6.813/6.831 • User Interface Design and Implementation
Spring 2013, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
HW2: Heuristic Evaluation
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Declaration of collaboration

I declare that I discussed this assignment with nobody.

User Study Participation

I participated the in the studies of the following three individuals:

- Franck Dernoncourt,

- Robin Diets

- Damian Oslebo

Evaluating Prototypes

For this portion of the assignment, we were asked to do a heuristic evaluation on a computer prototype developed by our classmates by making a numbered list of usability problems and successes we find. (Please note that I am basing this evaluation on page 12, of L-20 and utilizing Jakob Nielsen's 10 heuristics as the structure for my evaluation) Problem areas are indicated in the figures with a red star when possible, and elaborated on with regards to the heuristic metric in the comments below.
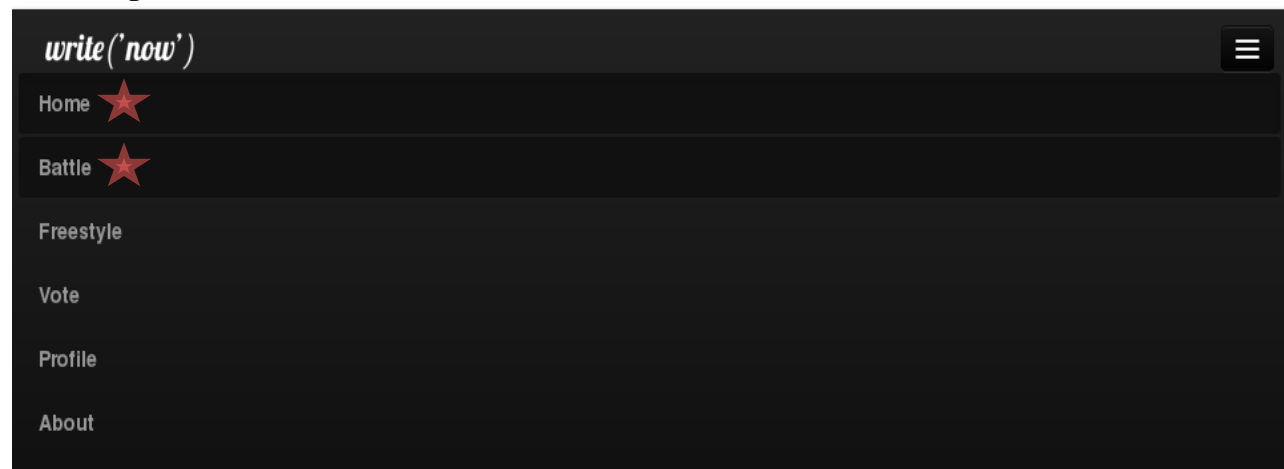
Home Page Menu

- **Learnability Heuristics**
  - **Match the real world**
    - **Good:** Uses well-known menu icon on top right across pages
  - **Consistency & standards**
    - **Good:** menu bar persists across pages in the ui
    - **Minor:** When navigating the menu, only the 'Home' menu text highlights, none of the other menus provide this feedback.
  - **Help & documentation**

- ■ **Good:** The "Get Started" button takes user to screen where they perform learning by doing.
- ■ **Minor:** The 'About' and 'Profile' menu should be closer to the top of the menu.
- ■ **Major:** The text above the "Get Started" button is not least prominent even though it is the most important text on the page.
- ■ **Major:** The text above the "Get Started" button asks the user to choose a topic, but there is no way to perform this choice.
- ● **Efficiency Heuristics**
  - ○ **Flexibility & Efficiency**
    - ■ **Good:** Drop down menu allows more experienced user to jump to area of interest.
- ● **Safety Heuristics**
  - ○ **User control and Freedom**
    - ■ **Minor:** The write now logo to the top-left of the menu bar can be clicked, but doesn't do anything.
  - ○ **Visibility of system status**
    - ■ **Cosmetic:** When selecting a page from the menu, the highlight color is very similar to the background. (minor)
    - ■ **Cosmetic:** The highlight color for a selected menu is the same as the current.
  - ○ **Error reporting, diagnosis, and recovery**
    - ■ **Minor:** If the user clicks home, when the menu is opened, the menu bar closes.
- ● **Aesthetic and minimalist design Heuristics**
  - ■ **Good: Simple and clean design choice for home page**
  - ■ **Cosmetic:** The "Write Fast, Write Now" distracts the users attention from the instructions below.

Writing Battle:

write('now') ☰

Writing Battle

Topic Category: [All ▾]   Time Limit: [1 min ▾] ★

START!

You: Mob Riller

Start writing here...

Opponent: Zaoqi Hhang

Submit ★

(enabled when time starts)

Writing Freestyle:

write('now') ☰

Writing Freestyle

Topic Category: [All ▾]   Time Limit: [1 min ▾] ★

START!

You: Mob Riller

Start writing here...

