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Human-Computer Interaction

User Interfaces - Iteration Report

Group 2: Eric's Chi-Leaders

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1. Goals

With our first release we aimed at gathering as much data on the general user-experience as possible. Quite a general goal seemingly, but after finishing our paper model user tests we did not have any open issues. We expected the live tests to shed some light on the shortcomings still in the system.

Getting a bunch of people just using our application will not get us any feedback though. This is why we ask the users to fill in a short questionnaire at the end of their session. The questionnaire is based on QUIS¹. We left out a few questions that were unrelated to our application (for instance: how noisy it is). We also added a few open questions at the end of the questionnaire so the first questions won't be influenced. The QUIS specifications dictate that a sufficiently large audience is required in order to extract any meaningful results. They also state that a sample size of 29 is on the low side of the spectrum. We therefore aimed to gather **at least 50 filled in surveys**.

Because we were interested in getting a general view on how our application would be received, we aimed at achieving a high number of unique test persons. We imposed the goal of getting **at least one hundred users** on ourselves. This would mean that about 50% of these people would fill in our survey. This seems to us as a quite high percentage but if we ask people specifically to do this, we believe we can get enough surveys filled in.

In addition to the questionnaire, we are tracking all the actions a user performs while logged in on the system. This should provide information that will be useful when comparing with new iterations in the future.

We aimed to end this beta-testing period after 2 weeks.

2. Approach

We started implementing our application during the spring break. After running into a few minor difficulties, we were able to release our first version on the 24th of April.

As discussed in the previous section, we wanted to get at least 100 users trying out our application. We started inviting friends to test this first release by sending out invitation mails and private messages via facebook. We each contacted about 30 of our friends. It seemed that the personalized messages had a much better response-rate (almost 70% response) when compared to the more generic messages (around 30% response).

Once the first 25 test subjects filled in our survey, it soon became clear that a lot of users wanted a way to insert textual comments into articles. For this we made a small patch to the release, adding a post-it feature. This update also added sporza.be and cobra.be support. Once a total of 50 surveys were filled in, we performed an extensive analysis of which a synopsis can be found in the Results-section of this report. Graphs for all questions can be found in the appendix.

1: The "Questionnaire for User Interface Satisfaction" by Chin et al, Maryland 1988.

3. Results

We were quite close to achieving our previous goals: 81 unique people connected of which 56 filled in the questionnaire. Overall, we are very happy with our results and look forward to refine our application even further.

A full list of questions can be found in the appendix, along with the results. We thoroughly analyzed these results, comparing the first half of the surveys with the last half. This revealed significant differences only for those questions that were related to the availability of tools. Overall our application scored reasonably well in most categories.

Only one question seems to have a rather low score: “Did the application keep you informed about your progression?”. After inquiring the people that gave us a low score on this question we learned that it was unclear when their work was saved. We are going to address this in the next iteration by notifying the user when their work is being saved (this is done every time they leave the article).

After looking at the graphs which give detailed information on the distribution of the scores we concluded that there were no abnormalities here. We didn't see two distinct groups totally disagreeing with each other on a topic. People seemed reluctant to give an extreme score of 1 or 5.

We also managed to gain some valuable information from the open questions and comments. The most noteworthy conclusions are:

User diversity

A high percentage of the users were 20-year olds with advanced educational degrees and rather high computer skills. The main reason for this occurrence is obviously the recruiting of our own friends to test the application. In the future we should try and reach a more diverse test group.

Visual Style

Some of our users (11 out of 50 that filled in the open questions) told us that they rather liked the application's concept, but were unimpressed by the UI's visual style. We might want to rethink our style for the next iteration as we haven't put a whole lot of time into this yet. We have to be careful with this though, maybe lots of people actually do like the style.

Toolset

As also stated by one of our fellow-students during our presentation, a lot of users feel limited by the toolset we offer them. The main complaint was the lack of an adjustable brush size.

Article Browsing

Some people indicated they are having trouble navigating the articles that are currently in our database. They are now being displayed in a very straight forward way, without any categories or search function. This decision was made so we could release our application sooner and refining this has always been an open point for us.

