


GenderMag Recorders Assistant Useability Assessment


The objective of the useability test is to evaluate the tools compliance to the reduction of bias within the tool itself. As such, the use of the tool will be the focus. The test subject chosen is the GenderMag website <http://gendermag.org/>.

The evaluation is also looking for conformance with the Jakob Nielson 10 useability heuristics. These can be found at <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/ten-usability-heuristics/>

Interaction tab feature

The first observation in using the tool is the distraction of the text flowing over the allotted space within the interaction tab. The font chosen vs the space allotted results in

the bottom of the letters being cutoff. In the image  the “g” is only partially visible and there is an unnecessary scroll bar displayed to the right of

the tab. Using the tab scroll results in the  in the letters moving up, however the g is still not fully visible. The result is the user can be confused by the scroll bar intent. As the interaction with the tab is intended to be a “click me” to raise the full tool. However, the user could initially be thinking the scroll arrows actually are the tool controls and clicking on the up arrow only performs the scroll of the letters and does not raise the tool. The user is then left with the need to tinker / experiment to discover how the tab truly interacts.

This is a good example of the types of things the GenderMag project is looking to correct. The tab/button design is actually bias because it requires the exact opposite trait of the Abi persona. Abi relies on being able to use an affordance intuitively without the need for tinkering. To do so, the affordance needs to communicate via its design the intended interaction type, if any. The way this affordance is implemented, the scroll arrows look to be communicating how to interact. But the scroll arrows only scroll the words and do no real action. If she were to click on the scroll arrows thinking the tool should raise, she could potentially blame herself for doing something wrong or unintended by the developer. Assuming the scroll bars arrows were removed, how would the user be informed that a mouse clicking action is needed to interface?

An improvement might be to provide an indication of action by shaping the tab to look more like a button. Rounding the corners of an object has become an industry standard. A simple use of the CSS `border-radius` control might be enough. However, if coupled with a “shadow” effect applied to the button border to give it more of a 3D appearance and suggest interaction (see below).

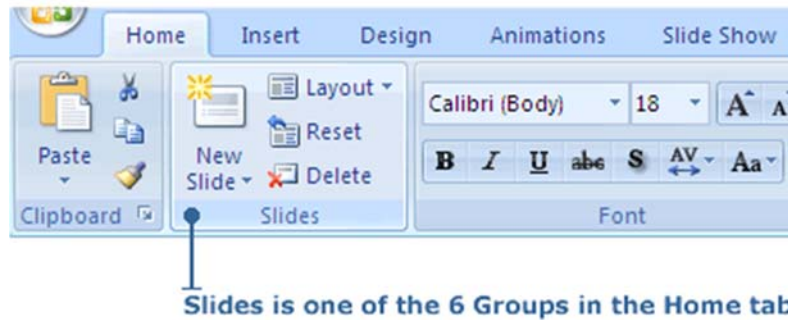


Figure 1 Sample “Home” tab with 3D simulation (image credit http://www.actden.com/pp2007/images/sc1a_1c.gif)

A final suggestion, but requires an increase in development effort, would be to provide an action on hover. Namely a popup help prompt providing instructions on the expected actions. Even displaying the simple phrase like “Click here to open”, would provide just enough information to keep going. The *Abi* persona would make the best use of this aid as she may hesitate before trying to interact. The popup would be good positive reinforcement to help her confidently interact with the system control.

The *Neilsen* heuristic #4: Consistency and standards applies here in that conforming to industry norms will help with the overall experience.

Pre-session setup screen 1

This screen has an issue with the far-right interface button.



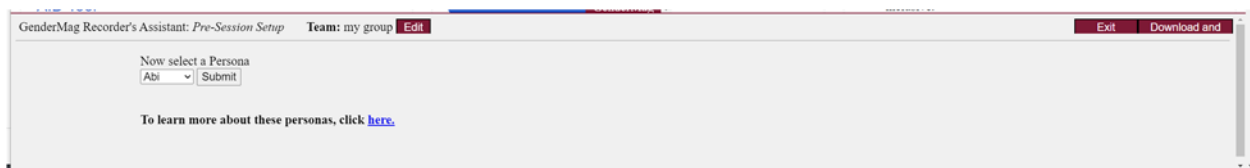
The button text is truncated, and the full message is not legible. (See screenshot above). It is possible this has to do with system settings as it may be related to the previous issue. Perhaps systems might replace the default font if that is not available on

all systems. However, this may show that the system is not completely independent of localized settings. Some accommodation might be in order to adapt. Perhaps a reduction in the text content even a few characters or increase in button dimensions might make this less susceptible to any localizations.

