



Heuristic Evaluation

01 VISIBILITY OF THE SYSTEM STATUS

The system should always keep user informed about what is going on, through appropriate feedback within reasonable time.

RATING: 7/10

Users can tell where they are located within the system based on the highlighted tab, though this could be made more bold and obvious. It is unclear however where users are within a “process” that they are trying to undertake.

An hourglass icon is often used to provide a visual clue that a process is underway.

When something is saved, it is NOT always made clear to the user with a visual confirmation.

02 MATCH BETWEEN SYSTEM AND THE REAL WORLD

The system should speak the users’ language, with words, phrases and concepts familiar to the user, rather than system-oriented terms. Follow real-world conventions, making information appear in a natural and logical order.

RATING: 8/10

Terminology is generally geared towards the target user as the initial set up takes into account the industry (such as legal, accounting, engineering, architecture).

Information doesn’t feel as though it appears in a natural and logical order and the layout doesn’t feel intuitive.

03 USER CONTROL AND FREEDOM

Users often choose system functions by mistake and will need a clearly marked “emergency exit” to leave the unwanted state without having to go through an extended dialogue. Support undo and redo.

RATING: 8/10

Users are usually given the option to “undo” a task, but at times the only choice is “close” and that confuses the user into wondering if their work has been saved.

Re-do is not frequently supported, and once a window is closed, it is not obvious how to return to it.

04 CONSISTENCY AND STANDARDS

Users should not have to wonder whether different words, situations, or actions mean the same thing. Follow platform conventions.

RATING: 8/10

Controls and icons follow standard windows conventions, however there is some inconsistency in terminology.

05 HELP USERS RECOGNIZE, DIAGNOSE AND RECOVER FROM ERRORS

Error messages should be expressed in plain language (no codes).

RATING: 8/10

Most error messages are helpful and written in plain language, however many are generated from other applications that are linked with the application and are therefore not easily controlled.

06 ERROR PREVENTION

Even better than good error messages is a careful design that prevents a problem from occurring in the first place.

RATING: 7/10

Errors are not well-predicted (ie. users are allowed to enter 500 hours in one day in a time sheet).

Error prevention has been removed in some cases due to single requests from customers rather than assessing the needs customer population as a whole.

07 RECOGNITION RATHER THAN RECALL

Make objects, actions, and options visible. The user should not have to remember information from one part of the dialogue to another. Instructions for use of the system should be visible or easily retrievable whenever appropriate.

RATING: 5/10

Too many choices are presented to the user, and they are not warned of potential problems before they take action.

Users are not warned of potentially destructive actions.

08 FLEXIBILITY AND EFFICIENCY OF USE

The system should cater to both inexperienced and experienced users. Allow users to tailor frequent actions. Provide alternative means of access and operation for users who differ from the “average” user.

RATING: 4/10

The system does not cater to both novice and expert users and requires extensive training prior to use.

The user has too many options instead of being restricted to a logical set of choices, and the design does not suggest the right action to take next.

Customers are allowed many customization options, however often there are far too many paths to the same outcome which confuses newcomers.

09 AESTHETIC AND MINIMALIST DESIGN

Dialogues should not contain information that is irrelevant or rarely needed. Every extra unit of information in a dialogue competes with the relevant units of information and diminishes their relative visibility.

RATING: 1/10

The design, layout and functionality of the system is very outdated.

The amount of functionality on each screen causes clutter and confusion.

Dialogues contain too much information which is irrelevant or rarely needed and therefore diminishes the visibility of the functions that are actually needed.

User tasks need to be accomplished with fewer steps.

10 HELP AND DOCUMENTATION

Even though it is better if the system can be used without documentation, it may be necessary to provide help and documentation. Any such information should be easy to search, focused on the user's task, list concrete steps to be carried out, and not be too large.

RATING: 3/10

Help is easily accessed throughout the system, but occurs too repetitively rather than having one central location accessible from all screens.

The Help feature is not task-based "How do I?" but rather feature based. Help should include step-by-step instructions, not just definitions of features.

Help descriptions are too long, and not contextual to the problem that the user is currently experiencing.

Help is too large, giving users too much access to other topics which can distract them from their task, or make them feel so overwhelmed that they give up.

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

In general, BillQuick adheres to well to most standard usability practices, however there are deficits in the following areas that need to be addressed in the Galaxy re-design:

EASE OF USE & AESTHETICS

The design, layout and functionality of the system is VERY outdated and not aesthetically pleasing.

The amount of functionality on each screen causes clutter and confusion.

New users require extensive training and set up.

It is recommended that extraneous and rarely used functions be eliminated, or allow users to choose the level of functionality required. This will result in a much cleaner and less intimidating interface.

MEMORY & VISIBILITY

It is difficult for users to know exactly where they are in the system. There are too many navigation systems that compete for the user's attention.

There are multiple paths to the same outcome, but often this makes the system more confusing for the user.

Page functioning displays inconsistent and unexpected behavior.

