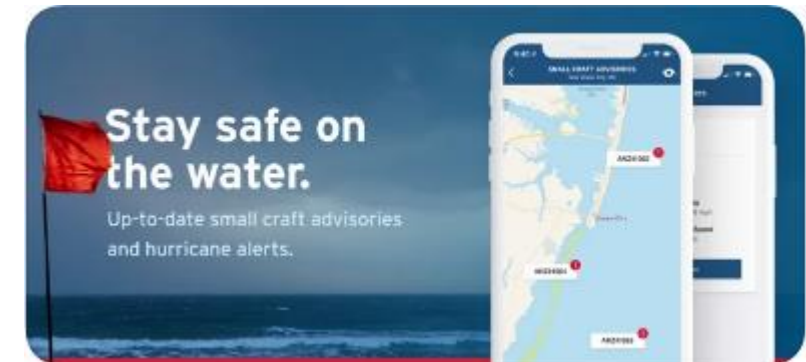
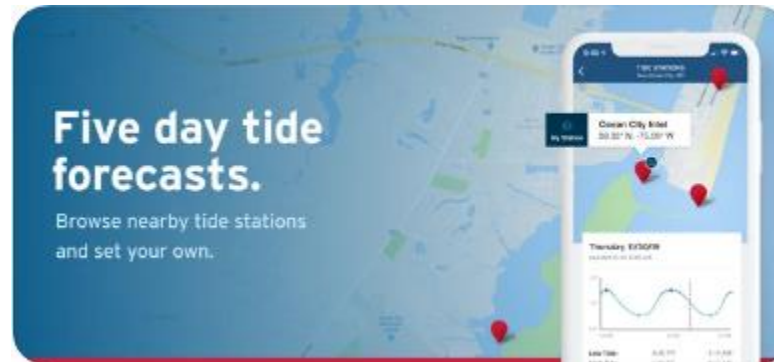


Buoyweather

Competitive Analysis: BoatUS

Overview:

I'll be analyzing a potential competitor called BoatUS which offers a boating weather app featuring current tides, weather and marine conditions on local waterways, five-day forecasts, and small craft weather advisories. The BoatUS app is from the Boat Owners Association of The United States. It is the largest boat owner association in the United States, and has been around since 1966. <https://www.boatus.com/>



Competitive Analysis: BoatUS

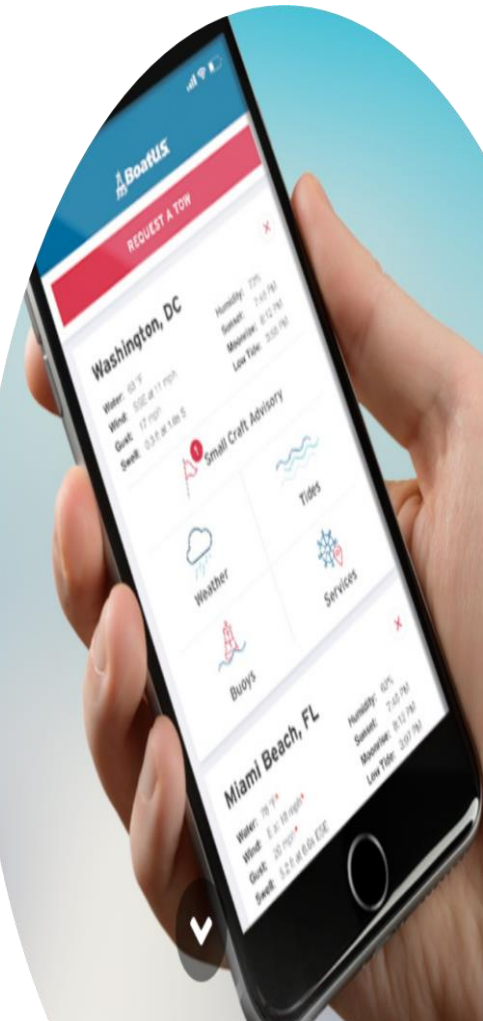
Key Objectives:

BoatUS's tagline is "BoatUS makes boating better." They set themselves apart by being the nation's largest boat owners association with 700,000 members. They attempt to distinguish themselves in the boating weather app marketplace by offering users the option to customize their experience by selecting preferred tide and buoy stations. A user can also get a small craft advisory for their area before going out on the water.

