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Report - EdX Discussion page

Top 5 Findings

1. Inserting a link icon is unclear.

Violations: #6 Recognition Over Recall, #2 Match Between system and real world.

Inserting link icon is unclear. There isnt an established mental model for the icon in place thus can leave a user feeling confused or frustrated. This can also force the user to prioritize recall having to remember what the icon looks like thus spending additional mental energy.

Suggestion:
There are far better icons that are established rather than this current one therefore I would replace it. Another suggestion is to just place a "Insert Link" box instead of an icon.

2. All post do not show time elapsed or date when posted.

Violations: #2 match between system & Real world.

All post shown on the discussion page do not show the time elapsed or date on each post that was posted. Without knowing this information, users might reply to a post that is several months (or even years) old. This can be a huge source of frustration for the user to not see the activity level for a specific module.

Suggestion:
Include date posted below each post in the main discussion page. Colors can also be utilized to differentiate the recency of the post.

3. Inserting a image does not show indication of error.

Violations: #5 Error Prevention

Including an erroneous location (URL) is not indicated towards the user until after the fact where nothing is displayed. This can lead to more user confusion.

Suggestion:
First, the post needs to be prevented so the user is aware of an existing error. Second the error message should be prompted as the "Inserted Image Error" so the user knows where the error is stemming from.

4. Inserting a hyperlink does not show indication of error.

Violations: #5 Error Prevention

Including a hyperlink does not show an indication of an error. This problem is similar to the previous (where the user has to include a image url or destination url).

Suggestion:
First, the post needs to be prevented so the user is aware of an existing error. Second the error message should be prompted as the "Inserted URL Error" so the user knows where the error is stemming from.

5. Unclear is a post was successfully posted or not.

Violations: #1 Visibility of System status, #5 Error Prevention

User posting does not show an indication whether the post was successfully posted or not. This is an added Error prevention method for the previous 2 actions (including image and a link).

Suggestion:
User must be prompted in some way that the post was successfully post. My method would be a message that appears in the middle of the screen and fades away that last ~1 second. In green the text can say "Post Successful." As for errors, it appears in the same manner but in red text: "Post Unsuccessful. [What the error is]."