4. Next Iteration

This section of the report documents what we hope to achieve with the next version of our application. We concluded that our test population was rather narrow. For the next survey we will make sure to seek out a broader audience and have at least **10 people with little or no computer skills to test our app**. We will provide them with a test facebook account and ask very specific questions about the learning process and ease of use.

We want to **increase our number of users to 200** (so we can get feedback from a more varied audience) before Tuesday 24/5. We will try to achieve this by creating a facebook page for our application and posting links to edited articles there. Another idea we are playing with is making articles in english available. Support for english articles would enable us to advertise our application on highly used channels, such as: irc, forums, etc.

There were a lot of issues that we were notified of via the open questions. We would like to **see how many people agree with these issues**. The best way to find out seems to be to list them all and let people distribute points to indicate what they want to see changed. We will look further into this and review other options, expect more in-depth discussion in the next report.

In order to compare our users' behavior between the beta- and live-version, we need to be able to present our log files in a clear and concise manner. At the moment we have a log file in .txt form registering the following user activity:

- Opening an article.
- Editing an article.
- Adding an article.
- Every action in this log file has a date- and timestamp.

We want to use this information to analyze the following statistics:

- How many times the average user comes back.
- How many articles a user opens/adjusts per session.
- How many new users we have per day or week.

We aim to achieve this by developing our own simple log-conversion tool.

Appendix

Planning for the next iteration

09/05

- Find an alternative method of opening an article's page.
- Disallow people erasing others' work.
- Limit the number of colors. (or at least try to disable the color black so text remains readable)
- Allow people to share their creations on facebook.
- Create a facebook group.
- Post a picture on this facebook page on a daily basis.

10/05 - 15/05

- Analyze the feedback we have received from our new survey and log information to detect what problems we should tackle in the next iteration.
- Compare popularity and use with the previous iteration to see if the changes resulted in any improvements.
- Evaluate the goals we had set for ourselves and set new goals for the next iteration.

16/05

- Alternative view to show the list of articles.
- Filtering and sorting articles based on the main categories
- Allowing/disallowing friends to edit the article.

17/05 - 24/05

- Analyzing new data
- Writing final report.
- Evaluate the addition of allowing/disallowing friends to edit the article.

Questionnaire

User Survey questions, and their average scores (from 1 to 5, higher is better)

General Questions

How was the first impression?	3,3/5
Is it easy to use?	3,68/5
Interesting?	3,4/5
Fun experience?	3,58/5

Questions about screens and transitions

Was the size of text big enough to read?	4.42/5
Did the application provide enough information using tooltips?	3.22/5
Did you like the organization of the information?	3.58/5
Was it clear how to go from screen to screen?	3,72/5

Questions about the used terminology

Was the used terminology consistent?	4,08/5
Were the used error- or warning-notifications useful?	3,38/5
Was the used terminology always related to the task at hand?	3,94/5
Did the application keep you informed about your progression?	2,71/5