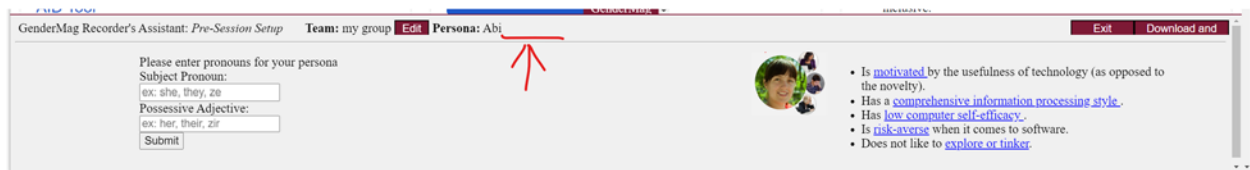
This issue might tend to trigger the Abi persona into having issues with continuing to use the tool as the messaging from her perspective is incomplete.

From a Heuristics point of view, the title at the top “Pre-Session Setup” is a helpful guide to knowing the state of the system, heuristic #1. It can be inferred that the full process actually has not fully started yet. If possible, it could be improved with the addition of a progress bar. A simple shaded bar indicating progress towards full completion. This would give a non-textual based gauge to the user about where they are at in the process. Again, an industry standard and could be linked to the particular message displayed in each screen.

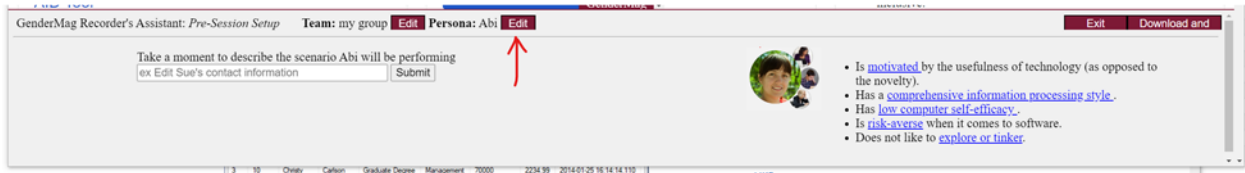
Pre-session setup screen 2 &3



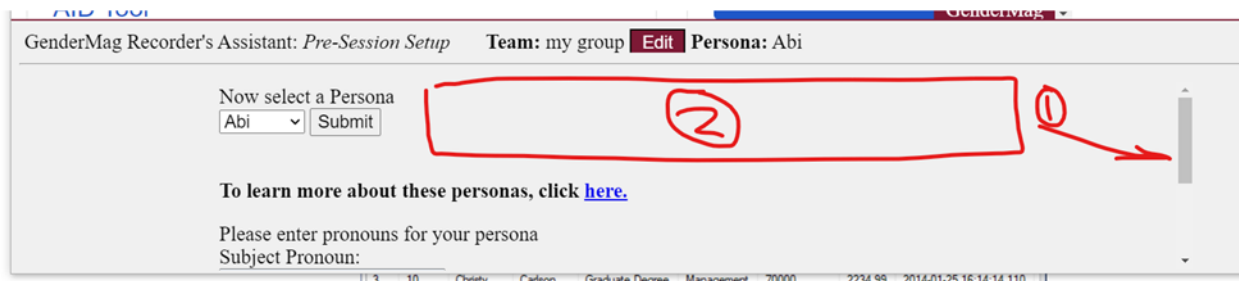
The second screen has a violation of heuristic #3 User control and freedom. From screen #1 there was data asked to be input the team name that can be seen at the top status bar with a good “Edit” button next to it. However the choice of a persona, in that case Abi, there is no opportunity to edit the choice. Once Abi choice is made, the user would have to restart the session to modify their choice.



Once the pronouns and adjectives are filled in an Edit choice does become visible (see below)



After pressing the Edit button the user is now offered to edit the persona choice, and surprisingly the Subject Pronoun and the Possessive Adjective are also available for edit. However they are difficult to see as a new scroll bar (1) must be used to discover there is more that could be interacted with.



Perhaps making use of the available space in area (2) might be able to eliminate the need for the scrolling and thus eliminate the need for exploration and tinkering.

In session screen 1

We have now changed the progress message at the top to indicate In Session. This is good feedback to try and help understand the progression of the system, but could still use some further information regarding total progress towards completion



The Subgoal 1: Title as entered by the user is not fully visible. It would be expected this would text wrap into the available space under the first line. But it is interesting the full title is shown in bold next to it.

