Homework 2: Heuristic Evaluation
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In this document, we perform a heuristic evaluation of the user interface for the Tech Wizard application. There were no collaborators.

Main Page

1) Search Bar: Enter key press not registered
Severity: major
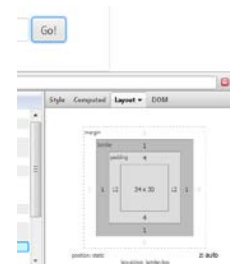Principle: consistency & standards, flexibility & efficiency

When the search bar has keyboard focus it does not respond to Enter button key presses.

2) Search Bar: "Go!" button is too small
Severity: minor
Principle: flexibility & efficiency

The "Go!" button is disproportionately small as compared to the search bar size.

3) Search Bar: "Go!" button label is minimally descriptive
Severity: minor
Principle: learnability

Consider a different label (e.g. "Search").

4) Search Bar: "Go!" button has camouflaged color scheme
Severity: minor
Principle: contrast, graphic design

The "Go!" button style of white to gray gradient lends itself to blending into the white background. Consider a more distinctive button color.

5) Search Bar: Does not have keyboard focus on page load
Severity: minor
Principle: flexibility & efficiency

The search bar should immediately have keyboard focus on page load.

6) (Good) Search Bar: Default text is descriptive to purpose
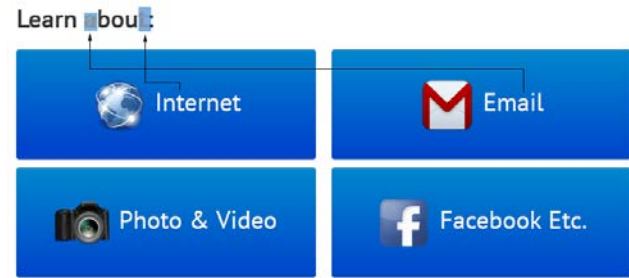Severity: good
Principle: learnability

Default text in search bar ("Search for tutorials") is appropriately descriptive.

7) (Good) Font consistency on main page
Severity: good
Principle: consistency & standards

Font is consistent in root menu on main page.

8) Broad categories without good information scent
Severity: major
Principle: learnability

"Internet" and "Photo & Video" are broad categories. It's assumed these categories will cover basic topics such as "How to use a search engine" or "How to use a webcam". Better information scent is required for these broad categories so a user doesn't have to click through to find out what topics are covered (e.g. tooltips).

9) (Good) Menu icons are distinctive and recognizable for meaning
Severity: good
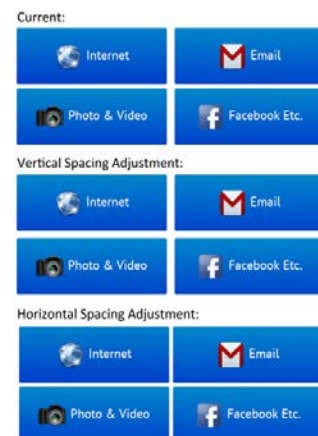Principle: learnability, graphic design

Icons used are immediately recognizable for their meaning.

10) Spacing between menu categories gives the illusion of vertical button grouping
Severity: minor
Principle: learnability

Consider using consistent spacing between the menu categories on the main page.

Tutorial Listing Page

11) Opening a topic does not close previously opened topics
Severity: major
Principle: flexibility & efficiency

Opening another topic after the first does not close the previously
opened topic, leading to a cluttered menu. If the user opens a second
topic the user is likely to have not found what they were looking for in
the previous topic.

12) No search bar
Severity: major
Principle: consistency & standards, flexibility & efficiency

A user wanting to perform a keyword search instead of sifting through topics will be required to return
to the homepage. A search bar should be visible on all pages.

13) Sub-topics have poor information scent
Severity: major
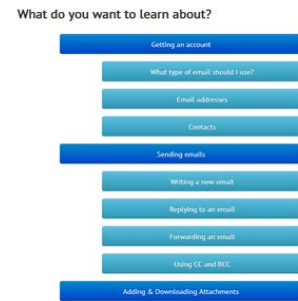Principle: learnability, help & documentation

A sub-topic like "Writing a new email" requires little additional explanation, however a sub-topic like
"Contacts" is overly general. Goal-oriented descriptions may be useful (e.g. "In this section you'll learn
how to add new e-mail contacts, as well as how to edit and delete existing contacts.").

