Any.do

Any.do is a task-list based task management app for Android, iOS, and web. The app approaches daily work by asking the users what they want to get done today. Rather than setting up deadlines and reminders, it sets up reminders, and includes a feature called the "any.do moment," where it shows the user the tasks marked for today, and asks users if they'd like to complete the task today, reschedule it for later, or delete it. The app lets users create lists and tasks, with one additional level of subtasks, and add attachments or notes to tasks. Sharing lists and collaborating/delegating was useful and worked as expected. Additionally, it can sync with a google calendar, so tasks can be added that way as well, and tasks added on Any.do will appear in the user's google calendar. The base version of the app is free, but for $2 per month, premium users can also color-code tasks (either by project or by priority), customize themes, customize recurring tasks, and have access to unlimited file sizes on attachments.
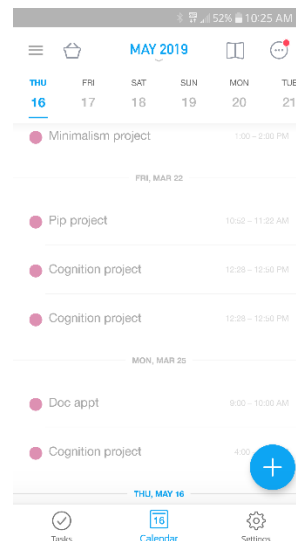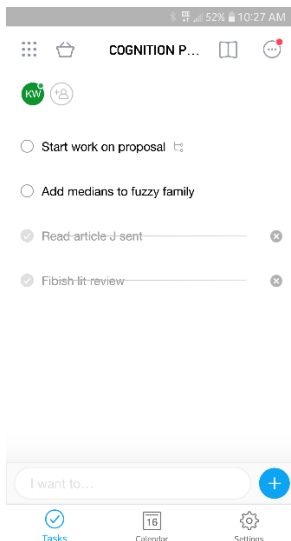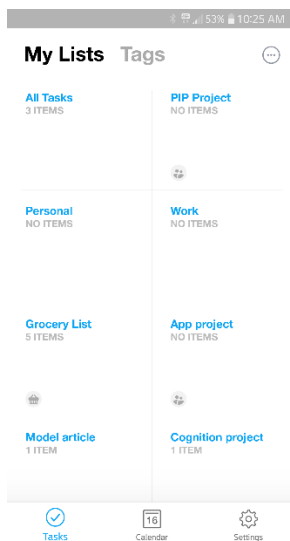
Points in favor:
- We like the idea of the "any.do moment" feature.
- Built-in grocery shopping list
- Quick-add task button

Points against:
- Poor user interface: the app's features can sometimes be confusing because of how it looks (for example, projects are not in a list, but rather in individual boxes in a grid, the calendar function looks nothing like a calendar, etc).
- The execution of the "any.do moment" falls short of its desired goals: it doesn't remember when a user has told it to reschedule a task for later, and will show the task in the next day's moment. This basically renders it useless, as it requires one to go through all tasks every day, and for that, one could just look at all the lists. We feel that this feature is ultimately harmful in that it requires one to face all tasks every day, instead of focusing only on the day's tasks (it should be noted that this feature can be turned off if desired).

Screenshots:

Habitica

Habitica is a list-based task management app for Android, iOS, and the web. The app approaches tasks and habits via a fantasy role-playing game. Users can play the game alone or they can join a party of friends. Completed tasks earn the user experience points and gold, the latter of which can be used to purchase rewards. Habitica divides tasks into three categories: 1) to-dos, which are non-recurring tasks the user wishes to complete; 2) dailies, which are recurring (but not necessarily daily) tasks the user must do; and 3) habits, these can be positive or negative (the former positively impact your totals, the latter negatively impact said totals). All tasks can be rated as "easy, medium, or hard." The harder the task, the greater the reward. Tasks can be organized by using tags, but cannot be sorted into separate lists.