There is now an "Edit subgoal name" that allows a user to modify their prior choice and this is a god feature around heuristic #4. The placement of the button relative to the item being interacted with does leave some room for improvement. A user must do an association with an action in one area of a screen making a change to a different area of the screen. A more logical choice would be to place the edit function much closer to the Subgoal text being edited.

Clicking the implied hyperlink (because of the blue text and underline) of Subgoal 1: causes the already entered information to be reset (see below)

GenderMag Recorder's Assistant: *In Session* **Team:** my group **Persona:** Abi S

▼ [Subgoal 1: Com...](#) **Subgoal: Complete a report**
Will Abi have formed this subgoal as a step to her overall goal?
 Yes No Maybe

Why, why not or why maybe?

Save and Continue Edit subgoal name

Which (if) question?
 Motivat
 Comput
 Attitude
▼ Informa

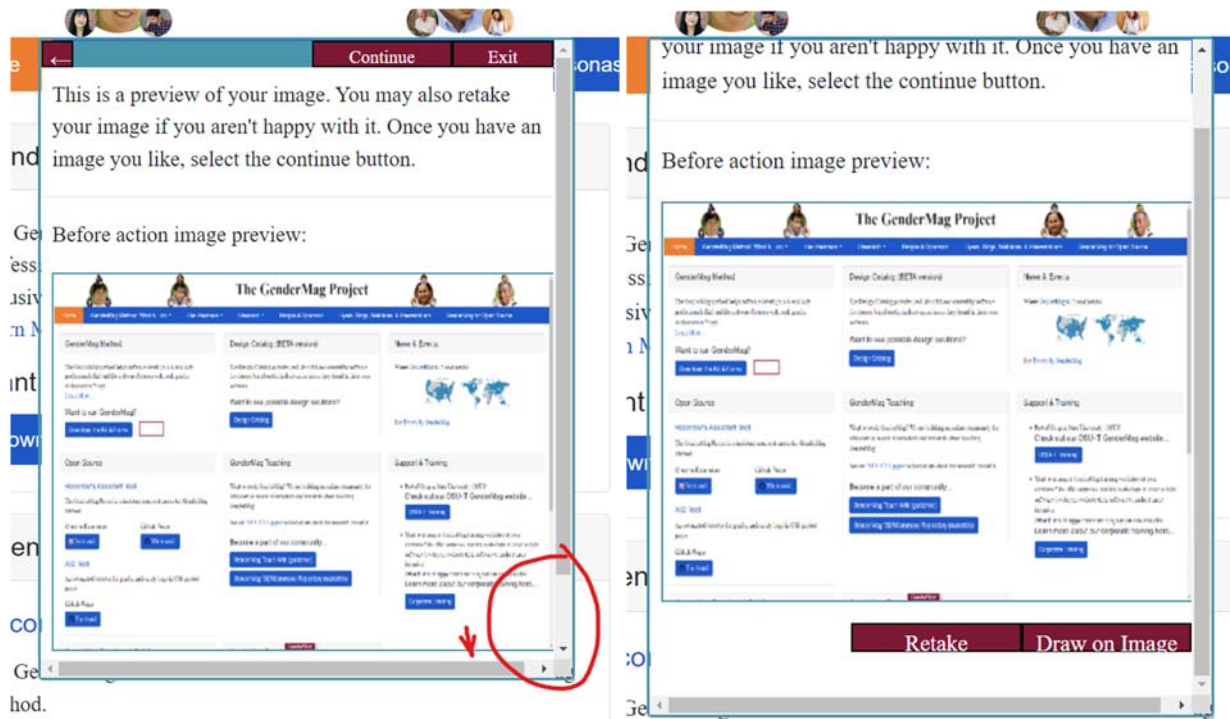
3	10	Christy	Carlson	Graduate Degree	M
4	12	Education	...

Perhaps this would not be an issue with Abi as she may not be expected to explore, however it does seem to be an issue overall if someone were to have entered info and now need to repeat this step. A recommendation might to eliminate the expansion function that does not seem to add value in this screen.

