

Collaborators: I did not collaborate with anyone.

For this evaluation the **Refocus.io** extension was installed in Google Chrome (Version 26.0.1410.64 m) on Windows 7.

Usability Analysis:

1. **Major:** The “FOCUS” icon lacks the affordance of a button and was not visible at a first glance. (Learnability)

The “FOCUS” icon seems like a graphical part of the website heading at first glance when the website has a white background (Figure 1). However, once the user starts scrolling the page or hovers over the “FOCUS” icon, it becomes clear that “FOCUS” is something not part of the webpage.



Figure 1

2. **Major:** The meaning of tooltip text saying “Click to go into Focus Mode” is not clear for a first time user. (Learnability)

A user, who is using this application for the first time, may not understand the purpose of going into “Focus Mode” (Figure 2).

Recommendation: Perhaps, rephrasing the tooltip text as “Click to start focusing on paragraphs” might be helpful for the novice users.



Figure 2

3. **Good:** The overlay showing the focused text is well designed and has no redundant icon (Figure 3). (Aesthetic and minimalistic design)
4. **Good:** The “x” and << >> icons on the overlay are minimal and functionally consistent with the outside world. (Aesthetic and minimalistic design, Consistency)
5. **Good:** The << >> icons are closely placed, thus easily clickable. (Fitt’s Law)

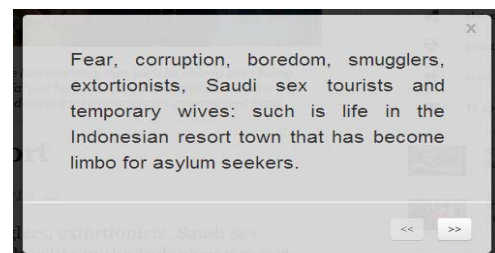


Figure 3

6. **Catastrophic:** The overlay showing the focused paragraph has a fixed position on the screen and cannot be dragged. If the focused paragraph is too big, the << >> controls on the overlay go out of vision and there is no way to bring them back. (User Control & Freedom, Efficiency, Safety)

When the overlay shows a large paragraph and the controls go out of view (Figure 4), the user is left with only the option of closing the overlay and focus on the next paragraph by manually selecting it and using the “Focus on Selection” option.

Recommendation: Making the overlay content scrollable beyond a certain size might be a good idea.

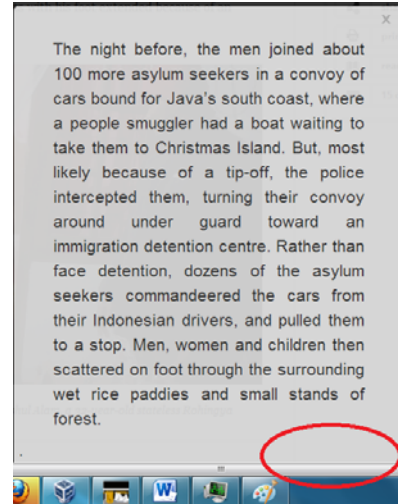


Figure 4

7. **Major:** If a webpage does not contain any paragraphs, clicking on the “FOCUS” button shows an empty overlay where << >> buttons are clickable but don't do anything (Figure 5). (Anticipation, Safety)

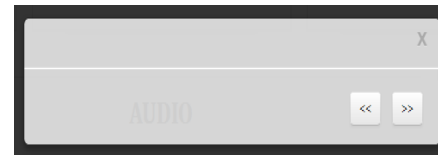


Figure 5

8. **Minor:** The term “Progress List” is ambiguous and inconsistent with the text in explanation. (Learnability)

The explanation text says “Drag and drop the links that you want to explore later” which gives the user a feeling that he is listing the links to visit but not his progress.

Recommendation: Perhaps, rephrasing the title text as “Links to visit” or “Tasks to do” might be more appropriate.



Figure 6

9. **Minor:** The mouse cursor becomes “I cross bar” while hovering over the “Clear Completed” link. (Consistency, User Anticipation)

It is anticipated that, hovering over a link will turn the cursor into a hand, but here it becomes an “I cross bar” which is inconsistent.

