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6.813

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<div align="center">HW2: Heuristic Evaluation of "*write('now')*"</div>

Collaboration Statement

I collaborated with my TA, Jeremey Scott and no one else.

Prototype

I performed a heuristic evaluation on the prototype of "write('now')", created by by Clara Liu, Kimberly Toy, and Timothy Yang.

Evaluation Details

The evaluation was broken up into six categories: General, Battle/Freestyle, Vote, Profile, About, and Results. Nielsen's Heuristics, Shneiderman's 8 Golden Rules, and the 6.813/6.831 Principles were the heuristics used to explain/justify problems.

Heuristic Evaluation: General

1. **Minor: Navigation Bar lacks proper information scent (Learnability, Reduce Short-Term Memory Load)**
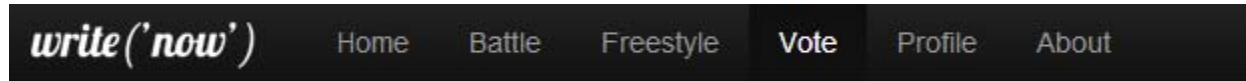
The words "Battle" and "Freestyle" do not properly suggest the purpose of each page to a novice user or an infrequent user.

Recommendation: Add tooltips so when user hovers over button they receive description of purpose.

2. **Cosmetic: Lack of whitespace at bottom of "Profile" and "About" pages (Aesthetic)**
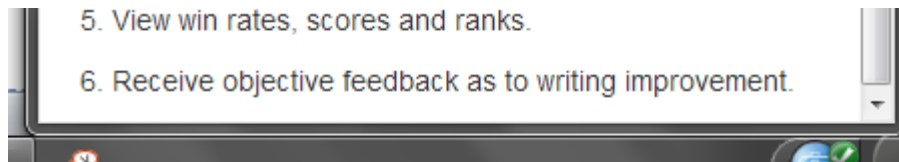
Profile and About pages do not have enough white space at bottom of page, providing the incorrect affordance that there is more to the page when there is not.

Recommendation: Add more whitespace to bottom of Profile and About Pages

3. **Cosmetic: Quotes in log not around 'now' (Consistency)**

In the write('now') logo, the left quotation is around the opening parenthesis, not on "now," while the right quotation is around "now"

Recommendation: place both quotation marks around "now."

4. Positive: Pages scale well
   (Consistency, Put User in Control)
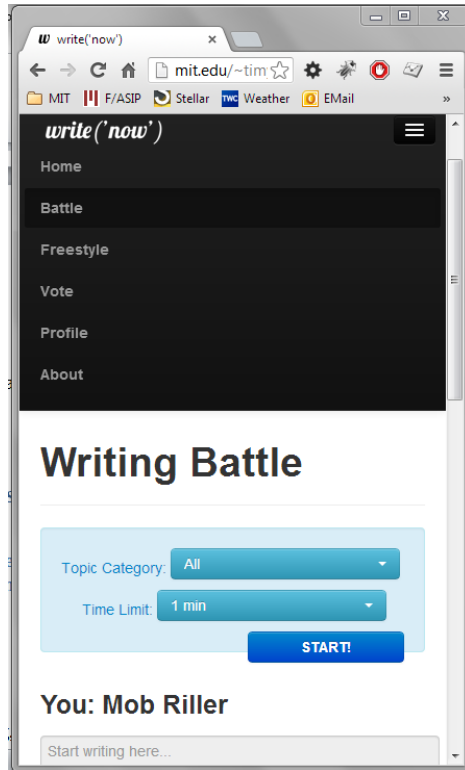
The page scales well, with the Navigation Bar becoming a dropdown when too small and content still being accessible.

Heuristic Evaluation: Battle/Freestyle

1. **Minor: "Time Remaining" should alert user when there is not much time left (Visibility of System Status, Match the Real World)**

> **Topic: The Alaskan Flying Mantis Bear**   **Time Remaining: 0:06**

Users are not alerted when there is not much time left, so the completion of the game can come as a surprise to users.