14) (Good) "Did you know?" makes learning interesting
Severity: good
Principle: learnability, match between system and the real world

The "Did you know?" section adds fun trivia which makes learning
interesting. It adds a humanistic aspect to a system consisting mostly of
straightforward instructions. However, erroneous information presented as factual may confuse users
who don't understand the humor.

15) Labels on "Previous" and "Next" buttons are misaligned
Severity: cosmetic
Principle: graphic design, consistency & standards

The "Previous" and "Next" labels are not vertically aligned with their respective arrows. The horizontal space between the labels and arrows is not consistent.

16) Poor information scent on "Previous" and "Next"
Severity: major
Principle: learnability

It's impossible to know what the "Previous" and "Next" buttons lead to. A good example of linear tutorial navigation is http://try.github.io/levels/1/challenges/1.

17) Label choice "Previous" and "Next" may be suboptimal
Severity: major
Principle: recognition not recall, learnability

It's not clear that "Previous" and "Next" are the right labels to use, it (somewhat) works for Google with the scent provided by the linear search result page ordering. Consider alternatives such as "Previous Tutorial" and "Next Tutorial".

18) Large block of tutorial text is hard to digest
Severity: major
Principle: match the real world, help & documentation

The tutorial itself consists of a large block of text. Presumably, screenshots will later be used to clarify instructions. Consider instead creating an interactive dialog through which the user performs the listed instructions (e.g. sending a fake e-mail). Another less onerous option is embedded video tutorials, many of which already exist on YouTube.

19) Lack of affordances for changing text size and printing
Severity: minor
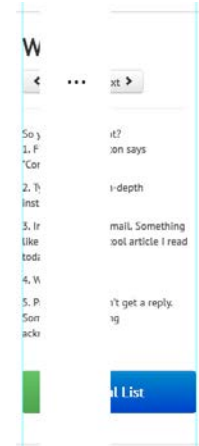Principle: flexibility & efficiency, consistency & standards

Given that tutorial body text is small, consider adding ᴀAA text size increase/decrease buttons for enhancing readability, as well as a 🖶 print icon for users that want to use a paper copy of the tutorial instead.

20) Lacking proper alignment to right hand side
Severity: minor
Principle: consistency

On the right side of the tutorial instruction page, both the "Next" button and the thin gray line beneath it are not properly aligned to the right hand edge of the body block.

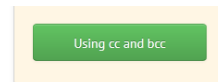## 21) Colors of Home and Related buttons are not distinct
Severity: minor
Principle: consistency & standards

The color of the "Using cc and bcc" button is the same as the color of the "Back to TechWizard Home" button. Consider using the green color only for the home button to maximize its recognizability.
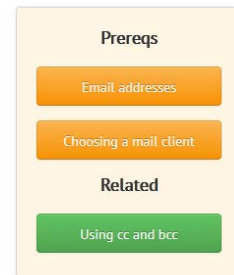
22) Shorthand "Prereqs" is unnecessary
Severity: minor
Principle: learnability

The shorthand "Prereqs" in place of "Prerequisites" is unnecessary given the space available.
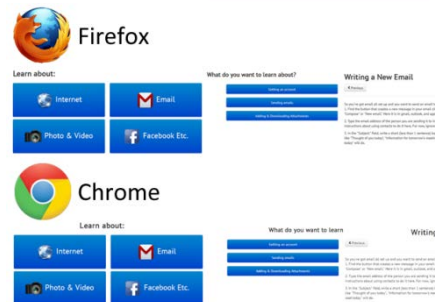
23) Inconsistent horizontal alignment of header text
Severity: minor
Principle: consistency & standards, aesthetics

Header text is inconsistently aligned between Firefox and Chrome (left aligned on Firefox and centered on Chrome).
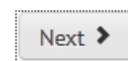
24) Firefox displays unsightly dotted outline on button focus
Severity: cosmetic
Principle: aesthetic & minimalist design, consistency & standards

Firefox Buttons that have focus show an ugly dotted outline around their borders. See http://stackoverflow.com/questions/71074/how-to-remove-firefoxs-dotted-outline-on-buttons-as-well-as-links. Focus indicators are important (since keyboard tabbing to an element and pressing enter is a valid way of navigating a website), but the indicator can be more aesthetically consistent (e.g. without the white space between the bottom of the outline and the button and a colored outline which is distinct and less visually jarring).

25) Chrome displays misaligned TechWizard title
Severity: minor
Principle: aesthetics

On Chrome only, the title is misaligned.

26) (Good) Screen is divided by function using position and color
Severity: good
Principle: consistency & standards, aesthetic & minimalist design

There is effective use of background color and positioning to delineate function across a single screen.