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Human-Computer Interaction

User Interfaces - Iteration Report

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Abstract

This is the second report for the User Intefaces course by group 2, **Eric's Chi-Leaders**. We will describe the process of our initial *BETA*-release by describing our pre-set goals and the approach taken in the first sections of this report. Afterward we will list the results obtained from user-tests and use these to conduct an evaluation of the application. Lastly, we explain the steps we will take in the next iteration based on our conclusions. The appendix contains a table with the groups time-distribution (per person).

The most important thing we took away from this iteration and the corresponding evaluation was the following:

"We are definitely on to something here."

Meaning that almost all of our users liked the application's concept and thought it was a fun little tool to play with. Our future work will be situated in refining the user-experience rather than changing anything our concept.

We invite the interested reader to further examine this document and follow our project's blog.

List of Tables

1 Goals

With our beta release we strive to attract a fair amount users to our application. The main idea here is to generate a lot of user-input so that we may use this to further refine our interface. We would also like to know whether or not our intended target audience has an actual interest in these types of applications. These inexplicit goals and intentions translate to the more detailed ones described in table 1.

Goals associated with public-beta release	
Setting:	**Explicit Goal:**
Scope	have at least 200 (*unique*) persons using the application
Feedback	have at least 50 (*unique*) persons submit a filled-in questionaire
User Retentivity	have the application be used more than 2 times in one week by the same user at least once
Fun/Intended use	have at least one article get completely vandalized
Time	beta testing should take around 2 weeks

Table 1: Goals for Beta

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.

Spreading the word and getting feedback

At this point we made an online survey with key questions about our first release. We started inviting friends to test this first release by sending out invitation mails or private messages via facebook. We each tried various different ways of doing so. Some of us sent a *broadcast*-message to their entire friendlist with a generic explanatory invitation. Others opted for a

more personal approach and sent a custom message to a select group of their friends.

Testers were asked to perform the following tasks:

- add an article, this worked only with deredactie.be in the beginning
- make some adjustments with the pencil
- use the eraser
- check if your modifications were stored by the system correctly
- search for your account options
- add an article, this worked only with deredactie.be in the beginning
- make some adjustments with the pencil
- use the eraser
- check if your modifications were stored by the system correctly
- search for your account options

Additionally, participants were asked to fill in our questionaire.

Each of us started by contacting at least 30 of their friends. In the prospect of reaching our *50 responses*-goal, we agreed to send more invitations as needed.

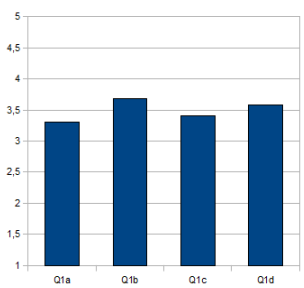
Once the first 25 test subjects filled in our survey, it soon became clear that a lot of users wanted a way to insert textual comments into articles. For this we made a small patch to the release, adding a post-it feature. This update also added *sporza.be* and *cobra.be* support. Once a total of 50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

Implementation

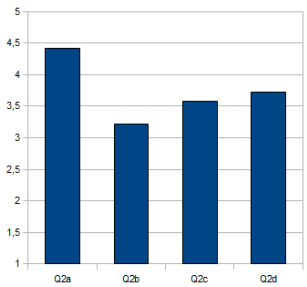
We used a combination of **javascript**, **php** and **as3** to implement our application. The main application functions are all implemented using as3 (Action Script 3 = programming language that is used to create flash applications). Php and javascript were used to create the back-end that connects the client to the database storing all our information. We chose as3 because one of our team members had a lot of programming experience with this language. Furthermore, the flash plugin is installed on most users computers if not imbedded in their browsers.

3 Results

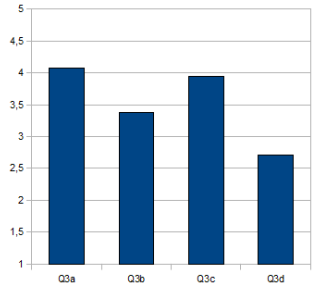
In this section we present the reader with five graphs, each representing one of the general *themes* of questions as seen in the questionare. A full list of questions can be found in the appendix table 5.