The BoatUS app has a 4.8 stars (out of 5) from over 28,000 ratings on the Apple app store and 4.7 stars (out of 5) from more than 2,100 ratings on the Google Play app store.

Overall Strategy:

BoatUS has a website highlighting the features of its app, an informational video, FAQs, and blog with boating articles. A quick Google search for BoatUS brings their website up as the first result. The other first page results include their wiki and social media pages. BoatUS also has an official information summary on the top right of the Google search page. As the nation's largest association of boat owners, they are well known in the boating community. BoatUS makes regular use of press releases and active posting on their social media pages and website blog.



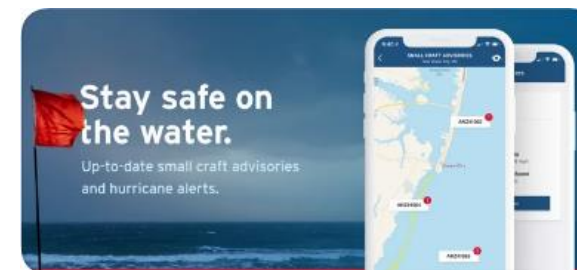
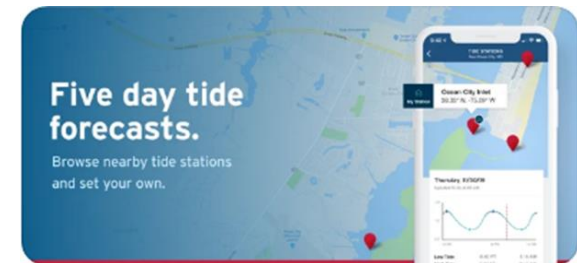
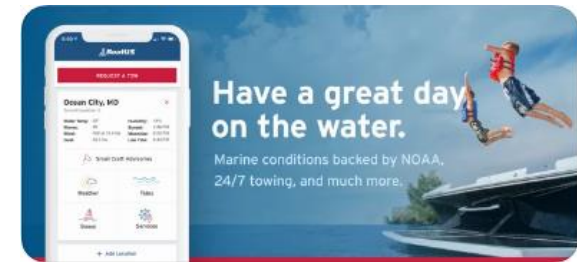
Competitive Analysis: BoatUS

Market Advantage:

BoatUS's biggest market advantage are their 700,000 members. They are one of the first apps to show up in a search of boating weather apps in the Apple app store and the first result in the Google Play app store. They are the second result of a Google search for "boating weather app" only after a 'best of list,' which they are on. In fact, the BoatUS app is included on many "best of" boating app lists. Name recognition is a significant market advantage for BoatUS in the boating weather app space.

Marketing Profile:

I could not find any advertisements for BoatUS online. They do promote BoatUS memberships on their website, social media pages, and on their Apple and Google Play app pages with the invitation to "Join over 600,000 satisfied boaters that don't leave shore without BoatUS every time they're on the water." Given how well-known the BoatUS association is, they have effective word-of-mouth marketing.



Competitive Analysis: BoatUS

SWOT Profile:

Strengths

- Many users and highly rated positive reviews.
- Customized user experience.

Opportunities

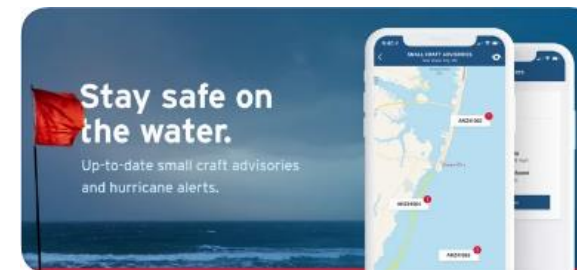
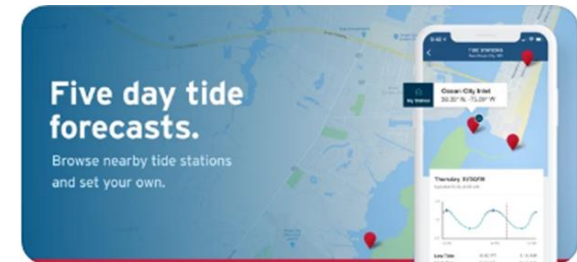
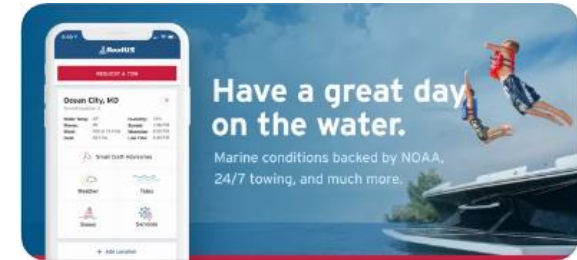
- More focused app for boating weather.
- Access to boating weather on computer, rather than just phone app.