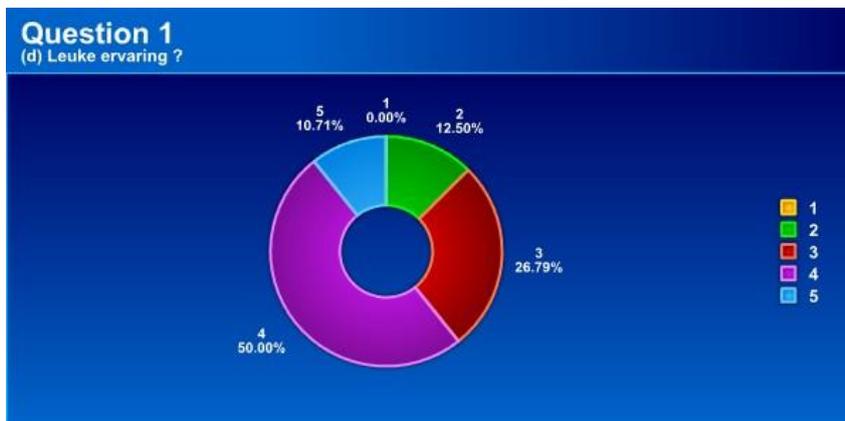
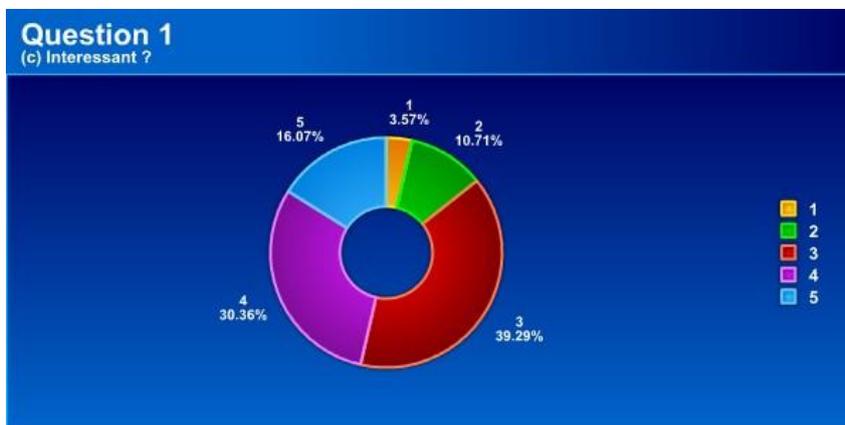
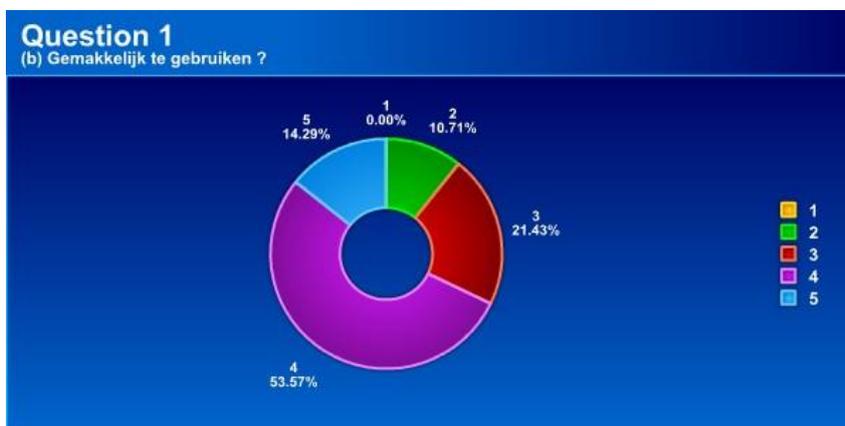
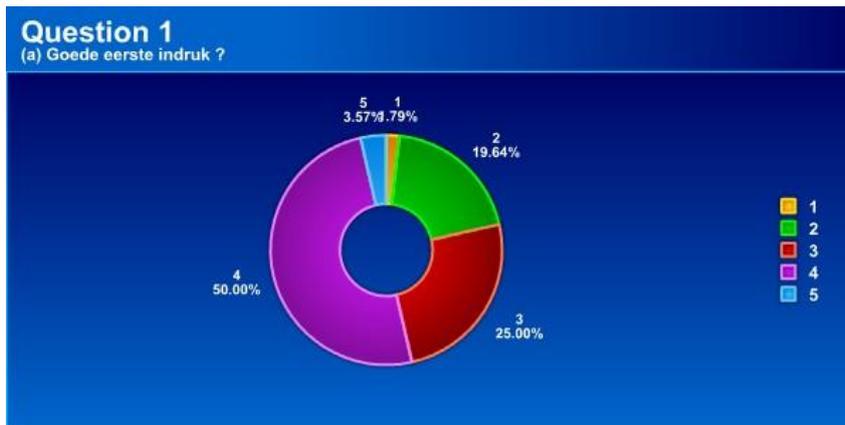
Questions about the learning aspect