Recommendation: Add visual cues (blinking, color change) so users know when the time is almost up

2. **Minor: Time Limit options are limited and not efficiently accessible (User in Control, Efficiency)**
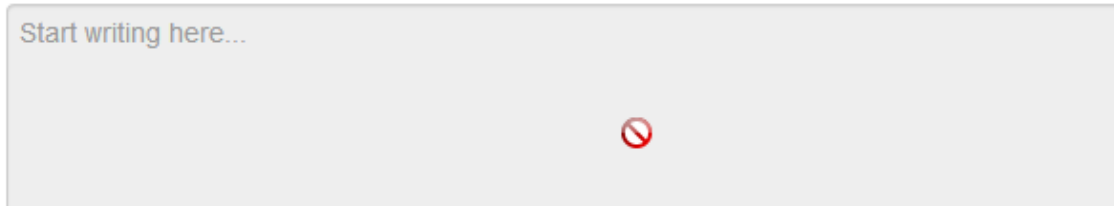
Time Limit: 1 min

1 min
5 min
10 min
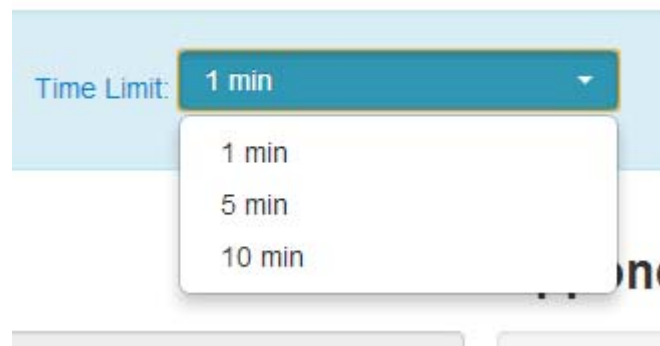
Users must choose a Time Limit from a short list and must use a drop-down menu to access the options.

Recommendation: Make Time Limits customizable or displayed with a radio button

3. **Minor: There is no feedback why user cannot type in textbox when game not in progress**
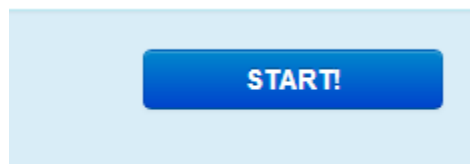   **(Feedback)**

There is no feedback as to why a user is denied from typing in the textbox when the game has not been started

Recommendation: Flash the start button or have a dialog appear explaining how the game must be started

4. **Minor: User must click "Start!" Button to begin game**
   (Efficiency)

The only way to start a game is by clicking the "Start!" button.

Recommendation: Have clicking the textbox start the game (would have to implement canceling game start to ensure safety)

5. **Minor: System status does not sufficiently reflect change in mode when game starts**
   (Visibility of system status)

"Stand-By"   *"Game In Progress"*
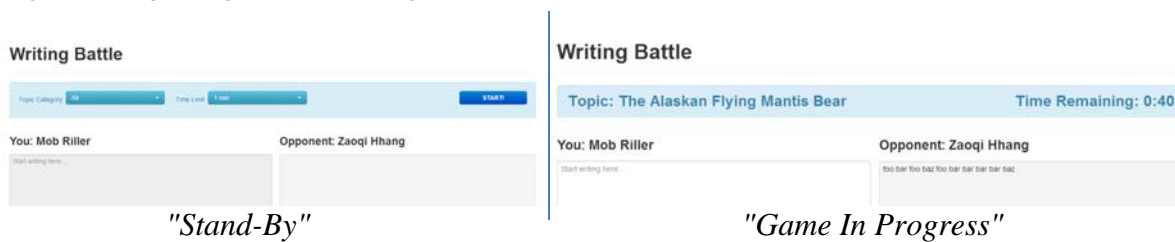
There is a lack of affordance to the game mode switching from "stand-by" to "game in progress."

Recommendation: Gray out/blur everything except textboxes and time display when game starts.

6. **Minor: Cannot cancel a game**
   (Reversible Actions)

Users cannot cancel the start of a game (during countdown) or prematurely quit a game.