- Lack simple weather conditions rating system.
- Boating app has many features beyond weather which may not offer best UX for quick lookup of weather.

Weaknesses

Threats

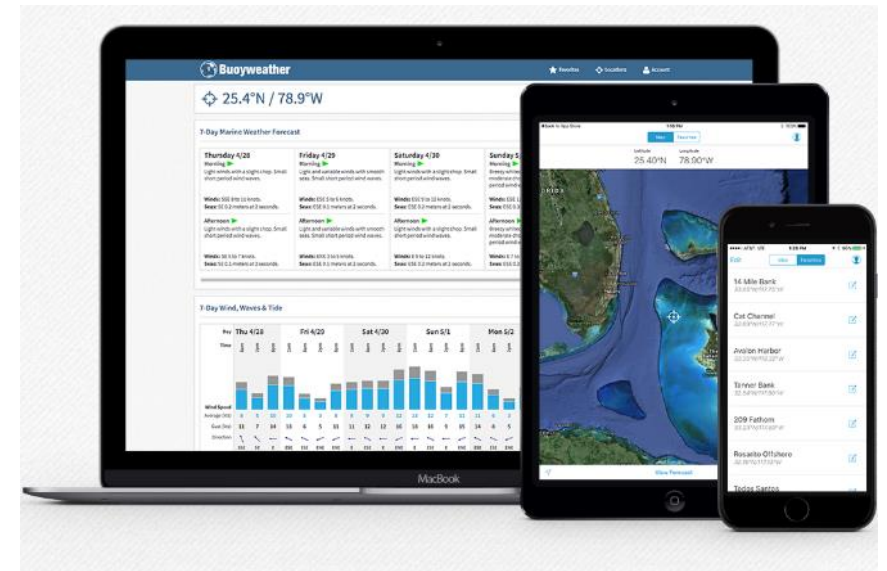
- Other top-rated boating weather apps such as NOAA Marine Forecast, and Marine Forecaster.
- Weather websites that offer marine reports and forecasts.



Competitive Analysis: Buoyweather

Overview:

I'll be analyzing a potential competitor called Buoyweather which offers weather forecasts and charts. Users can access boating weather on their computer, tablet and phone. Buoyweather's point-based marine weather forecasting system empowers users to make informed decisions about their offshore navigation and recreation. Bouyweather was founded in 1999. The app is free, with in-app purchase options for full features. <http://www.buoyweather.com/>



Competitive Analysis: Buoyweather

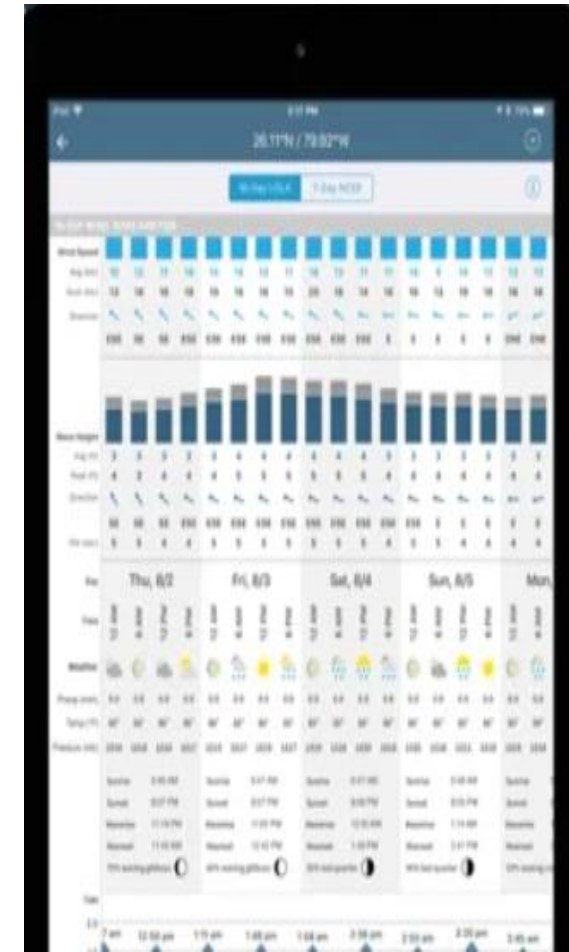
Key Objectives:

Buoyweather's tagline is "The Global Marine Forecasting Solution." They attempt to distinguish themselves in the boating weather app marketplace by offering accurate marine weather forecast for any GPS point in the world through their point-based marine weather forecasting system.

