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CS 352

Seven Gulfs Activity

I'm sort of using the Wizard of Oz thing, as if I am experienced with the internet, but don't know anything about Pandora and stations.

Step 1: We are trying to use Pandora to start a station that plays only a narrow selection. For this case, London-cast recordings of Broadway musicals. This was given by the prompt. Googling Pandora gives it as the first result, and the subtext under the result talks about music, so it should be the right website.

Step 2: As for our intention, we plan to use the website Pandora to create a narrow station. There is a white bar and a blue + sign. Within the white bar, it says "Enter an artist, song, or genre to create a station." Above that, in larger letters, it says "Free personalized radio that plays the music you love." From this, I can infer that Pandora is a free service, and in combination with the text in the white bar, that a station is like a personalized radio that plays music that I love.

Step 3 and 4: From being on the internet, I know that white bars typically signal that I click within the white bar and I will see a blinking cursor. Then I will be typing in the bar relating to the station I want, and then hit enter, and perhaps it will give me a list of station results relating to what I want. Sure enough, when I click the white bar, it says what it previously did, but the bar expands and says "Not sure what you want to hear? Start browsing stations you'll love." So now I know I can both search for and create stations. A blue browse button is below. At this point, it is still somewhat vague what I will do to create the station once I hit enter, but I hope that if I follow along with the prompts of the website, I will get my London-cast recorded Broadway music. I plan to type in "London-cast Broadway music" into the white bar and hit enter. If this doesn't work, perhaps I will go back and click the blue browsing button.

Step 5, 6, and 7: While I was typing in my search query, the bar dynamically updated with results, as it predicted what I was searching for. After typing in London, I see various results such as Les Miserables, London Philharmonic Orchestra, and London Symphony Orchestra. When I highlight these objects, these choices, they glow blue, giving me feedback of which one I am currently moused over. Presumably, if I click a highlighted option, it will create a station along the lines of what I searched for. The reason I feel this is because the internet traditionally uses blue text for links, on google and such. Even though I am not on google anymore, the white horizontal bar functioned as a search bar in the same way, and I have seen similar highlighted elements repeated elsewhere on the internet. In relation to my goals, "Miserables (Original London Cast)" is the choice that seems the most promising. It is a Broadway musical and the original London cast is specified. But I do not know if creating a station over here will give me music only from Les Miserables, or from Broadway musicals recorded by London in general.

Perhaps, they could have had a more prominent tutorial on the concept of stations. While there is the real life concept of radio stations, exactly how it works on this website could be better specified. While there is an about link on the main page, it is very small, and cluttered with lots of other words. The website has lots of empty space, so perhaps they could have made the text bigger and expanded the website to fill more of this space. This would have helped with step 5, the state of the system, and the tutorial on stations would help with step 6, helping me to interpret the meaning of the feedback.

At this point, I realize that I am probably going to be repeating steps. I come up with a new course of action, physically interact with the objects on the website, and receive new feedback that I decipher the meaning of, before comparing to my goals. With each successive cycle, I will gain more experience and context using the website, and which of my attempts to reach a narrow station were more or less successful, so I can hone in more accurately in subsequent attempts. An ideal website would get the station exactly as I desire on the first try, but I know that can be hard.

I decide to refine my search to “London Broadway.” I am slightly confused to see artists and songs, but no stations. I assume that perhaps, it would create stations about the artist or songs. After scrolling down, I see a stations category, and click the second result Broadway. It has some text under it, various musicals and the specification (Original Broadway Cast). This works if the original cast was from London. After clicking Broadway, I click play station, and hear A Spoonful of Sugar from Marry Poppins. I cannot determine if this is from London or not. After trying various search queries, I decide to just searching for the name of a musical that I know and specify original London cast, then listen to various songs to confirm they are all from London. This method works, and satisfies my original goal, but I am somewhat unsatisfied with the lack of attribution as to where the original cast of the particular Broadway musical was from. This made step 6 harder, determining meaning from the feedback so I could determine if it satisfied the original goal, as step 7 said. I basically got lucky. The intuitive approach of searching for London cast Broadway failed, and it wasn’t clear if Original cast Broadway filled that condition. I would have to know if Broadway originals were from London or not. When searching for the London cast, I did not know if it would only play music from a particular musical or other broadways from London either. I had to determine this through listening to several songs instead of receiving immediate feedback. To remedy this, there could be more information given on the origin of the performance, and not just on the song itself, because the version of the song is important.