

Heuristics Evaluation of U-Collaborator

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1. Visibility of system status

- Always keep users informed about what is going on.
- Provide appropriate feedback within reasonable time.

Evaluation

It would be nice if the sidebar menu buttons lit up, but since all the pages have a header, it is still clear which page the user is on.

The pie chart on the profile page is somewhat unclear. At first glance, I was not sure what period of time it represented. Is it meant to be the total time you have available this week? An extra label may help clarify this.

Maybe put a dot on the Notifications menu button to signify when there are notifications.

2. Match between system and the real world

- Speak the users' language, with words, phrases and concepts familiar to the user, rather than system-oriented terms.
- Follow real-world conventions, making information appear in a natural and logical order.

Evaluation

The use of an RSVP system for meeting times is a good tie-in to real world conventions. The language used throughout the app is user-friendly and easily understandable.

3. User control and freedom

- Users often choose system functions by mistake.
- Provide a clearly marked "out" to leave an unwanted state without having to go through an extended dialogue.
- Support undo and redo.

Evaluation

It's good that the main navigation bar is always accessible in case the user clicks on the wrong page, and there are many cancel buttons. But, a few pages of the group creation sequence do not let the user go back/cancel.

There's a missing link from the Help page to the CPSC 481 group.

4. Consistency and standards

- Users should not have to wonder whether different words, situations, or actions mean the same thing.
- Follow platform conventions.

Evaluation

The design of the chat is similar to the conventions of other chat interfaces. I haven't noticed any major issues with consistency throughout the site.

5. Error prevention

- Even better than good error messages is a careful design which prevents a problem from occurring in the first place.

Evaluation

A group can't be created unless other members have been added, which is good. For proposing a meeting time, I assume that the red slots are times when people are unavailable. The scheduler still allows these time slots to be selected, which may not be intended.

6. Recognition rather than recall

- Make objects, actions, and options visible.
- User should not have to remember information from one part of the dialogue to another.
- Instructions for use of the system should be visible or easily retrievable whenever appropriate.

Evaluation

All the available actions/help popups seem to be clearly visible and intuitive, and there is no need for the user to memorize information during dialogues.

7. Flexibility and efficiency of use

- Accelerators -- unseen by the novice user -- may often speed up the interaction for the expert user so that the system can cater to both inexperienced and experienced users.
- Allow users to tailor frequent actions.

Evaluation

The notifications having quick-jump buttons to the relevant pages is useful. This isn't a necessary feature, but the option to save a team contract template for creating a group would be neat.

8. Aesthetic and minimalist design

- Dialogues should not contain information which is irrelevant or rarely needed.
- Every extra unit of information in a dialogue competes with the relevant units of information and diminishes their relative visibility.

Evaluation

Nice colour scheme and appealing splash page. Text is clearly readable, buttons stand out, and none of the pages feel too cluttered.

This is really minor, but the left-justified placement of text and the pie chart on the profile page makes the right part of the page feel a bit empty. Making the left navigation bar a bit smaller and shifting some other components right may be an improvement.

9. Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors

- Expressed in plain language (no codes)
- Precisely indicate the problem
- Constructively suggest a solution.

Evaluation

No comments since user errors aren't shown.

10. Help and documentation

- Even though it is better if the system can be used without documentation, it may be necessary to provide help and documentation.
- Help information should be easy to search, focused on the user's task, list concrete steps to be carried out, and not be too large.

Evaluation

I like how there is a help popup for making a team contract, since it might be a new concept to users. The popup could be improved by adding some examples of expectations/consequences. It might also help to clarify the meaning of the default team roles shown, or let users enter their own roles with descriptions.

It is nice that there is a detailed Help page for using the site.

Other

A slight error with the flow in Group Messages: clicking "RSVP Yes" sets up a message where you say you can't make the meeting time.

In general, adding some more steps for tasks (eg. Filling in boxes when creating the team contract) and something for the Friends List would help flesh out system interactions.