The Buoyweather app has a 4.7 stars (out of 5) from 493 ratings on the Apple app store, but just 3.2 stars (out of 5) from 294 ratings on the Google Play app stores. It would seem the experience is better with Apple users than Android users.

Overall Strategy:

Buoyweather has a website highlighting the features of its app and an opportunity preview their features by entering a location. The site has a link (in the footer menu) to a tutorial, but the page is missing. A quick Google search for "buoyweather" brings their website up as the first result. The other first page results include their Facebook page, Apple and Google Play app pages. Buoyweather has not claimed the Google information panel to provide more company details. The company seems active posting to social media.



Competitive Analysis: Buoyweather

Market Advantage:

Buoyweather's market advantage is that they show up as the top marine weather app on the Discover Boating website (www.discoverboating.com) and the Discover Boating Top 10 list shows up as the first result when you Google "boating weather app". Beyond that, they do not show up on the first page of Google search results. They are in the top ten (#8) when searching "boating weather app" in the Google Play store.

Marketing Profile:

I could not find any advertisements for Buoyweather on Google, Bing, or Yahoo. They may advertise on Facebook, but I have not seen Facebook ads for them. According to Discover Boating, Buoyweather is a favorite weather app among many boaters, so there is at least some market recognition for the product. Perhaps they leverage their social media activity.



Competitive Analysis: Buoyweather

SWOT Profile:

Strengths

- Available on all platforms (PC, Mac, and Apple and Android tablets and phones).
- Solid GPS technology for pinpoint marine forecasts.

- Lack of discoverability on search pages.
- Weather app features routes (e.g. Maine to Massachusetts) as default. Need to enter longitude and latitude for more localized weather.

Weaknesses

Opportunities

- Better UX for getting more localized boating weather reports and forecasts.
- Effective SEO for website.
- Marketing campaign for the app.

- Other top-rated boating weather apps such as BoatUS, NOAA Marine Forecast, and Marine Forecaster.
- More localized marine weather reports and forecasts.

