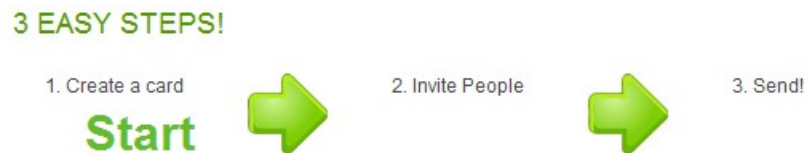


I evaluated the Eloha computer prototype, found at http://ray_li.scripts.mit.edu/eloha/. Eloha allows users to collaboratively create greeting cards. Overall, I found the interface enjoyable to use. Below I note some positive aspects of the design as well as some usability issues which could be fixed to make the interface more user-friendly.

1. Minor: Unclear how to create card (visibility of action)

The Eloha home page contains the following images.



Clicking on the green arrows does not do anything, even though they look like buttons and thus have an affordance for clicking. Creating the card requires clicking on the “Start” text, which does not have an affordance for clicking.

Recommendation: It would be helpful if the “Start” text could be placed onto a button, or if clicking on the arrows would create a card.

2. Good: Popup calendar (match the real world, recognition not recall)

When selecting the recipient's birthdate, a calendar pops up to enable the user to visually select the appropriate day. This is similar to how a user might look at a physical calendar to locate a particular day. Additionally, the user must only recognize the date on the calendar rather than recall it from memory. For example, if s/he knew that the birthdate was the first Monday in April 2011, s/he would only have to look at the calendar, rather than remember the exact date.

Full Name:

Birthday Date:

E-mail Address:

April 2011						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

(c) 2011 Eloha.com. [impl](#)

3. Minor: Unclear notion and usage of “Birthday Date” (learnability)

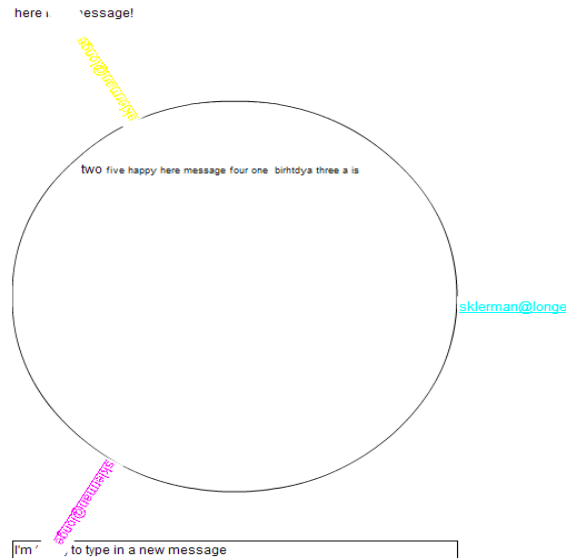
It is unclear what a “Birthday Date” represents, so a new user will have difficulty entering the correct date. (Is a “Birthday Date” the same as a date of birth or is it the date of a person's birthday in a particular year?) Additionally, it is unclear how “Birthday Date” is used by the application, since nothing on the website uses the date after it is entered.

Recommendation: Clarify the notion of a “Birthday Date” or remove it if it is not necessary for the application. If the date will be used for creating a birthday card, it should be clarified that Eloha can only create birthday cards.

Birthday Date:

4. Major: Visibility of input and output obstructed (visibility)

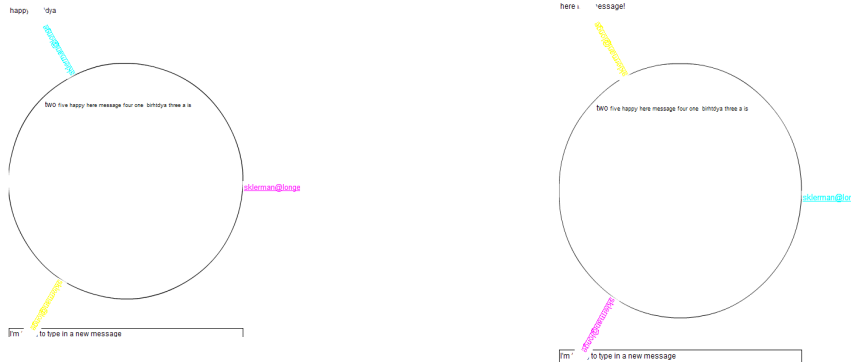
When the greeting card is filled with messages, strings of text emanate radially from the greeting card circle. These text strings obstruct the input text box and block the viewing of existing messages. Additionally, the strings are truncated if they are too long. In the below screenshot, the yellow label blocks the “here is a message” display in the top left corner. The pink label blocks the new message that is being written in the textbox below the circle. All of the labels are truncated at 14 characters. Recommendation: Allow for longer email address strings. Move the message display farther up the page to limit the overlap. Move the input textbox farther down the page to increase visibility of the currently typed message.



