6.831 - Homework 2

Heuristic Evaluation

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Franck Dernoncourt
franck.dernoncourt@gmail.com

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Contents

1. Heuristic Evaluation

This report is a heuristic evaluation of the 6.831 project *StudentSearch*: http://mit.edu/~cdville/Public/813/#

Collaborators: None

1.1 Bug: The auto-completion isn't working ✕✕✕✕
Severity: <u>Catastrophic</u>

The auto-completion for the courses as well as the skills isn't working.

1.2 Flexibility: Skills are not properly segmented ✕✕✕✕
Severity: <u>Catastrophic</u>

The HTML/CSS skill should be two different skills: for example the student Sherlock Holmes has listed in his skills "HTML/CSS", but if the user looks for HTML only he won't find him.

1.3 Learnability: Courses and Skills are OR or AND? ✕✕✕✕
Severity: <u>Catastrophic</u>

The user has no way to know (unless he carefully analyzes the results) if when he enters a course and a skill, the search engine will return the students that have both the course <u>and</u> the skill or the students that have both the course <u>or</u> the skill.

1.4 Learnability: results pages are never full ✕✕✕✕
Severity: <u>Catastrophic</u>

Even when there are several pages of results, the result page doesn't seem to be full. This misleads the user, who might erroneously think there aren't any more results. This might be linked to the screen resizing unavailability.

1.5 Efficiency/Error prevention: only first name is visible when emailing ✖✖✖✖

Severity: <u>Catastrophic</u>

When writing an email to students: the user should be able to see the last name of the students he is emailing, not just the first name, so that it prevents errors when people share the same first name and it provides more information to the user as sometimes the last name is easier to remember.
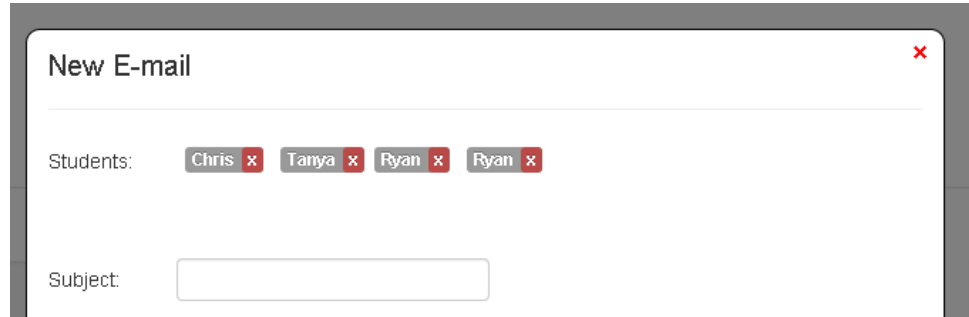
1.6 Error prevention when course doesn't exist ✖✖✖

Severity: <u>Major</u>

If the user enters a course that doesn't exist in the search box, the system doesn't display any error message. Same issue with skills.

1.7 Learnability: course number ✖✖✖

Severity: <u>Major</u>

Many professors don't know the exact number of the courses. It would be good to display somewhere the entire title of the courses.

1.8 Efficiency: the students' boxes aren't informative enough ✖✖✖

Severity: <u>Major</u>

The students' boxes don't contain enough information. I would place the Major number on the same line as the year (e.g. Senior – Course 6-2), and I would replace the interests by the skills and maybe also the courses the student has taken. I understand you didn't display the information as the user is doing the search on courses and/or skills, but I still believe this could be useful information.
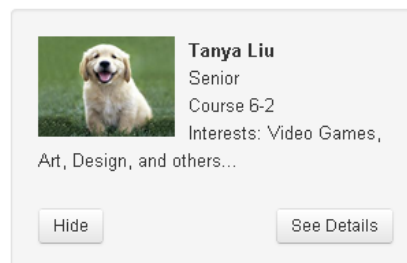
1.9 Graphic design: Screen Resizing ✖✖

Severity: <u>Minor</u>

If we try to resize the window, the page layout won't get adjusted. This limit was mentioned in the *StudentSearch - GR4* wiki page as non-responsive design.

1.10 Learnability: selecting students ✖✖

Severity: <u>Minor</u>

The user can select students he/she wants to e-mail. Currently there is the text saying "click student(s) to select". I believe this could be if you keep replaced by checkbox, although still letting the ability for the user to click anywhere on the student box, as Google+ does for photos, so that the user does not have to read the text (which I have personally missed, but I know I tend to read less than a blind guy). Also, it could be nice to have an option allowing the user to select all the students on the page.