Was it easy to get what the application was all about?	4,08/5
Did you not make many mistakes?	3,66/5
Was it easy to do the given tasks?	3,94/5
Did you get enough information while using the app?	3,2/5

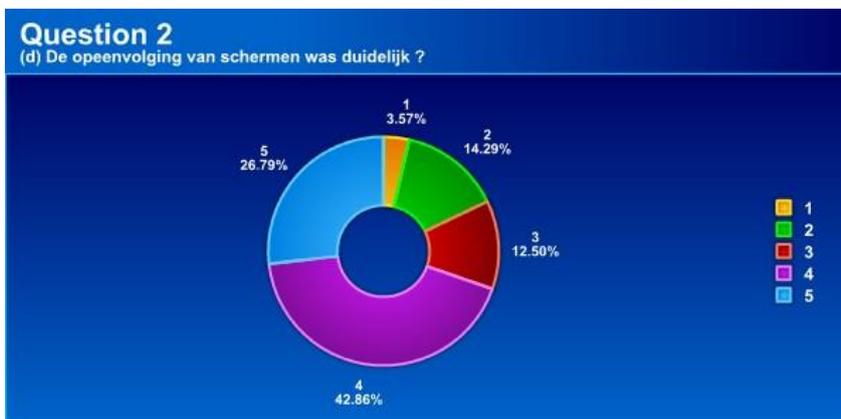
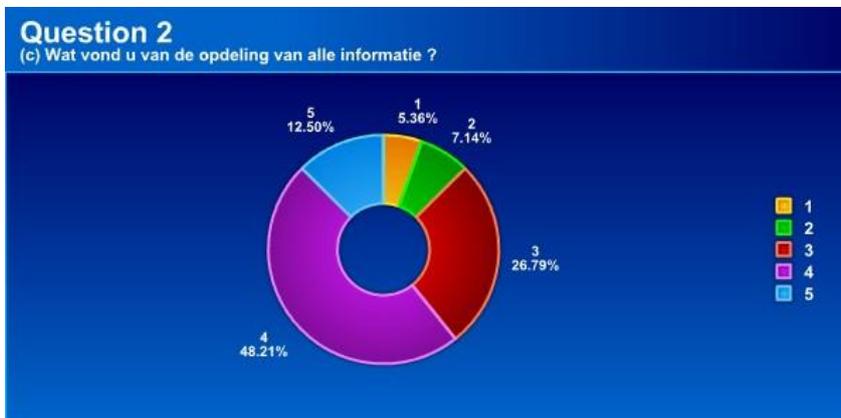
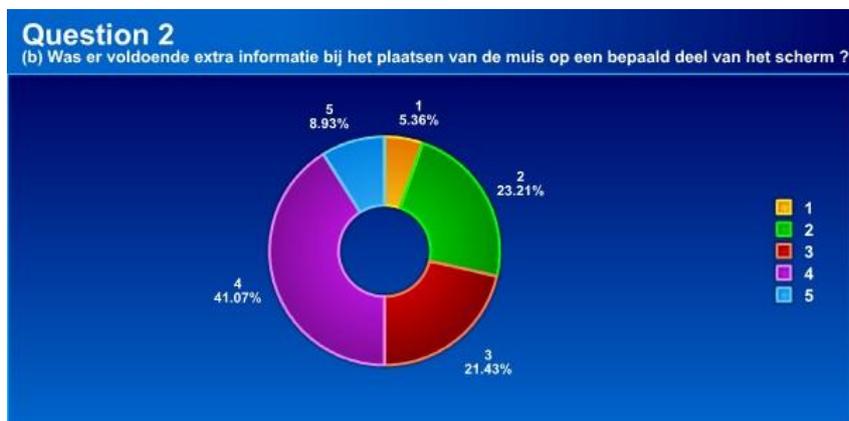
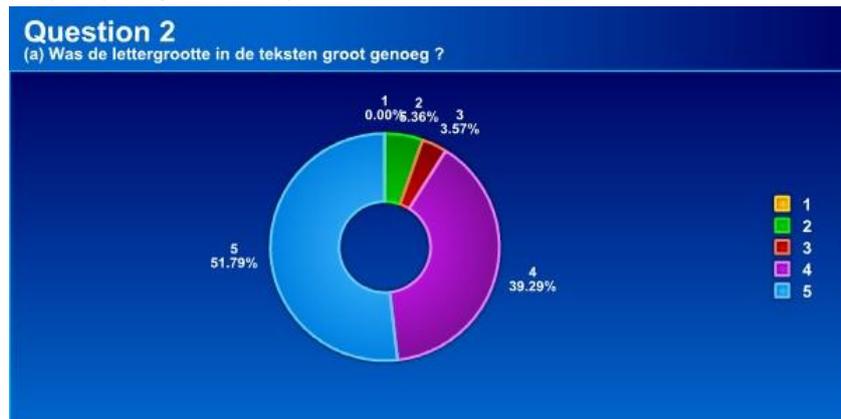
Questions about load times, stability and consistency of the system