5. Major: Messages rotating around circle (consistency, recognition)

When a user clicks on an email address radiating from the message circle, all of the links (representing people's messages) rotate around the message circle. This is a consistency and recognition issue, since the link to my message may first be located in the bottom right corner and may then move to the top left corner. Intuitively, I expect my message to be located in the same place every time I look at the card. Additionally, the links may move in a counterclockwise or clockwise direction, depending on which link is clicked. This behavior is confusing and inconsistent.

Below: The image on the left becomes the image on the right when the user clicks on the blue link.



Recommendation: Fix the location of the messages around the circle.

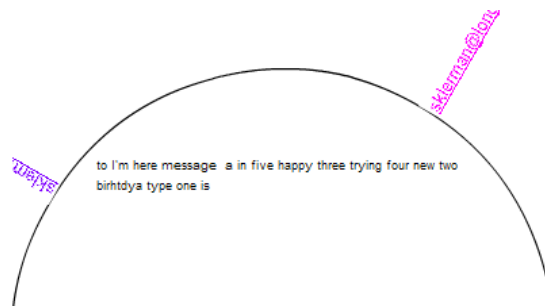
6. Good: Name of greeting card recipient on card (feedback)

The top of the greeting card collaboration page says “Sign Card for Shoshana Klerman” when the card's recipient is named Shoshana Klerman. Similarly, the view-link is annotated with the recipient's name, which gives clear feedback upon creation of the card.

View-link (This is the link you send to Shoshana Klerman once the card is finished):
http://ray_li.scripts.mit.edu/eloha/index.fcgi/eloha/view/d87de721736a0a5dc0f5cd45b9d7d568

7. Minor: Unclear message representation in circle (learnability, visibility of state)

The page with the greeting card contains a large circle with words in it. The words represent a tag cloud of collaborators' messages to the recipient. The words have various sizes and are ordered in a seemingly random way. It is unclear whether the size and location of the words represent something about users' messages or whether they are random. Additionally, a new user expects to see his/her message itself in the circle and will be confused when the words of his/her message are jumbled. It may take a while to realize that the circle contains a tag cloud and not a list of users' messages. The below screenshot shows the contents of the tag cloud circle when the following messages have been entered: “One two three four five”, “happy birthdya”, “I’m trying to type in a new message”, and “here is a message”.



8. Minor: Nonuse of recipient's email address, inability to send the card with a single link

(efficiency)

Eloha stores the email address of the card recipient, but does not use the email address for anything. Additionally, there is no ability to send the card to the recipient with a single click. Instead, a user must copy a link and send it to the recipient.

Recommendation: Either the request for an email address should be eliminated since the information is not used, or the system should have a “send this card” button which will automatically send the link to the user (via the email address which the system has stored).

View-link (This is the link you send to Shoshana Klerman once the card is finished):
http://ray_li.scripts.mit.edu/eloha/index.fcgi/eloha/view/d87de721736a0a5dc0f5cd45b9d7d568

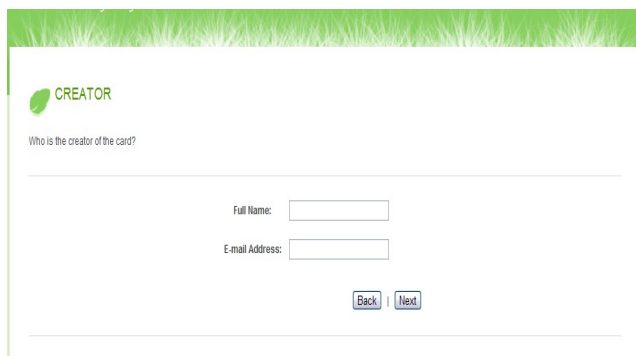
9. Minor: Inability to update email addresses, birthdates (CRUD, user control and freedom)

The user interface violates CRUD since it does not allow the name, birthday, or email address of the recipient or collaborators to be changed after the card is initially created.

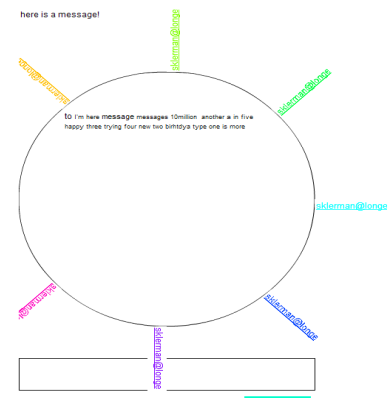
Recommendation: Allow for updates of user information.