Google+ example: https://plus.google.com/u/0/photos/instantupload
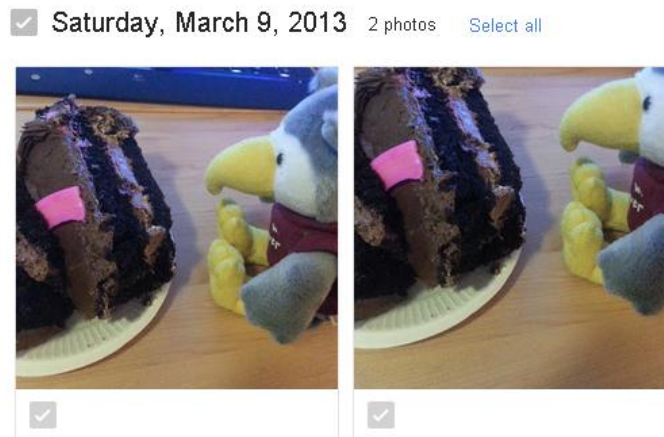

FIGURE 1 - GOOGLE+ WAY OF SELECTING MULTIPLE ITEMS

1.11 Graphic design / efficiency: too much wasted space ✖✖

Severity: <u>Minor</u>

A lot of space is wasted, such as the space between Courses and Skills

1.12 Learnability /Visibility: feedback messages ✖
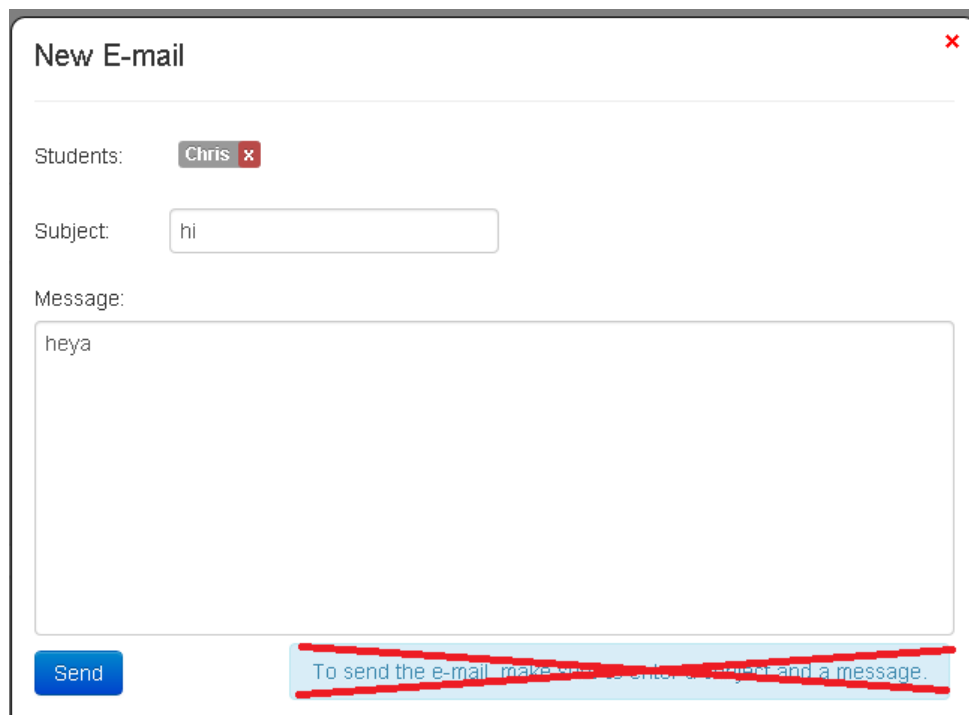
Severity: <u>Cosmetic</u>

Many actions have a feedback on the top of the page, which is great. As Gmail does, it might be better to remove the notification after a certain amount of time though.

> Your e-mail has been sent successfully!   ✕

1.13 Learnability: adaptive help messages ✖

Severity: <u>Cosmetic</u>

When writing an e-mail, there is a help message asking for the user to enter a subject and message. Since this message catches well the attention of the user, it would be good to remove it once the user has typed a subject and start writing the message so that he can focus on the message.

New E-mail   ✕

Students: Chris x

Subject: hi

Message:

heya

Send   To send the e-mail, make ~~sure to enter a subject and a message.~~

1.14 Error prevention when closing the tab if search is ongoing ✔

Good

If we try to close the window when we have entered a search requirement, the website will ask the user to confirm if he really wants to close the tab. On the opposite, if no search is ongoing then no confirmation is asked. This is a great way to prevent errors while reducing the impact on efficiency.
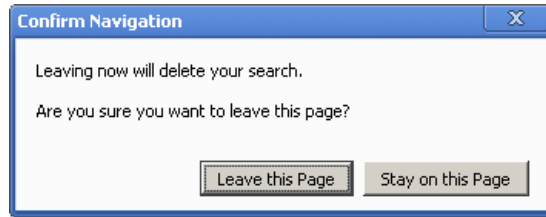
1.15 Graphic design: Font choice and background color ✔

Good

The font and the color of the website are consistent.

1.16 Error prevention when doing a new search ✔

Good

When we click on the "Start New Search" button, the user is asked to confirm he intends to discount the current results.