10. **Minor:** Even though the “dotted box” gives a feeling that it defines an area for dropping a dragged link, a user can actually drop a link anywhere on the right panel, even outside the box. (Learnability, Affordance, Consistency, Aesthetic Design)

The user can basically drop a link anywhere on the panel shown in Figure 7 (even on the “Refocus.io” icon) and the link gets added to the “Progress List”. So, showing the “dotted box” seems redundant and the right border of the box is not actually visible.



Figure 7

11. **Good:** Clicking on a link in the focused text directly adds it to the “Progress List” which is efficient since the user need not drag it to the right panel. (Efficiency)

12. **Major:** The layout of the items in the “Progress List” makes it difficult to look at and inefficient to use. (Efficiency, Aesthetic Design)

The checkbox, link text and cross are not well organized (see Figure 8). It makes the list look cluttered when multiple links are added to the list. Recommendation: Perhaps, grouping the items in columns would make it more organized. See Figure 9:

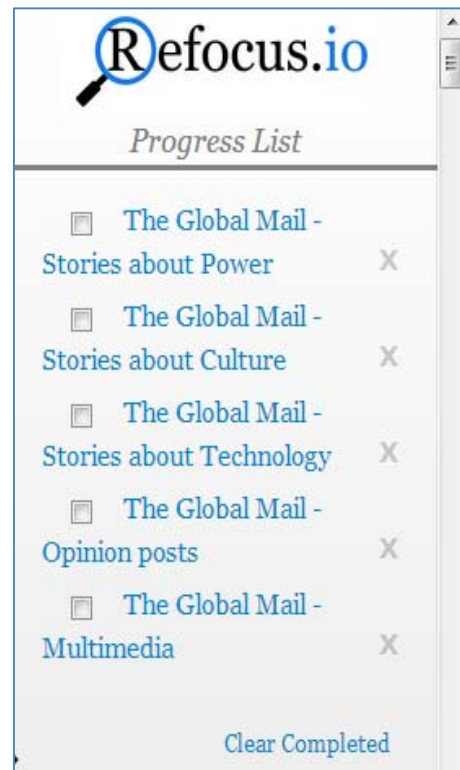


Figure 8



Figure 9

13. **Good:** The items in the “Progress List” can be reordered in place by dragging which is quite convenient and efficient. (Efficiency)

14. **Catastrophic:** When the “Progress List” becomes large the “Clear Completed” link goes out of sight and there is no way to bring it back other than crossing out some of the tasks manually. (Efficiency)

The “Progress List” is not scrollable. When a large number of links are added to the list, the newly added items as well as the “Clear Completed” link goes out of sight (Figure 10).

Recommendation: Making the “Progress List” scrollable beyond a certain size might be appropriate.

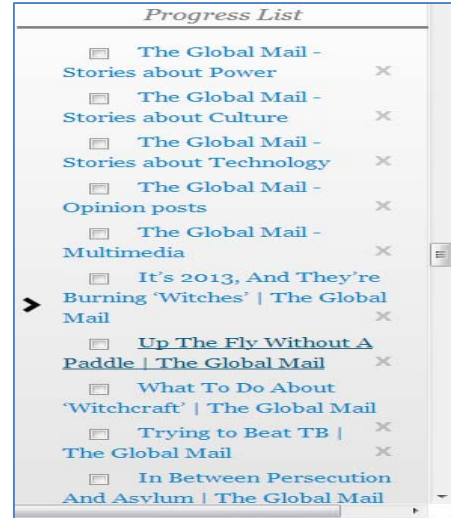


Figure 10

15. **Minor:** “Clear Completed” link is clickable when the list is empty or no link is selected. (User Anticipation, Safety)

It is not clear how the “Progress List” will behave since the implementation is incomplete. Assuming a link in the list that has been visited already, will be checked automatically, the “Clear Completed” link should be clickable only when the list has some checked items.

Recommendation: Perhaps, replacing the “Clear Completed” link with a button will be a good idea. Then the button can be disabled when there are no items in the list.