10. Good: Graphic design (aesthetic and minimalist design)

The application contains effective and attractive graphic design, especially with regard to its use of whitespace and color. Additionally, representing the greeting card as a circle with colorful rays emanating from it is creative and visually interesting.



The screenshot shows a web form titled "CREATOR" with a green header. Below the title, it asks "Who is the creator of the card?". There are two input fields: "Full Name:" and "E-mail Address:". At the bottom of the form, there are "Back" and "Next" buttons.



11. Minor: Unclear that rectangle is a textbox (visibility)

The greeting card collaboration page contains a rectangle beneath a large circle. The rectangle is a textbox, but there are not many affordances that it is meant to be typed in (aside from the shape).

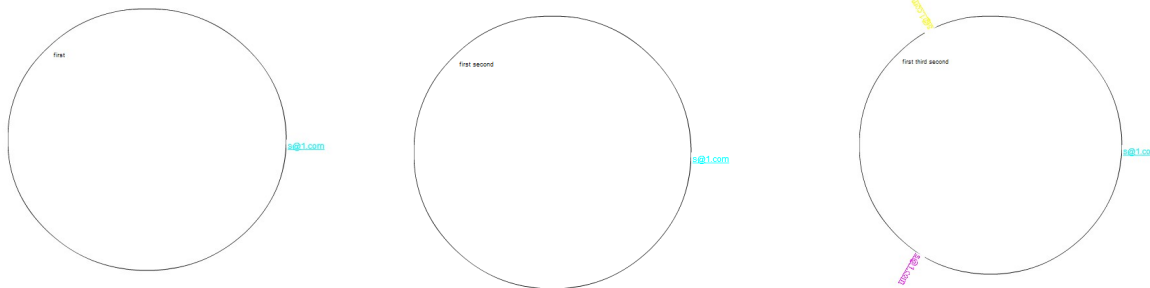
Recommendation: Add a blinking cursor in the textbox and/or put text in the textbox that disappears when the user begins to type, such as “type your greeting here”.

Submit

12. Major: Missing message string (visibility, consistency)

The greeting card does not display the email string that is supposed to be at 9 o'clock on the circle. The message's contents are displayed in the circle, though. This is an inconsistency between the inside of the circle (which contains the message) and the rays of the circle (which don't contain the email address of the person who wrote the message).

From left to right: circle after 1 message has been entered, circle after 2 messages have been entered, circle after 3 messages have been entered. In the second image, there is supposed to be an email string radiating from the circle across from the blue tag. Since the messages are evenly spaced along the circle, this visibility problem (the elimination of the string at 9 o'clock) will occur whenever there are an even number of messages in the card.



13. Good: Effective error messages (error reporting)

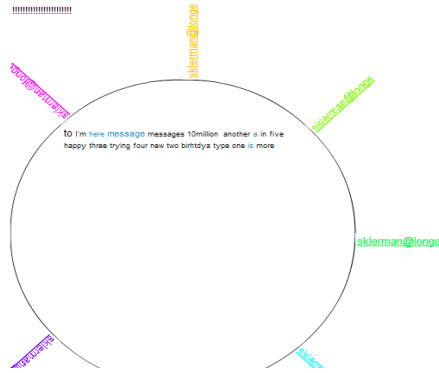
Upon creation of a card, when a user does not input a required field or enters an invalid email address, the system notifies the user clearly and effectively.

Full Name:

• This field is required.

14. Minor: Inconsistency between displayed message and tag cloud highlighting (consistency)

When a user clicks on one of the email strings sticking out of the circle, the message that the string represents is displayed in the top left corner. When a user hovers over an email string, the words contained in the message are highlighted in the tag cloud circle. This creates an inconsistency when a user hovers over a string which is not selected. The message that is displayed in the corner is the last selected message, but the message whose words are highlighted in the tag cloud is the one that the user has hovered over. In the below screenshot, the “!!!!” message has been selected, but the email address representing “here is a message” message has been hovered over.



Recommendation: Highlight the words in the tag cloud corresponding to the selected email address (not to the email address under hover). Mark the selection of an email address by putting the address in bold, so the user knows where s/he clicked.

15. Major: Unclear edit-link functionality (learnability, consistency)

The card generates an edit-link which has unclear functionality. After adding many messages in the collaboration page (/eloha/edit_card), clicking on the edit-link link causes all but one message to disappear. This suggests that each user can only add one message to the card, which is inconsistent with the original message screen. Both the edit_card link and the edit pages allow the user to edit the card. It is unclear how the /eloha/edit page differs from the/eloha/edit_card page

Recommendation: Clarify what edit-link is supposed to do and make it clear on the collaboration page. Prevent the user from entering more than one message if that is not allowed.

Below, left: the edit_card interface after adding three messages.

Below, right: the edit interface which results from having clicked the “edit-link” on the edit_card interface. Note how two messages have disappeared.