Create a single navigation system and place it consistently throughout the application. Provide a single clear path to each function that guides the user in step-by-step fashion.

HELP

Help is extensive, and appears repetitively throughout the application, however instead of guiding users based on task, it simple provides definitions of functions.

Users require more task based instructions that are available from ONE central location.

Place HELP in one central location that is accessible from anywhere in the application. Provide step-by-step instructions based on the user's task rather than just definitions. Make instructions succinct so that they do not intimidate the user.

USER INTERFACE REVIEW

01 NAVIGATION

Navigation is located across the top of the application, as well as two locations down the left side.

Some navigation items lead to task oriented pages while others lead to additional navigators.

Navigation should be as simple, consistent and predictable as possible.

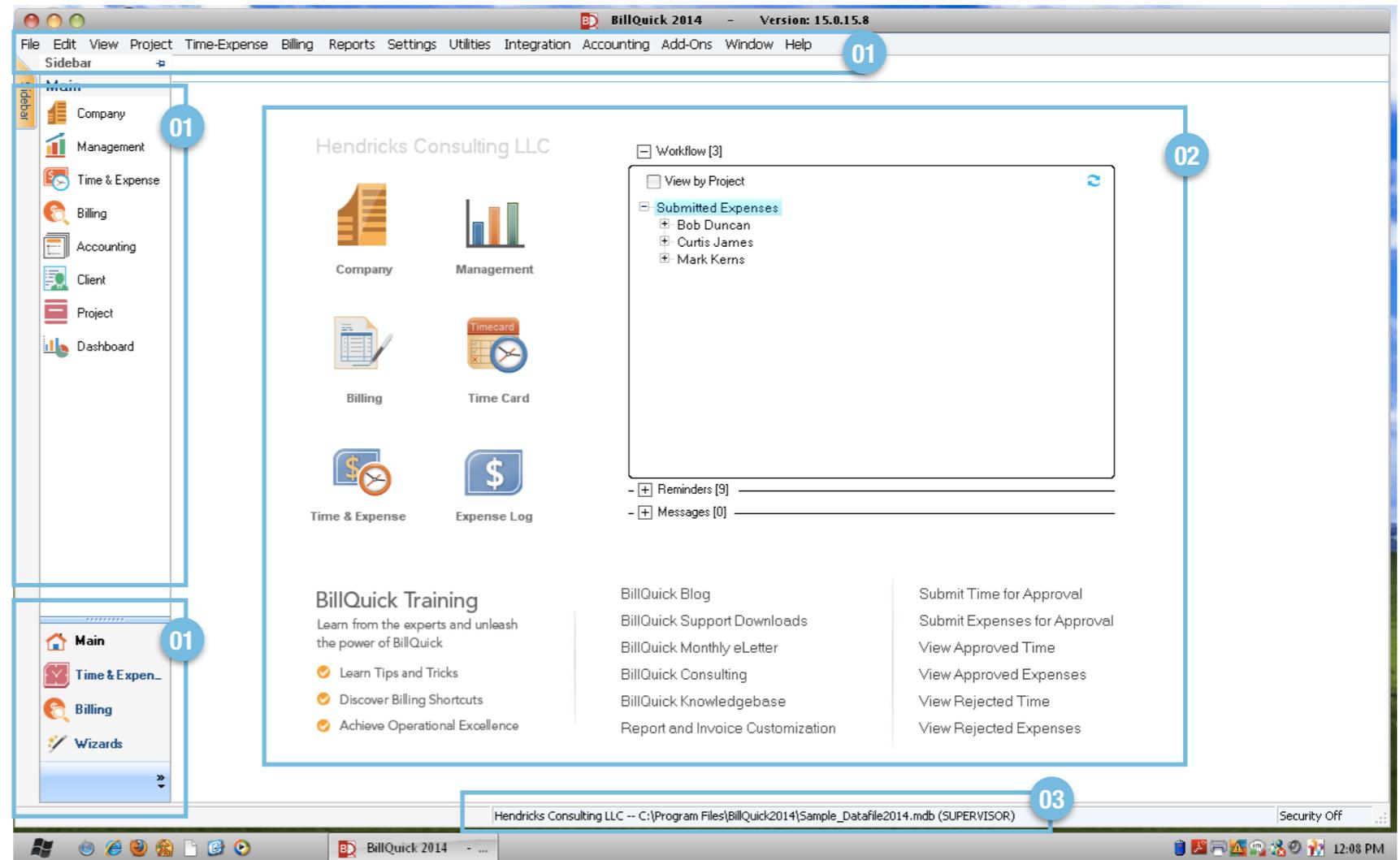
02 NAVIGATOR

The Navigator is really just an additional source of navigation. Too much focus is put on BillQuick versus the user's actual tasks.

This area would be better served as a customizable dashboard that gives users a quick overview of their company and tasks.

03 STATUS BAR

No labels are used here making the purpose unclear.