Recommendation: Implement a "Cancel Game" button (have it prompt users to check if they are sure to ensure safety, especially after game has started).
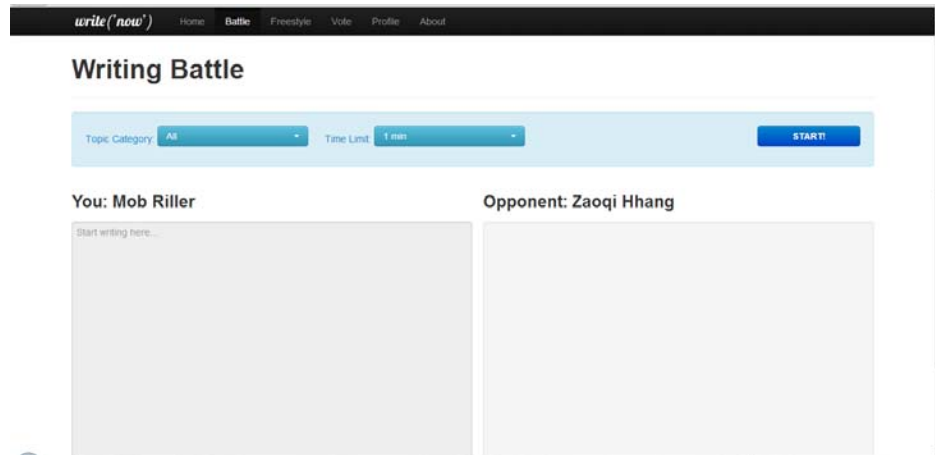
7. **Cosmetic: Titles having unnecessary words**
   (Minimalist Design, Aesthetic)
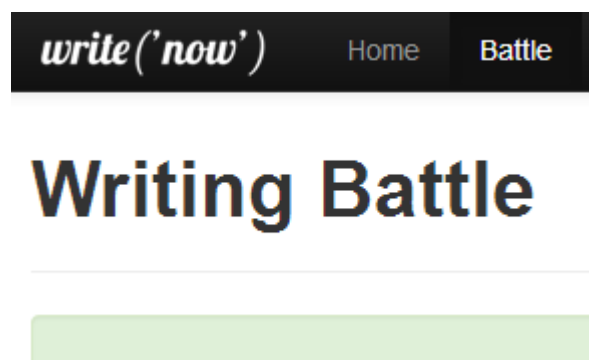
"Writing" precedes the words "Battle" and "Freestyle" even though there is only one type of "Battle" and "Freestyle"

Recommendation: Omit the word "Writing" in titles (so "Battle" instead of "Writing Battle")

8. **Cosmetic: Unnecessary scrolling in screens (Consistency)**

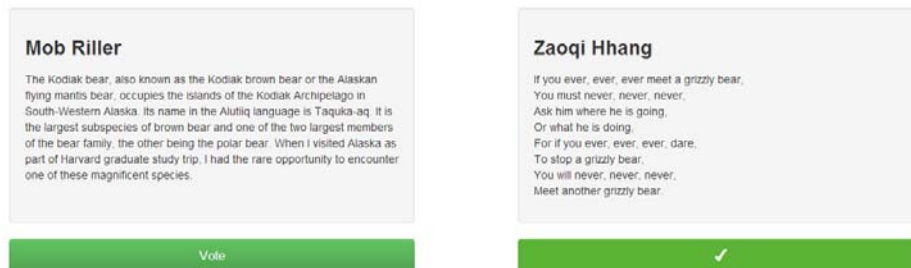The "Battle" and "Freestyle" do not entirely fit into screen, so unnecessary scrolling exists.

Recommendation: Reconsolidate layout (whitespace?) so all of the content fits in one screen.