If playing the game with a party—generally a small group of friends—completed tasks reward the party as a whole. Parties can work together to defeat enemies (in our case, we fought feral dust bunnies), gain experience, and gold. For users who enjoy role-playing games (or games in general), Habitica turns to-do list accomplishments into a real-life game.
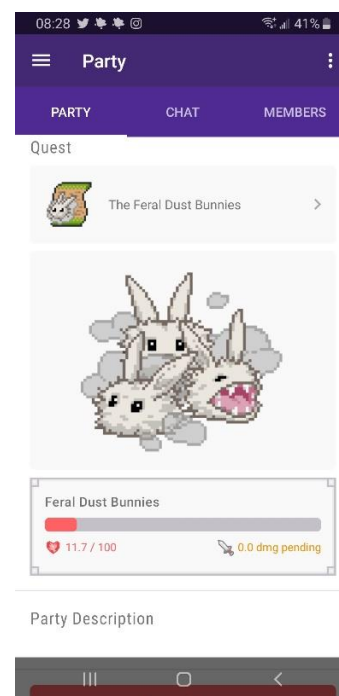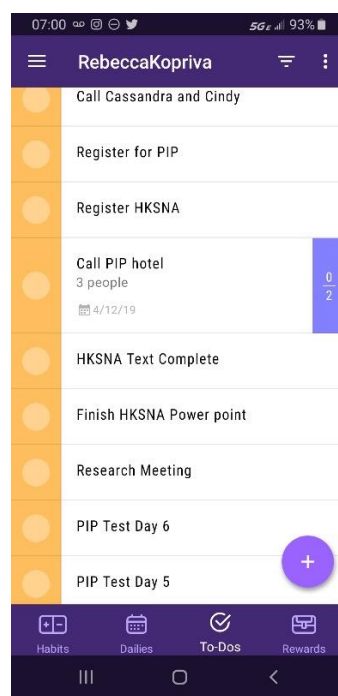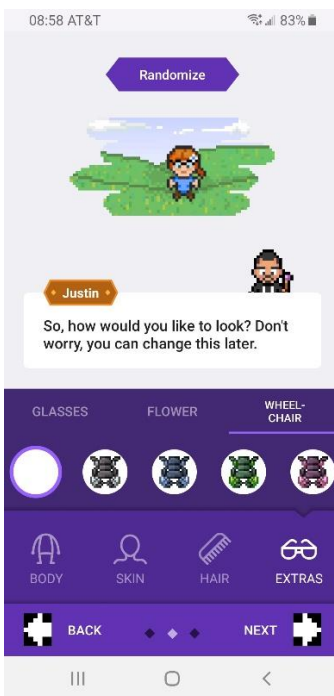
Points in favor:
- Gamification makes tackling tasks fun
- Ability to rate "difficulty" of tasks

Points against:
- Cannot organize tasks by project
- Cannot create shared task list between users

Screenshots:

Ike

Ike is a task management app designed for Android. It is based on the methodology of the Eisenhower Matrix, which prioritizes tasks into four categories: urgent and important, urgent but not important, important but not urgent, and neither urgent nor important. This gives users a unique way to organize their project tasks in ways that allow them to see the most urgent first and put more unimportant tasks on the back burner. The app allows the user to create these matrices for multiple projects, and to add tasks to each quadrant of the matrix for each project. Users can also set deadlines for tasks, add reminders, add notes, and attach images. The app is free, which allows users to create unlimited projects and tasks in three different color-coded themes. Users can upgrade to the pro version for $1.99 to get widgets for a phone's homescreen, personalize themes, and add location reminders.

Points in favor:
- The priority matrix design of the app forces the user to consider priorities and task management as they are creating tasks.
- The app also does not require users to look at the entire list of tasks all at once, instead showing only tasks from one specific quadrant of the matrix at a time. This allows users to not feel overwhelmed by their entire to-do list.

Points against:
- No sharing or collaboration capabilities
- Users are not able to see tasks at first glance. They must click on a quadrant of a project in order to see their tasks. Similarly, there's no "today" function which would allow users to see the tasks due on a particular day across projects.
- There is no sub-task capability, hindering its use for more complex projects.
- Lack of support: we had some questions regarding the app, and there is no technical support available from the company that created it. The company does not even list the app on their website anymore.