Were the load times short?	3,92/5
Was the application bug-free?	3,98/5
Was it easy to adjust an article with the given tools?	3,86/5
In its current state, would you recommend this app to other people?	3,24/5

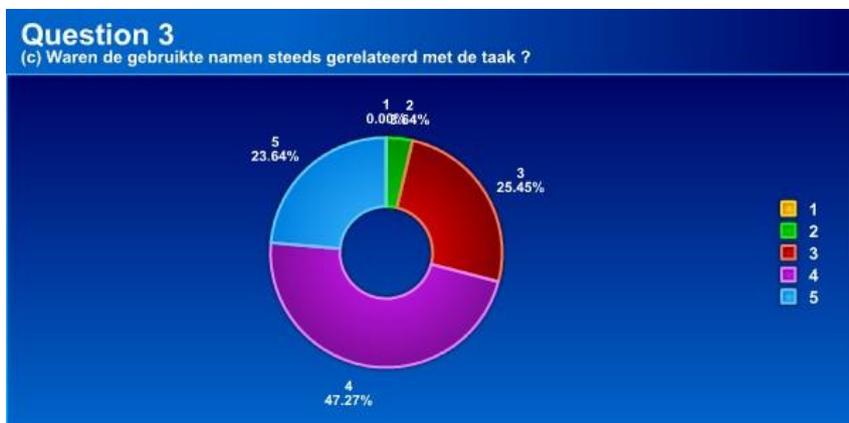
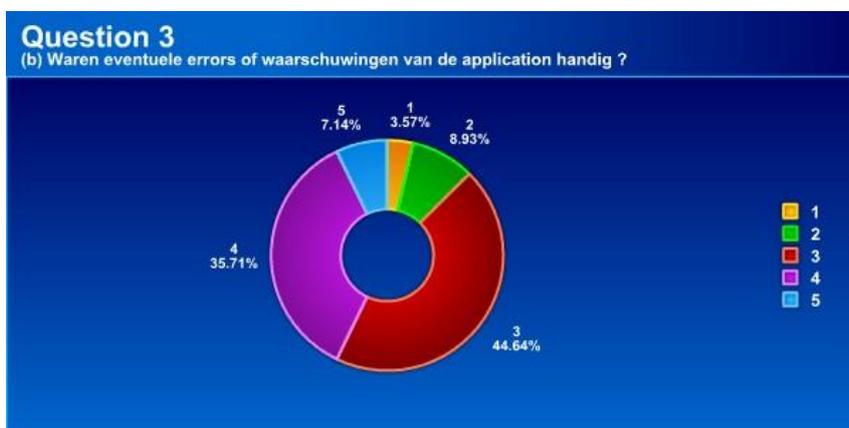
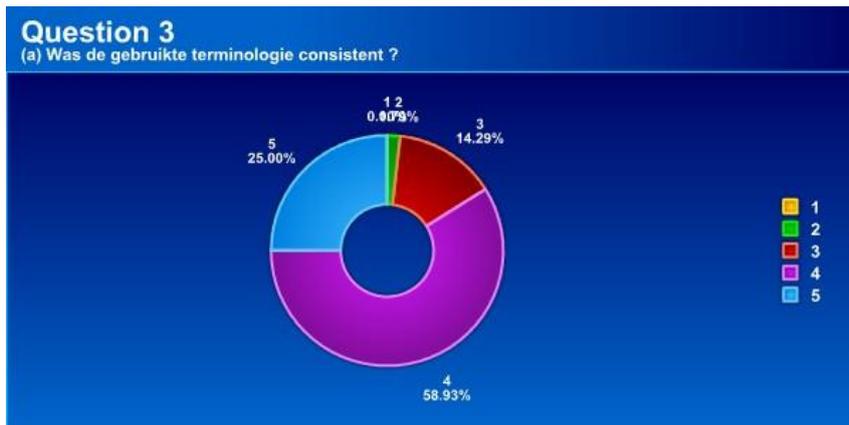
Question 1: Wat vond je in het algemeen van de application? Geef punten waarbij 1 het minst is en 5 het meeste.