Heuristic Evaluation: Vote

1. **Minor: Should be able to "Undo" a vote (Reversible Actions)**
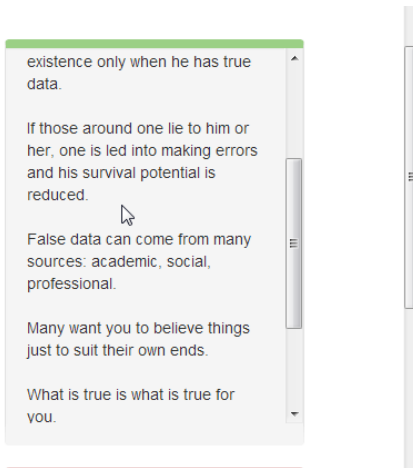

Although votes can be switched, they cannot be undone altogether.

Recommendation: Clicking a voted square should undo the vote.

Heuristic Evaluation: Profile

1. **Major: Scrolling down page interrupted with scroll bars within writing (Efficiency, Safety)**

Due to scrolling for within each "Writing" pane, scrolling down a page is interrupted as users can accidently scroll down writings if cursor hovers over a scrollable pane of writing.

Recommendation: Remove scrolling in writing panes by displaying sample of writing (so it fills the entire pane and nothing more) and have a "read more" button so user can read full writing in pop-out or separate window.

2. **Minor: Profile info is not place where users expect it to be (Match the Real World)**

In popular interfaces (FaceBook, Gmail, Piazza, Yahoo!), profile information is located separately in the right side of the top navigation bar.

Recommendation: Separate the Profile information so it is alone and on the right side of the Navigation Bar; consider having a small icon for the user photo as well.

3. **Minor: No way to track page number for "Writings"**
   (Reduce Short-Term Memory Load, Efficiency)

There is no page numbering or affordances pertaining to which page of "Writings" a user is on or how many pages of "Writing" there are.

Recommendation: Implement a page numbering system such that users can efficiently go between pages and also know how many total pages there are

Heuristic Evaluation: About

1. **Major: "How it Works" not introduced soon enough**
   (Learnability)

"How it Works" provides information pertaining to the what the purpose of write('now') is and an overview of the features. Novice and infrequent users need easier access to this information.

Recommendation: Include some background information in the homepage, improve affordances in pages (especially "Battle" and "Freestyle," as explained earlier).

Heuristic Evaluation: Results

2. Major: Not clear how to add a comment (User in Control)

There is no apparent way to add a comment to a writing, even though comment functionality exists (there are comments already written)

Recommendation: Implement an "add comment" feature or improve the affordances if it already exists.

3. Major: Not clear how to return to results page (Reversible Actions)

There is a lack of affordance as to how to return a specific game's results page again (originally displayed at conclusion of a game).

Summarized Table of Heuristic Evaluation

	Category	Severity	Description	Heuristic
G1	General	1	Navigation Bar lacks proper information scent	Learnability, reduce short-term memory load
G2		0	Lack of whitespace at bottom of "Profile" and "About" pages	Aesthetic
G3		0	Quotes in log not around 'now'	Consistency
G4		+	Page Scales Well	Consistency, Put User in Control
BF1	Battle/ Freestyle	1	"Time Remaining" should alert user when there is not much time left	Visibility of system status, Match the Real World
BF2		1	Time Limit options are limited and not efficiently accessible	User in Control, Efficiency
BF3		1	There is no feedback why user cannot type in textbox when game not in progress	Feedback
BF4		1	User must click "Start!" Button to begin game	Efficiency
BF5		1	System status does not sufficiently reflect change in mode when game starts	Visibility of system status
BF6		1	Cannot cancel a game	Reversible Actions
BF7		0	Titles having unnecessary words	Minimalist Design, Aesthetic
BF8		0	Unnecessary scrolling in screens	Consistency
V1	Vote	0	Should be able to "Undo" a vote	Reversible Actions
P1	Profile	2	Scrolling down page interrupted with scroll bars within writing	Efficiency, Safety
P2		1	Profile info is not place where users expect it to be	Match the Real World
P3		1	No way to track page number for "Writings"	Reduce Short-Term Memory Load, Efficiency
A1	About	2	"How it Works" not introduced soon enough	Learnability
R1	Results	2	Not clear how to add a comment	User in Control
R2		1	Not clear how to return to results page	Reversible Actions

"Severity" Key

2	Major
1	Minor
0	Aesthetic
+	Positive