USER INTERFACE REVIEW

04 GLOBAL FUNCTIONS

05 PAGE FUNCTIONS

Organization of navigation items is scattered. Related functions should be logically grouped together.

06 LINKS

Links are revealed inconsistently (sometimes as a new tab, sometimes as a modal window).

07 MEMO

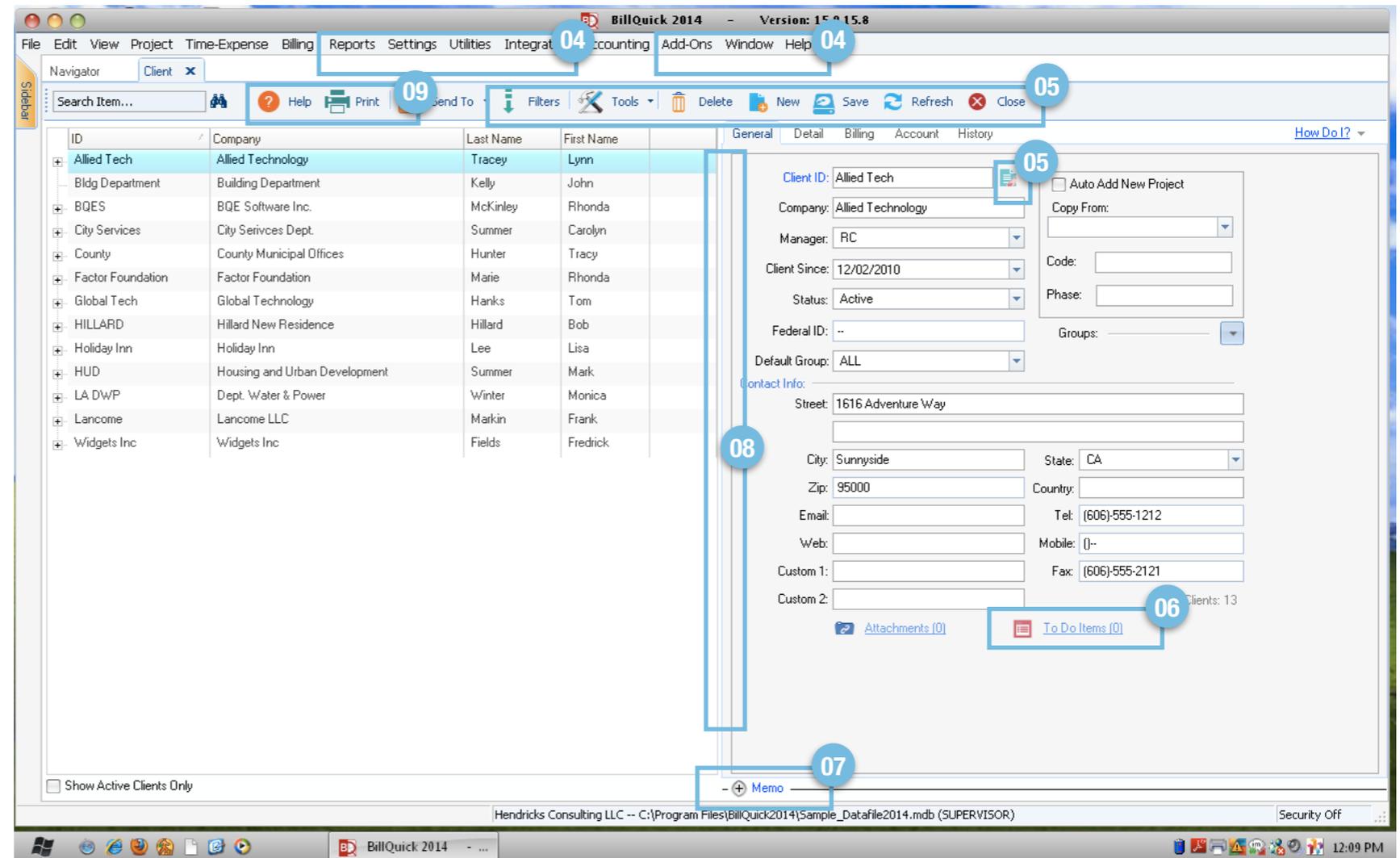
Unexpected location - not tied directly to the information that it relates to - disconnect.

08 DIVIDER

Poor affordance - not discoverable.

09 MENU

Unexpected ordering of operations. For example, Help and Print come before more common tasks in the menu order and does not follow standards.



USER INTERFACE REVIEW

10 FILTERS

Confusing to have multiple locations for filters.

11 TERMINOLOGY

“Period including” could be misinterpreted. Could use “ending” instead of “including”, or have a more precise functionality.

12 COLOR USAGE

Purpose of each color is unclear to user? What does red text mean? How is a yellow row different from a blue row?

13 ABBREVIATIONS

Some abbreviations may not be clear to all users. Should at the very least have tool tips.

14 ATTACHMENTS

Unexpected location - not tied directly to the information that it relates to - disconnect.

