

Homework 2—Heuristic Evaluation: Student Search

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Collaborators: None

I understood the purpose of this interface more as I played around with the features. I love the rapid response that instantly displays students that fit the specified parameters.

Positives

1. Representation of constraints

Standards, Safety, Consistency, Convention (Good)

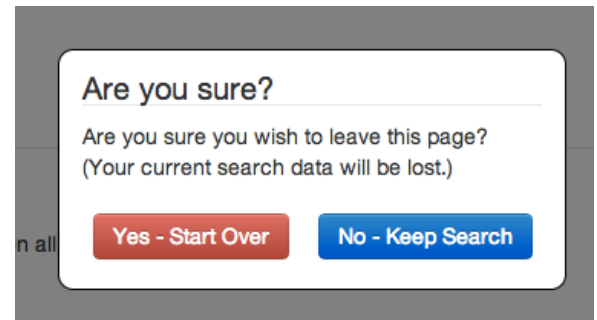
Every constraint entered by the user is represented by this graphic. The graphic has a standard red X that removes the constraint. It allows the user to easily undo a constraint that restricted the results too much. Constraints conventionally have an AND relationship (result must satisfy both), so when the matches are allowed to fit either of two options, the OR relationship is explicitly made apparent.



2. Confirmation Dialog on 'Start New Search'

Safety, Error Prevention (Good)

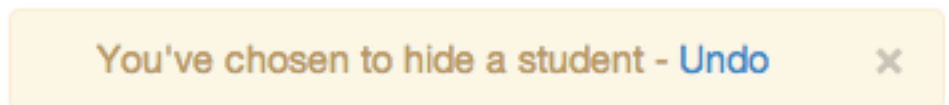
Starting a new search erases all constraints chosen by the user, as well as their student selection.



3. Most-recently hidden notification.

Safety, Convention (Good)

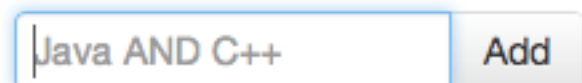
When the user chooses to hide particular users from the results page, it causes the information to disappear from the results section. Noting the change using a conventional notification box at the top is useful.



4. Quickly add criteria with enter button

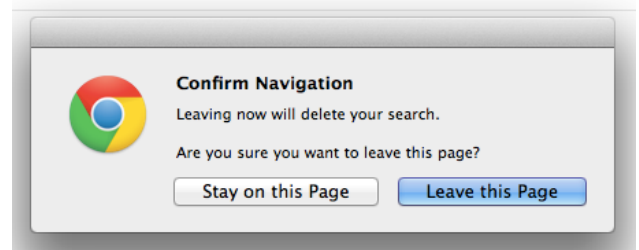
Efficiency (Good)

In both the Skills and Courses fields, the user can enter a criterion by typing it and pressing enter. This clears the box and prepares it to receive the next criterion.



5. Notification on window close / navigation *Safety (Good)*

The session information is not saved anywhere except the current session, so the app displays a confirmation because the data will be erased if the session is ended.



Criticisms

6. Whitespace between Courses and Skills *Aesthetic (Cosmetic)*

There's a lot of extra space between these fields that seems very conspicuous, but seems to serve no purpose.

Enter Search Requirements:


Courses:

Skills:

7. Finger-Point Clickable Cursor Unused *Consistency and Standards (Minor)*

The students themselves can be selected, but the cursor doesn't change to reflect that anything special will happen if you click on them.

Matches: (Click student(s) to select.)



Chris Dessonville
Senior
Course 6-3
Interests: Sudokus, Video Games, Problem Solving

8. What student did I hide? *Recognition not recall (Major)*

When a student is hidden, the name of the student that got hidden is not displayed on the notification.


You've chosen to hide a student - [Undo](#)

9. Whitespace between instruction and content. *Aesthetic (Cosmetic)*

There's an imbalanced whitespace between the "Hit 'Restore'..." instruction and the hidden students display.

View Hidden Students

Hit "Restore" to return the student to the search results.



Tanya Liu

9. Email functionality hidden by results display.

Visible Navigation (Catastrophic)

I didn't even know that the site offered this email functionality (which, I then realized, was the whole point) until I scrolled to the very bottom of the window. Both the "Email 3 Students" and additional results buttons were obscured.

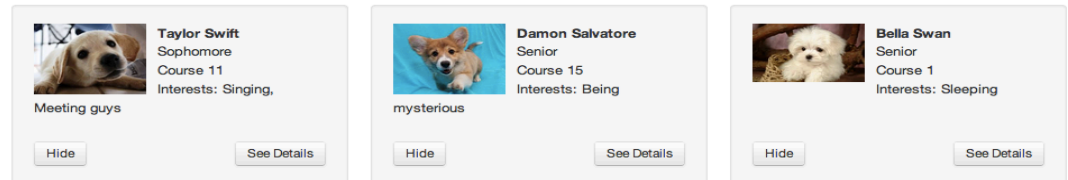


10. Viewing additional results obscures current selection

Visibility of System Status, Consistency (Catastrophic)

Only a fixed number of results appear on a page, presumably so that the E-mail button has a place to appear. The problem with this paginated approach is that a student can be selected

Matches: (Click student(s) to select.)



on one page, then the user can page over, and the selection no longer appears visually but it still exists. Consider anchoring the email button to the right side of the browser window (position: fixed) and using infinite-scroll.