Submit ★

(enabled when time starts)

- **Learnability Heuristics**
  - **Match the real world**
    - **Good:** The menus at the top of the page are positioned next to
    - **Good:** There is a countdown once the start button is pressed.
  - **Consistency & standards**
    - **Good:** menu bar persists across pages in the ui.
  - **Help & documentation**
    - **Good:** The text at the top and the two sides contains strong affordances that this is a competition.
    - **Major:** There is no indication of how one wins the battle.
    - **Major:** When one wins the battle, the results are not shows, the user has to click the small link - "view results" - in order to view the metric.
- **Efficiency Heuristics**
  - **Flexibility & Efficiency**
    - **Major:** There is no clear way to quit the current game once you start. This is particularly troublesome if you select a long game time.
    - **Minor:** The Submit button is effectively useless as users can submit and unsubmit, and submision happens automatically at the end of the game
- **Safety Heuristics**
  - **User control and Freedom**
    - **Minor: There is no indication if or where your writing will be saved.**
  - **Error reporting, diagnosis, and recovery**
    - **Good:** If the user accidentally clicks the submit button, they can undo the submission by clicking again.
- **Aesthetic and minimalist design Heuristics**
    - **Major:** If your screen is not the right size, the start button gets misplaced, as shown in the screenshot above.
    - **Cosmetic:** The green background against the blue links when the tasks are completed are difficult to see.

Vote:

* **Learnability Heuristics**
  * **Match the real world**
    * **Good:** The affordances of the green buttons beneath the writing samples make it clear what the task is that the user needs to perform.
  * **Consistency & standards**
    * **Critical:** The menu bar for this part of the UI is different than the home, battle, and freestyle pages because I scrolled out.
* **Efficiency Heuristics**
  * **Flexibility & Efficiency**
    * **Minor:** It appears that the writing given is random, it would be good to sort this by topic.
* **Safety Heuristics**
  * **User control and Freedom**
    * **Major:** There is no way to undo a selection without selecting something else. you may want to have an undo, or "tie", or both here.
  * **Visibility of system status**
    * Major: it's not clear that my vote has been cast as there is no feedback beyond the check mark, you might want to address this somehow. Mayeb some text underneath saying "Your vote has been cast!"

Profile:

Profile

Sort by : [vote ▾] ⭐

Mob Riller

Total Writings: 1200

Member since June 4, 2012

My Writings

The Alaskan Flying Mantis Bear

The Kodiak bear, also known as the Kodiak brown bear or the Alaskan flying mantis bear, occupies the islands of the Kodiak Archipelago in South-Western Alaska. Its name in the Alutiiq language is Taquka-aq. It is the largest subspecies of brown bear and one of the two largest members of the bear family, the other being the polar bear. When I visited Alaska as part of Harvard graduate study trip, I had the rare

My dreams

Most people I know have a dream. In fact, I've asked hundreds, if not thousands, of people about their dream. Some willingly describe it with great detail and enthusiasm. Others are reluctant to talk about it. They seem embarrassed to say it out loud. These people have never tested their dream. They don't know if others will laugh at them. They're not sure if they're aiming too high or too low. They don't know if their dream is something

What is random writing

There are times when planning and forethought take center stage. This is not one of those times.

Random Writers is a collection of bloggers, mostly new or novice writers, coming together to help make a difference. The idea was born of the earnest desire among four friends to write more. After some brainstorming and collaboration, a list of topics was developed and schedule

The truth of life

False data can cause one to make stupid mistakes. It can even block one from absorbing true data.

One can solve the problems of existence only when he has true data.

If those around one lie to him or her, one is led into making errors and his survival potential is reduced.

- **Learnability Heuristics**
  - **Consistency & standards**
    - **Major:** You can sort things by date, vote, etc. but the Writings don't have any information that show the date/ vote number. Ate these in ascending or descending order?
    - **Critical:** The menu bar for this part of the UI is different than the home, battle, and freestyle pages because I scrolled out.
- **Efficiency Heuristics**

- ○ **Flexibility & Efficiency**
    - ■ **Critical:** Reading through the writings requires using the small window and scroll bar. You might want to give the user an ability to expand these into full windows to improve readability.
    - ■ **Major:** the previous and next page buttons at the bottom of the page are not easily visible, consider putting them into a locked pane.
- ● **Aesthetic and minimalist design Heuristics**
    - ■ **Cosmetic:** The difference in color over the writings gives the affordance that there may be differences between them , but I wasn't able to detect any. Does this refer to category?

About

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write('now')

write fast, write('now')

Clara Liu, Kimberly Toy, Timothy Yang

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write('now') is developed by Clara Liu, Kimberly Toy, Timothy Yang.

write('now') is the product of 6.813 (UI Design) a course at MIT taught by Rob Miller and Haoqi Zhang.

Contact us at mob-riller@mit.edu.

The Problem

Writers find it difficult to find inspiration and motivation to begin or continue writing.

Problem Causes

1. Writer's Block

2. Burn-out

3. Lack of time

4. Human laziness

Example Scenario

Mob Riller graduated from Harvard with a dream to be an author. However, none of his books were good.

Dejected and out of ideas, Mob Riller is looking for a place to do some speed writing and find some inspiration.

The Solution: write('now')

How write('now') works:

1. You and an opponent are given a time limit and a prompt to write about.

2. Write write write!

3. When time's up, other users will vote on their preferred piece, granting the winner fame and glory.

Features:

1. Speed writing game.

2. Voting on writings.

3. Free writing mode (no opponent).

4. Make and receive comments.

5. View win rates, scores and ranks.

6. Receive objective feedback as to writing improvement.

- **Learnability Heuristics**
  - **Consistency & standards**
    - **Critical:** The menu bar for this part of the UI is different than the home, battle, and freestyle pages because I scrolled out.
  - **Help & documentation**
    - Good: useful information on the purpose of the site