Action 1 screen and sub screens

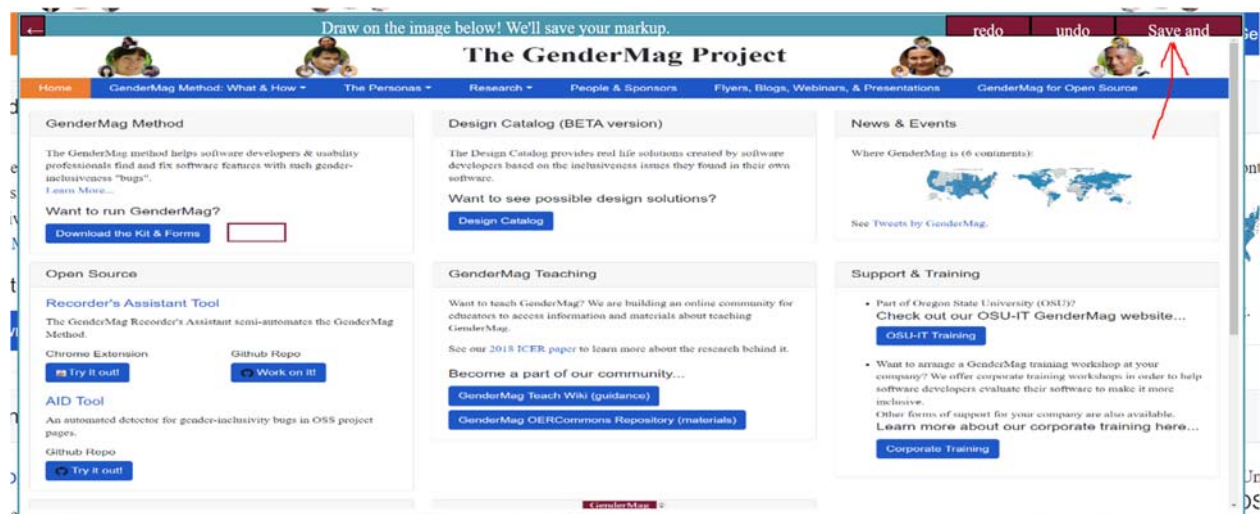
The next screens asks for an action associated with the prior Subgoal 1 and taking an action. Once a title for the action has been entered, the user is asked to take a screenshot and given some instructions. These are good instructions and setting of expectations from a progress orientation standpoint.

Clicking on the button brings up a maroon rectangle to be used to highlight the action being taken. Unfortunately, the size of the highlight can not be adjusted and might become lost depending on what is being focused on. There is then a preview screen displayed where the user is offered a preview. This screen is of fixed size yet has interaction buttons located at the top and the bottom of the screen. Without exploration by moving the scroll bars the user may not know of the availability of the action buttons. It would be nice to increase the size of the window or get a full bird's eye view to know there are buttons available. (See two images below)



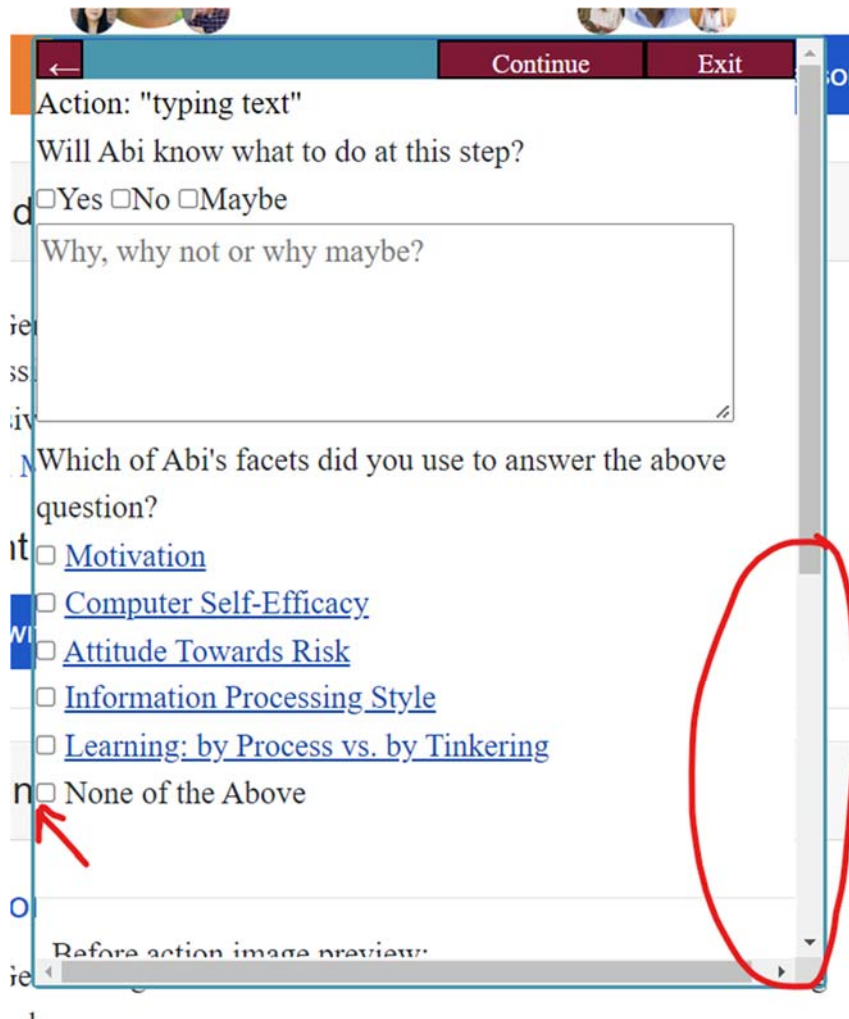
These screens have similar issues with button text crowding.