11. Student Representation in Email

Consistency (Minor)

Elsewhere students are represented with their full name and icon, but not in the email window.



12. No visual hierarchy in Show Details Popup

Readability (Major)

The name should be the primary heading here, but it's the same size as everything else.

Roy Mustang - Junior

Course 6-2: Electrical Engineering and Computer Science

Courses: 6.01, 6.02, 6.813, 6.831, CMS.590, 11.127, 11.252

Skills: Python, Java, C++, Algorithms, MATLAB, HTML/CSS

Interests: Fire bending, Education, UI Design, Learning

13. Abnormal Image Borders

Visual Consistency (Minor)

Some images have the same background color as the site's background color. Consider adding explicit borders. An indication that the image background is not a part of the interface keeps users from becoming distracted by irregular borders.

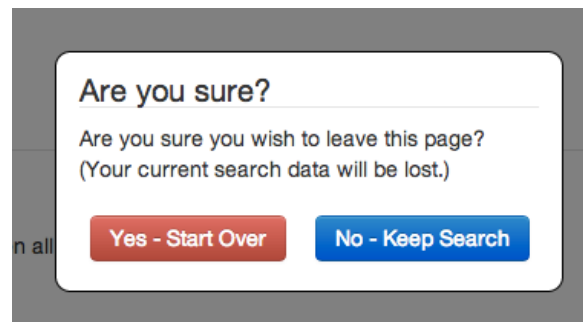


14. Confirmation button color

Visual Consistency (Major)

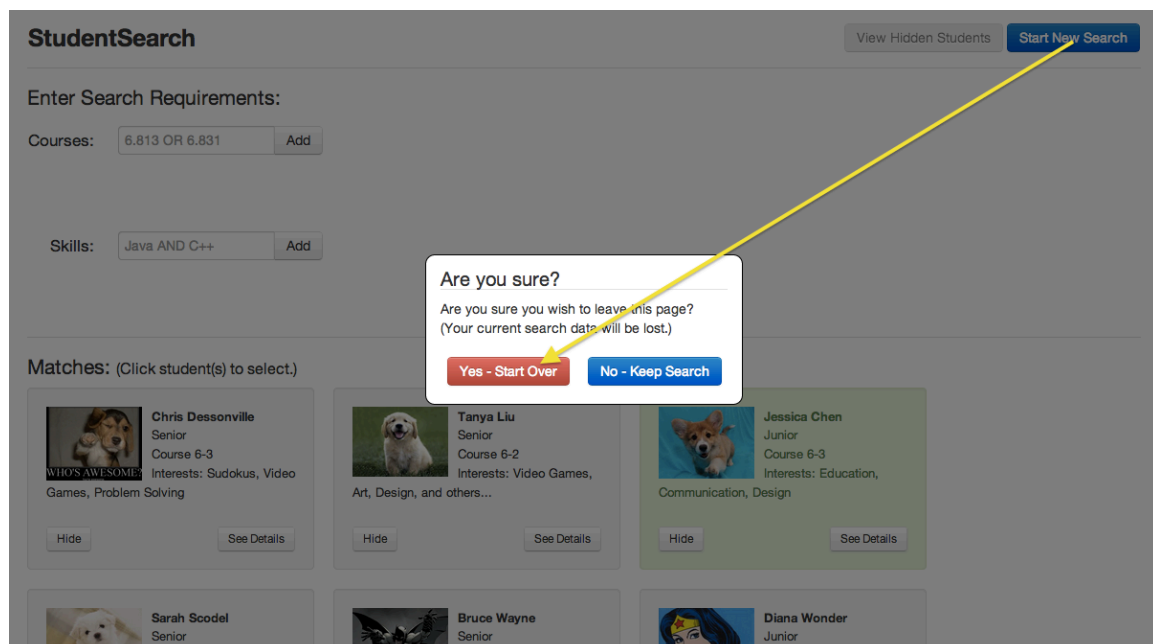
The "Start New Search" button and the button to confirm the action: "Yes - Start Over" are different colors. This caused an error on my part - I pressed the "No - Keep Search" by mistake intending to confirm because it was the same color.

I'm not expecting the option for Yes to be red (even though it deletes information).



15. Distance between confirmation button and action button

Efficiency / Fittz's Law (Major)



It's mildly discomfoting having to drag the mouse over so far to confirm the action.

16. Start New Search Button Activates on Student Selection

Explorable Interfaces (Minor)




StudentSearch View Hidden Students Start New Search

Enter Search Requirements:

Courses: Add

Skills: Add

Matches: (Click student(s) to select.)

 Chris Dessonville Senior Course 6-3 Interests: Sudokus, Video Games, Problem Solving WHOS AWESOME! Hide See Details	 Tanya Liu Senior Course 6-2 Interests: Video Games, Art, Design, and others... Hide See Details	 Jessica Chen Junior Course 6-3 Interests: Education, Communication, Design Hide See Details
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Clicking on a student makes the Start New Search button blue and active. This immediately refocuses my attention on it, even through my workflow would not likely immediately involve that button. Consider associating Start New Search more closely with the active search constraints. It's odd that it pops up when I am just playing with the student selection—I haven't actually specified a search yet.