Threats



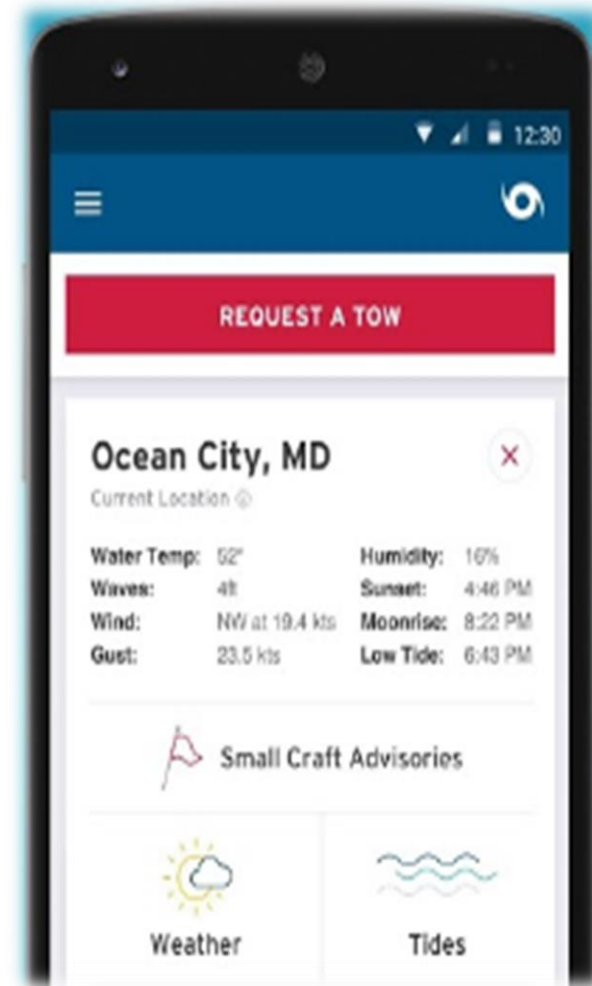
UX Competitive Analysis: BoatUS

Usability

The BoatUS app is mostly intuitive and easy to navigate. There are some usability and UX issues related to using the app for boating weather. For example, there is no “weather” screen in the navigation menu. The user needs to add a location before accessing weather reports and forecasts. The app features requesting a boat tow (a main service from BoatUS), as well a Membership and boat insurance from BoatUS.

Layout

The first thing you notice is the “Request A Tow” CTA button at the top of the screen. This is a featured BoatUS service. Overall, the layout was clear. The Menu icon at the top of the screen slides a navigation menu out from the left of the screen when tapped. It is clear where you can go from the menu. Again, what was lacking was listing “weather” on the menu. This hurts the user experience when looking to get weather reports or forecasts.



UX Competitive Analysis: BoatUS

Navigation Structure

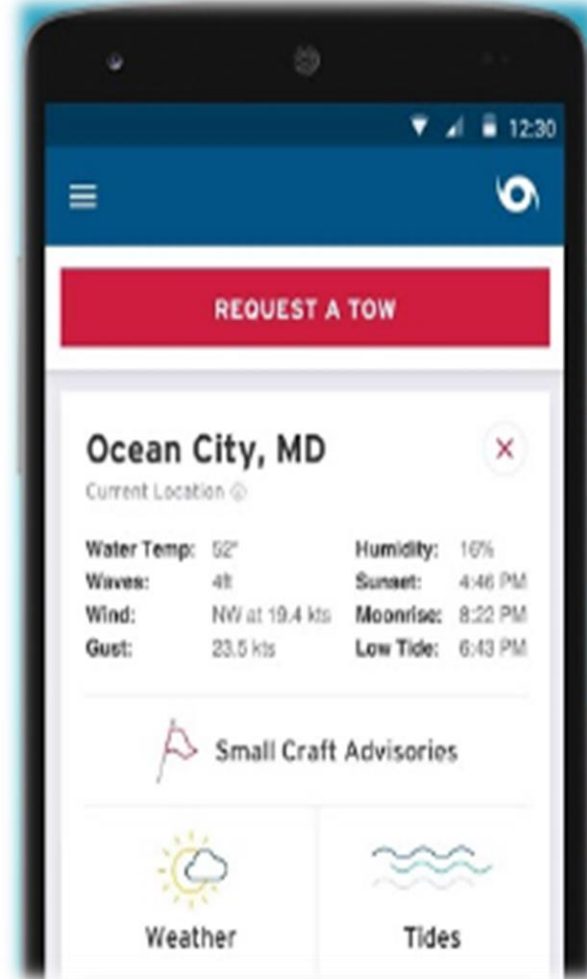
The BoatUS navigation is simple and clear. The menu has Home, Membership, Insurance, Info, Settings, and a CTA button to “Create My Account” or a link to “Log In.” The UX for boaters looking for weather reports and forecasts is lacking from the navigation structure as the weather feature is not listed on the menu.

Compatibility

BoatUS is compatible with iPad, iPhone, and Android devices.

Differentiation

BoatUS has many users and is a highly rated boating app. They offer a customized user experience through saving locations for weather, tides, and buoys. The app is available on both Apple and Android mobile devices but lacks web access on a PC or Mac. The weather and forecast features are easy to read and formatted nicely. But BoatUS does not feature its weather functions. Rather, BoatUS focuses on their core services of boat towing and boat insurance. An area where our Ahoy! app could offer a better user experience is in providing quick access to boating weather reports and forecasts.



UX Competitive Analysis: BoatUS



Calls To Action

The CTAs in the BoatUS boating app are clear. From the Home screen there is a large CTA button to create an account. From there, it is clear you need to create a free account to access all features of the app (even if you have a BoatUS membership or insurance policy). The process of creating an account does not present any issues.

At the bottom of the location screen there is a clear CTA button to Add a Location. Once a location is added, there are clear CTAs for Weather, Tides, Buoys, and Discounts (discounts on boating products and services in the area if you are a BoatUS member – similar to AAA discounts).

