1 Prototype Video

A video of the prototype being used can be found here.
    http://youtu.be/U63NwWMVzy4

2 New Design

Our new design is now fully interactive, more color, and many more icons. The first and largest improvement is that this prototype is interactive - users are able to add and view any entry. We have achieved this using HTML, CSS and PHP, with an Apache Web Server and SQLite Database. Sadly, we did not have time to make this interactivity complete - users are currently not able to delete entries, nor are they able to add attributes or relations to an entry after it has been created. We hope to add these features to the prototype before testing begins.

Another large change is the addition of colors, and clearer layout, and icons. We have icons for each of the navigation buttons, as well as the "Add Entry" and "View Details" buttons. Furthermore, we have added background coloring to differentiate the various sections of the page (menu bars, content, etc), as well as alternating the color of each row of our information tables, which greatly improves the user's ability to match the buttons on the right to the content they wish to view.

3 Changes from the Old Design

Most of our changes from the old design have already been discussed - we received a lot of feedback and the ugliness of our interface, as well as the problems imposed by not having a fully interactive website. Also, the addition of icons will hopefully make the purpose and location of all of our buttons clearer.

A more subtle change is the amount of information we present on each page. In the previous prototype, all of the information about each entry was presented on the main list page - this mean there was no reason to view the details for any entry. We have changed this, now only showing the entry's name on the list page, and displaying much more information on its details page.

4 Expected performance

We hope that the improved appearance of the program will not affect the users' opinion so dramatically, while also improving their experience. Larger icons are both easier to visually find, while also easier to click with the mouse. Also, we hope that the visual association will help the users achieve their tasks more quickly, since people process and memorize visual data more rapidly than textual data.

The addition of icons comes with a cost - it reduces amount of information that appears on each page. Experienced users of our website might not enjoy these changes, as their focus may be processing as much content as possible rather than an easy to understand user interface.

We also expect that adding new relations will cause problems. To add a relation, you need to specify the target objects that are to be related. Right now, that is done by selected the target's type (company, job, note or person) and then typing the target's name. If the name is not typed in correctly, the relation is not added, and silently fails. Ideally, we would like to let the user select the target from a list of entries of the correct type, but we did not have time to implement a feature this complicated.

Finally, the add page in generally is currently a bit confusing. When you submit your responses, it remains on the same page. We have not figured out how to fix this yet, but we hope to have this bug ironed out before our next round of usability testing.

5 User Suggestions that were Rejected

One tester suggested that we include a "date added" field for each entry. He wanted this field to help him distinguish between different entries. We rejected this suggestion for now. Adding it to our current layout would make our design visually busy, especially since to make it useful, it would have to be on the list page of each entry type. Also, we decided that it was not likely to make much difference in most cases.

A user also suggested a totally different users interface, with 3 panes, as mentioned at the end of the previous report. Though this ideas has some merits, it would have required a complete overhaul not only of the highest level design, but down to the semantic and syntactic level of the design. Though there may be some advantages to her suggestion, we did not have the ability to make such far reaching changes at this time.

6 Usage

Sadly, we are not able to host this website remotely, so if you would like to use the demo, you will have to host it on your local machine. Here is an easy way to do that hosting.

1. Download and install XAMPP for your computer from http://www.apachefriends.org/en/xampp.html

2. XAMPP should have created a directory somewhere called 'xampp/htdocs' which is the hosted directory. It will be at a different location depending on your OS. Find it.

3. Add our code to a subdirectory of xampp/htdocs, either by copying the code or cloning it from github to that directory.

4. Start apache using the xampp control panel.

5. Open start.php from the xampp/htdocs/<directory you added>/www/

6. You should now have a working demo!