16. **Major:** There is no “Select All” and “Clear All” option for selecting and clearing all the checkboxes for the links in the “Progress List”. (Efficiency)

It is highly inefficient to select or clear the checkboxes in the “Progress List” one by one.

17. **Catastrophic:** There is no visible information hinting the user about the presence of “Focus on Selection” option so the user may end up not using it at all. It hurts efficiency since to go to a certain paragraph, user might start from the beginning every time in focus mode. (Visibility, Efficiency)

Selecting a piece of text and then right clicking shows the “Focus on Selection” option. But this is not obvious and user might never use it.

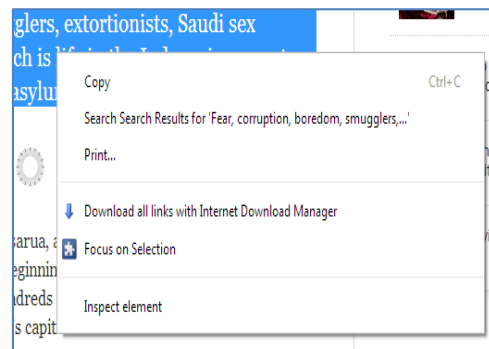


Figure 11

- 18. Major:** When a paragraph is selected and focused on using the “Focus on Selection” option, it is displayed in a smaller font than the typical “Focus Mode” which makes it harder to read it (Figure 12). (Internal Consistency)

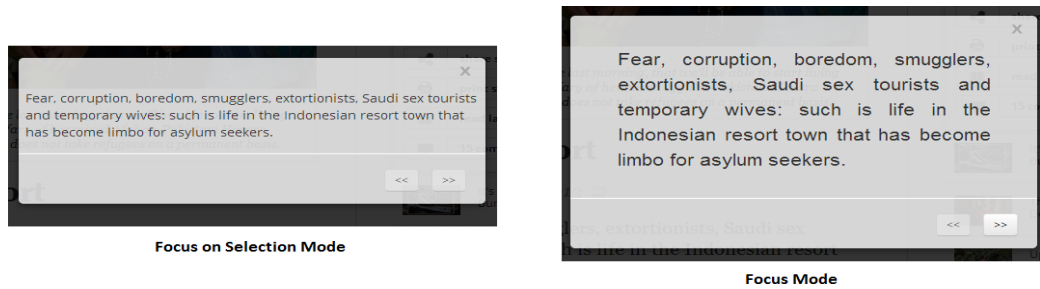


Figure 12

- 19. Minor:** The term “Focus on Selection” is ambiguous. (Learnability)

Recommendation: Perhaps, rephrasing the term as “Focus Selected” would convey the purpose of the option more to users.

- 20. Minor:** There is no documentation of the features of “Refocus.io”. (Help & Documentation)

Recommendation: Like other chrome extensions, it might be useful to have a “Visit Webpage” link besides “Permissions” (in the Settings > Extensions page of chrome) and the webpage can explain the features through text or video.

- 21. Good:** The color scheme is pleasing to the eye. There is no use of red, green or other highly saturated colors, so color blind users can use it without a problem. (Aesthetic Design, Color Blindness)

Bugs:

- 1. Major:** Sometimes applying “Focus on Selection” option on a paragraph displays the text along with html tags which may be due to a bug in the code.

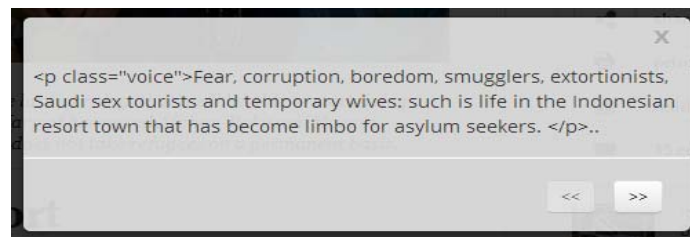


Figure 13

- 2. Catastrophic:** After closing and reopening the browser, the “Focus on Selection” vanishes from the right click menu. The only way it could be restored was reinstalling the extension again.