Using the “Draw on Image” button brings up a totally different sized screen whose aspect ratio causes stretching of the image. From heuristic #4 applying consistency will be less distracting to the user. In addition the “Save And ...” button has incomplete text again. (See below)



Clicking the "Continue" button, it brings up a new window with information needing to be filled in. The primary issue here is again the inability to dynamically resize the window and needing to scroll to see all the features available.

There is a smaller issue in the need for padding to the left of the text and action buttons. See image below.

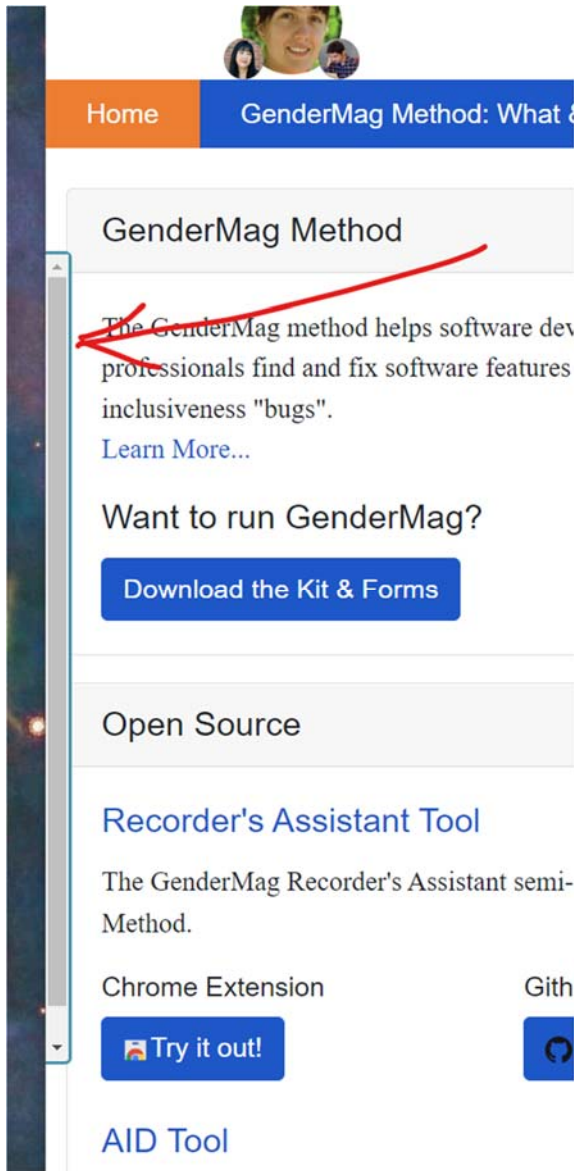


The change in focus to the popup window now causes a little confusion by the user. Being consistent and conforming to the pseudo standards established from the earlier workings of the app would be expected here and would conform the heuristic #4. However, the "floating" characteristic of the popup window could prove beneficial overall in being able to move to tool around on the target screen.

Fatal operation

If it were not for the fatal issue discovered as part of moving the popup, the floating window would be a good implementation. If the user grabs the window header bar and

positions the window off the side of the target screen then releases the mouse, the window is unrecoverable. See the screenshot below.



No amount of clicking and dragging or clicking the bottom GenderMag interface tab makes any improvement and the session must be killed by disabling the extension and restarting. It is not clear to me if the Abi persona would attempt to recover from this issue and try restarting or if she would blame herself and discontinue use. In any event this is a high level of impact issue and should be addressed where all users are concerned.