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6.813/6.831
HW 2 -- Collaborators: None

Household Dashboard

I like the simplicity of this interface, and was able to understand the overall interaction model right away. The interface seems to need a handful of subtle adjustments to improve its usability.

Good Features

1. Task Status

(Good feature)

Visibility of system status

I like the use of three colors to indicate whether a task is unclaimed (yellow), in progress (purple), or finished (green). The icon on the far left of who has claimed the task also gives good information scent. You get a good sense of the status of the household chores at a quick glance.



2. Cursor Updates

(Good feature)

Consistency and standards + Explorable Interfaces

The cursor adapts between a standard cursor and a pointer cursor to indicate what is and is not clickable in the interface. The user can quickly explore the interface with their cursor to get a sense of the affordances on first use.

3. Prevention of Null Tasks

(Good feature)

Error prevention + Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors

If the user unknowingly clicks the “Add” button without entering a task name, the system gives them feedback on the error by highlighting the “Enter Task Name” prompt in red. This is subtle and effective.

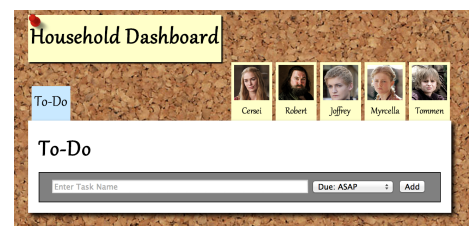


4. Post-it Theme

(Good feature)

Metaphor + Match between system and the real world

The designers cleverly themed the interface as a tag board, which instantly gives the user a sense of the interface affordances and the interaction model (i.e. that they can quickly post To-Dos for the family to see on this central board).



5. On-the-fly Task Creation

(Good feature)

Defaults + Flexibility and efficiency

The user can create one task after the other quickly from the main text field without needing to worry about who is going to work on it. Allowing the user to establish tasks before claiming or assigning them creates a flexible and efficient workflow.

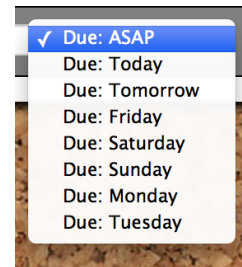
Usability Concerns:

6. Fixed Set of Due Dates

(Major)

Flexibility and efficiency + Match between system and the real world

This list-format date picker is limiting and could create frustration for users. The inclusion of “ASAP” is good, but in reality, users will want to be much more specific about when chores need to be done (i.e. what if the house needs to be cleaned before visitors arrive at 6pm next Monday?). I would suggest using a traditional date and time picker (with an additional ASAP button) for this feature.



7. Lack of Task Editing + Deletion

User control and freedom + Flexibility and efficiency

(Catastrophic)

Users can neither delete tasks that are no longer relevant nor editing existing tasks to make updates or fix errors. This very basic functionality seems essential. I would suggest incorporating this into the individual task UIs (see next point).

8. Multi-item Task Treated as Single Button

Consistency and standards + Flexibility and efficiency

(Minor)

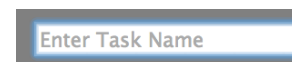


There are three informative items on display here and one would expect each to have a separate function on click. However, clicking anywhere in this area takes the user to the dialog where they can assign the family member and status. What's missing is the ability to manipulate the title of the task, as mentioned in (7). This could be part of the dialog, but it would be nice to skip the dialog and manipulate all of these fields directly for efficiency.

9. Task Entry Field Does Not Clear On Click

Consistency and standards + Flexibility and efficiency of use

(Cosmetic)



The prompt text in the text entry stays on click rather than clearing and the cursor visibly jumps to the beginning of this text. This breaks external convention and hurts efficiency given the user needs to clear the text. There is a setting in the HTML text input that can be used to handle the prompt properly.

10. Cannot Link Back to Tasks in User Screen

Consistency and standards + Flexibility and efficiency of use
(Minor)

In the home view, the user can view all tasks and click each to edit who has claimed them. The user should be able to manipulate tasks in the individual user views the same as in the home screen, especially once richer task-editing is implemented. I would suggest thinking of the user screens as filters for the home screen rather than static, separate, pages, so the user does not need to go back to find out more about the tasks they see here.

Today Cersei...

Task: visit robert
Status: Claimed

Task: dishes
Status: Claimed

Task: wash bathroom
Status: Completed



11. General Lack of Whitespace / Padding

Aesthetic and minimalist design + Readability
(Cosmetic)

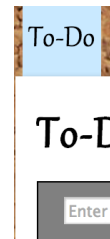
The titles shown here lack padding on the left and right sides of the text, so their positioning feels cramped and skewed. I suggest adding more whitespace for readability.



12. Alignment of Text

Aesthetic and minimalist design + Readability
(Cosmetic)

The left side of each piece of text are misaligned, creating an asymmetric cascade effect. I would suggest sticking to a grid layout for cleanliness and readability.



13. Strong, Competing, Backgrounds Misdirect Eye

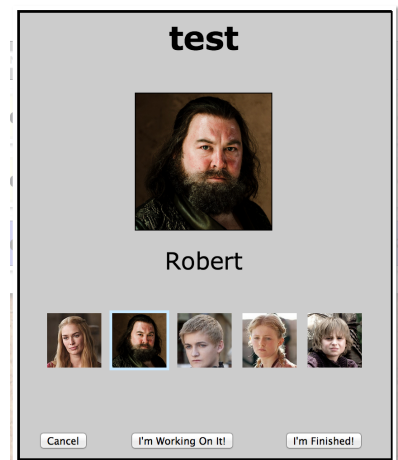
Aesthetic and minimalist design
(Cosmetic)

The very intense cork-board pattern and the high-contrast grey background of the task creation area simultaneously grab the user's eye and compete for attention. Both are distracting, and I suggest putting emphasis on the actionable items--consider lightening the grey and using the corkboard as a border or semi-transparent background.

14. User Identity is Confusing

Consistency and standards + Match between system and the real world + Learnability
(Major)

In claiming a task, the user does not have a sense of which family member they are signed in as. The user can select any family member and say "I'm working on it" or "I'm finished". It should be clear who "I" am and whether or not I can assign tasks to other members rather than just claiming them for myself.



15. Dangerous Link at Top of Page

Protect User's work + Error prevention

(Major)

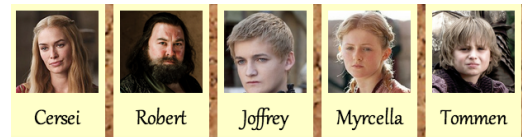
The "Household Dashboard" link is the largest in the interface, but it effectively clears the user's work without serving a clear purpose. I suggest removing or repurposing this link (for example a help-menu pop-up)

16. No Quick-Sense of User Task Count

Visibility of system status + Recognition rather than recall

(Minor)

Users cannot gain a sense of who is working on what from the home screen--they must explore each family member's page and determine how many tasks they already have / what their progress is--this seems like something that could easily be incorporated as a small number on their tab or a hover-over preview for quick information scent.



17. Due Date Disappears

(Catastrophic)

Recognition rather than recall + Error prevention

The date disappears once the task is assigned to someone, so the user is forced to remember this detail. This information should still remain after a status is added.