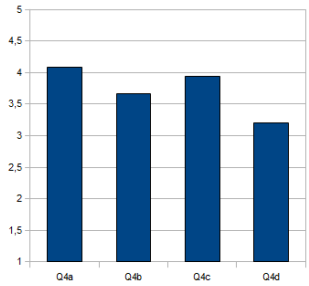
(a) General Experience



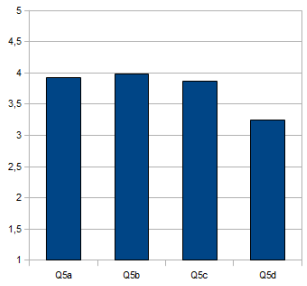
(b) Transitions



(c) Terminology



(d) Learning



(e) Performance

4 Conclusion

During this analysis, we compared 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. Our application scored reasonably well in most categories, so it's hard to identify any shortcommings purely on the questions posed in the survey. Luckily we 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 occurence is obviously the recruiting of our own friends to test the application. In the future we should try and reach a more diverse testgroup.

Visual Style

Some of our users told us that they rather liked the application's concept, but were unimpressed by the UI's visual style. This will be one of our major points of concern to remedy the next iteration.

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 being the lack of an adjustable brush size.

Overall

We have achieved two-thirds of our preset goals, overshooting the survey treshold by quite a bit (10 more than expected). Overall, we are very happy with our results and look forward to refine our application even further.

5 Next Iteration

This section of the report documents what we hope to achieve with the next version of our application. We have differentiated between Goals (*Concrete, numerical values*),

Goals

Goals associated with public release 1	
Setting:	**Explicit Goal:**
Scope	200 registered users by sunday 15-5-2011
Feedback	have at least 50 persons fill in our survey
User diversity	have at least 10 not computer-savvy perons fill in our survey
User diversity	support for (at least 1) english news-sources

Table 2: Goals for Live release

We will make another survey with **at least 50 users** providing feedback. This survey will contain the same questions as the previous version, albeit with some adjustements to clarify some of the question. Also, we will add some very specific questions concerning the lay-out and organisation of information.

In our previous survey we concluded that our test audience 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 have already conducted a small test of our previous release on 4 (of Siegfrieds) family members with little computer skills. The conclusion was that all 4 of them were able to understand all of the functionality within the minute. The only problem all of them experienced was double clicking to open an article. We are now interested to see whether or not our adjustements will augment the user-experience for this type of people.

The results of this new survey will be compared to the previous results in a detailed side-by-side analysis. This process should give us insights into

any problems we'll need to overcome in the future and whether or not we succeeded in improving our initial design.

We want to increase our **number of users to 200 before sunday 15/5**. We will try to achieve this by consistenly using the facebook link to promote our application. One of the tasks we will give users for our next survey is "like" an article on facebook, we hope that this starts a chain reaction of interested users via facebook. 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.

Intentions

In order to compare our users' behaviour between the beta- and live-version, we need to be able to present our logfiles in a clear and concise manner. At the moment we have a logfile in .txt form registering the following actions of a user:

- 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 analyse 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. We will most likely be using Java to develop this tool.

Planning for the next iteration	
09/05	
Setting:	**Todo:**
Functionality	: Find an alternative method of opening an article' s page. : 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.
Additional Promotion	: Create a facebook group. : Post a picture on this facebook page on a daily basis.
10/05 - 15/05	
Setting	**Todo:**
Evaluation	: Analyse 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	
Setting:	**Todo:**
Functionality	: 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	
Setting:	**Todo:**
Evaluation	: analysing new data : writing final report. : allowing/disallowing friends edited the article.

Table 3: Next Iteration Planning

Appendix

Time allocation

Time allocation per person				
	Brian	Siegfried	Joris	Stijn
Classes:	15u	4u30	15u	13u
Implementation:	51u	14u	0u	1u15
Graphics:	0u	0u	0u	16u30
Surveys:	6u	26u	4u	5u
Blogs:	2u	6u30	12u	12u55
Report:	1u	6u30	1u	14u
Presentation (prep):	1u	0u	1u	2u30
Total	**76u**	**57u30**[1]	**33u**	**64.4u**

Table 4: Time allocation table

[1] Has been severly ill

Questionaire

Users' Survey questionaire questions, and their scores.

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 organisation 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

Table 5: Questionaire content