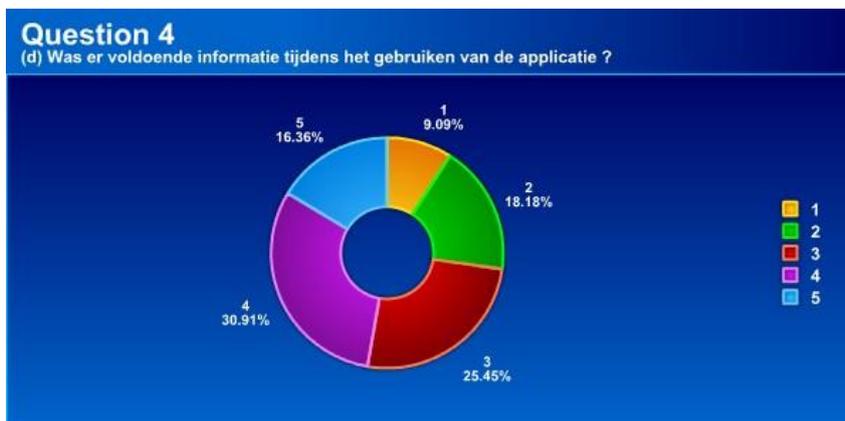
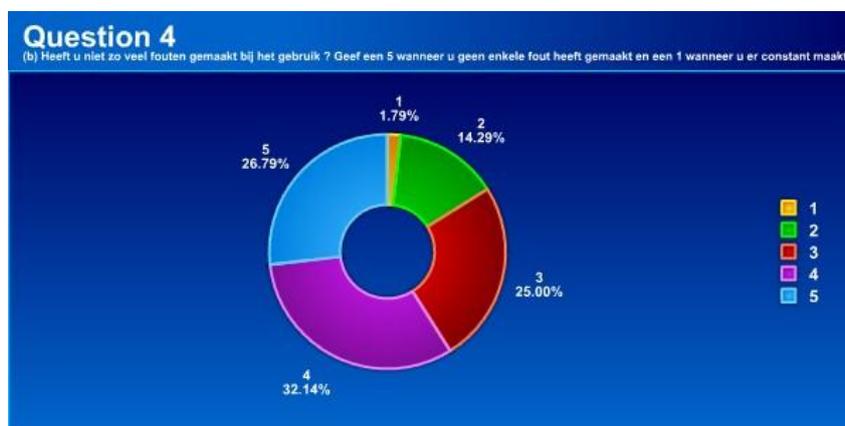
Question 2: Wat vond u van de verschillende schermen plus hun overgangen ? Geef punten waarbij 1 het minste is en 5 het meeste.



Question 3: Wat vond U van de gebruikte terminologie? Geef punten waarbij 1 het minst is en 5 het meeste.



Question 4: Hoe is de leercurve van onze app? Geef punten waarbij 1 het minst is en 5 het meeste.



Question 5: Wat vond u van de laadtijden en algemene werking ? Geef punten waarbij 1 het minst is en 5 het meeste.