Screenshots:

Todoist

Todoist is a to-do list task management app, available for PC, Mac, Android, and iOS. It is capable of creating multiple lists, organizing lists into projects, creating tasks and subtasks (and sub-subtasks etc), and marking due dates in these lists. Users can also assign four different levels of priority to their tasks. The app has multiple views: its homepage starts on "today" so the user can see tasks that are marked as due today. Users can also switch it to show weekly views or project views. The collaborative features are also useful, as the app allows the user to share lists, delegate tasks, make comments, and check things off shared lists. The basic version is free, but for $3 per month, "Premium" users can unlock more features, such as labels, reminders, comments, attachments, activity logs, and daily incentives called "karma." Some of these premium features fall into the necessary features in our study, and may help to make the app work better for its users.
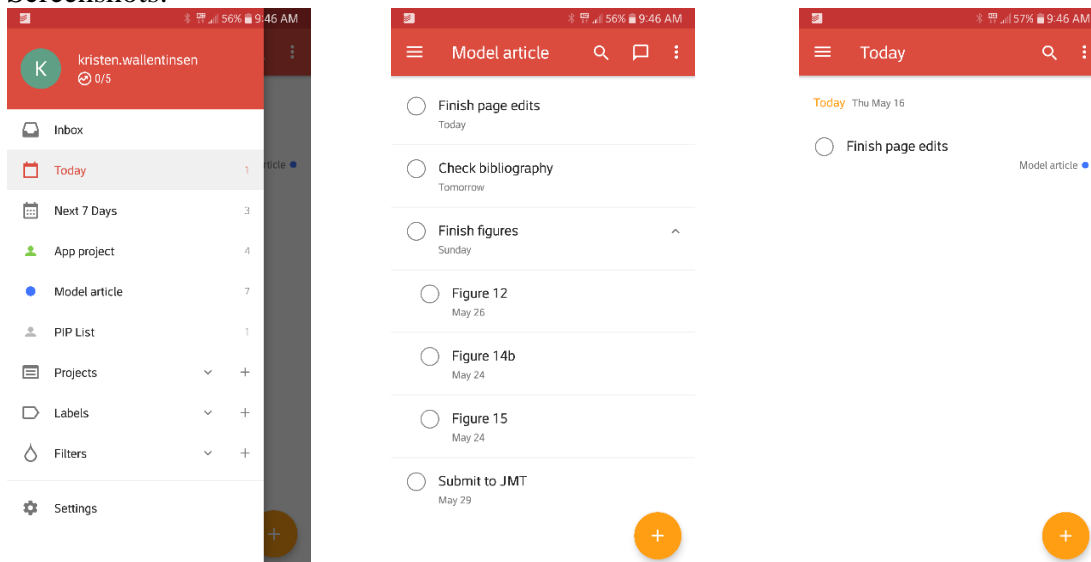
Points in favor:
- Prioritization: users can organize tasks by levels of priority
- Sub-tasks allow for multi-level hierarchical organization

Points against:
- The user interface is not user friendly:
- The app is poorly set up in terms of creating, completing, and deleting tasks. It is too easy to accidentally complete and delete tasks, we wound up accidentally deleting tasks numerous times. Furthermore, unless one gets premium, deleted tasks are gone forever.
- Icon buttons are not easily understood, making the learning curve for using the app steep. To make matters worse, there are multiple ways to do things in the app, making it confusing to figure out how to use the app.
- So many features are behind the premium paywall that we found it difficult to use the app in the free version. Buttons for premium features are present in the interface, but it doesn't explain which features are free and which are premium.

Screenshots:

Wunderlist

Wunderlist is a task tracking app for PC, Mac, Android, and iOS. It allows users to create lists of tasks, organize tasks into projects, set deadlines, and work through the tasks. The features of this app are all straightforward as far as task list apps go, but the thing that sets it apart is its ability to provide a robust framework with an easy-to-use interface. Users can easily create lists, add tasks, add deadlines, share task lists with others, delegate tasks to other users, upload files and links, comment on tasks, and have the satisfaction of checking things off their to-do lists. Users can also set repeated tasks, create reminders for tasks, and choose from a few different view options. One of my favorite features is its multi-level list capability. Each task has the option of being broken down into subtasks, and task lists can also be collected into folders. Both features allow for detailed multi-level organization needed to break down large projects (like "dissertation) into smaller projects (like chapters), and those smaller projects into specific tasks and sub-tasks.

Points in favor:

- Easy-to-use interface allows users to readily use the app without too much learning curve
- Multi-level organization facilitates the acquisition of project management skills
- Ease of collaboration allows teams and mentors to work together on project tasks
- Available on all tested platforms, with good syncing capability

Points against:

- Users could use a feature that adds separate deadlines for sub-tasks.
- Some users (and reviewers) wished for an "undo" button, in case you delete a deadline or task without meaning to.

Screenshots: