Findings and Recommendations

Key Findings

Finding 1: No option to redo and no icon to undo.
Severity: 3
Heuristics Violated: *User control and freedom, Consistency and standards, Recognition rather than recall, Flexibility and efficiency of use*

A universal standard in systems is the "cmd + z" shortcut to undo which works in Coursera. However, another standard is the "cmd + y" shortcut to redo. This shortcut does not work and instead opens your browser history in another tab. There are no visible buttons to perform the same actions, so the user is required to know the shortcut to perform this operation. It is important to give the user the possibility to undo and redo as many make mistakes and use trial and error to achieve their goals.
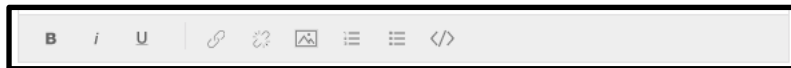

Figure 1: No option to undo and redo in toolbar

Recommendation: Add two icons (view image below for standard) in the toolbar that would allow the user to undo and redo their actions. These buttons should be enabled and disabled as appropriate to let the user know of the state of the system. The redo shortcut ("cmd + y") should also be enabled. Both buttons should have their respective shortcut enabled in their tooltip.

Figure 2: Standard for undo and redo buttons

Finding 2: No prompt to review the cancellation of a post.
Severity: 3
Heuristics Violated: *Error prevention*

The user is given the option to cancel their post by clicking a button which is great. But this creates the possibility of the user to cancel by accident. A prompt should inform that they will lose all their progress if they click that button and ask them to confirm.

Recommendation: A prompt should popup telling the user that this action is non-reversible and that their work will be lost. Two buttons should be included in this popup giving the user with the option to cancel (go back to post editor) or delete (delete post and go back to discussion forum).

Finding 3: No buttons displayed when marking a highlight
Severity: 3
Heuristics Violated: *Visibility of system status, Aesthetic and minimalist design*

When clicking the "mark as highlighted" quick-fly option, a pop-up warns the user what will happen. However, a glitch hides the "cancel" and "mark" buttons by default. They only appear when the user hovers over them. A user can waste a lot of time and even give up if this happens to them.
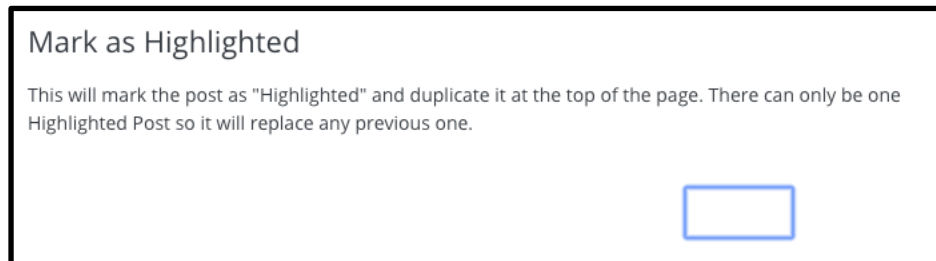

Figure 3: Buttons not rendered when marking a highlight

Recommendation: Simply show the buttons as they would appear when the user hovers over them.

Finding 4: No warning shown on maximum file size
Severity: 3
Heuristics Violated: *Visibility of system status, Error prevention, Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors*

While the feature to insert pictures in your post works fine, there is no indication that there is a maximum file size. For example, if I try to upload an image of 10mb, the loading wheel appears for a couple seconds, disappears, and no other feedback is shown.

Recommendation: When the user hovers over the image button in the toolbar, a tooltip should appear stating "you can only insert images of type *jpg*, *png*, or *gif* that are less than 5mb in size". It should be impossible for users to select files that do not respect this constrain when deciding what to upload to prevent errors.

Finding 5: Unnecessary selection of a discussion forum
Severity: 2
Heuristics Violated: *Aesthetic and minimalist design*

Even though I entered the "create a new thread" modal window through the "week 6" discussion forum, I am still prompted with a dropdown to select in which forum I want this post to be. There is no use for this and adds useless information for the user, which may confuse him.
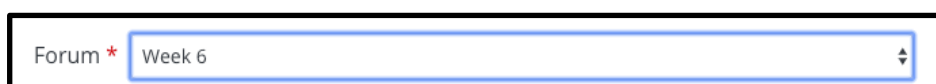

Figure 4: Unnecessary dropdown in the "Create a new Thread" window

Recommendation: Remove this dropdown altogether. The new post should always go in the discussion forum from which the user clicked on the "create a new thread" button.

Finding 6: Missing the keyboard shortcut to underline text
Severity: 2
Heuristics Violated: *Consistency and standards, Flexibility and efficiency of use*

In many text editors, there is a keyboard shortcut to quickly activate the underline, italic, and bold formatting. In Coursera's text editor, the bold and italic keyboard shortcut works, but the underline one does not. When the user clicks cmd+u, nothing happens. This slows down the user when entering text.

Recommendation: Add a keyboard shortcut for the user to underline text. By convention, this shortcut is "cmd + u" on a Mac and "ctrl + u" on a Windows.

Finding 7: No indication of what the subscribe button does
Severity: 2
Heuristics Violated: *Help and documentation*

The subscribe button does not indicate what will happen when the user clicks it until he has. Subscribe is used differently across platforms. For example, on Youtube, when you subscribe to a channel, it appears in a currated playlist, but you do not get an email to notify you of new videos. However, a lot of blogs offer a subscription feature that notifies the user by email when there is activity. Therefore, the fact of not informing the user about what will happen before the action is taken can result in uncertainty and confusion.
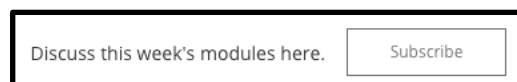
Discuss this week's modules here.   Subscribe

Figure 5: Subscribe button missing context

Recommendation: When the user hovers over the subscribe button, a tooltip should appear informing them that "You will receive emails whenever new threads are added".

Finding 8: Unhelpful tooltip for upvote button
Severity: 2
Heuristics Violated: *Match between system and the real world, Help and documentation*

When hovering the upvote feature of a post the "svgupvote" tooltip appears instead of telling the user what the button does. I can assume that this is the title of the image and not a real tooltip, but this might confuse a begginer user. Additionally the upvote feature is not vastly used and no information is given about what this feature does.
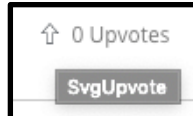
Figure 6: SvgUpvote does not provide the user with helpful context

Recommendation: Replace the "SvgUpvote" message with "Upvoting indicates that you find this post relevant and may help others find it easily".

Finding 9: Non-dynamic search function
Severity: 2
Heuristics Violated: *Visibility of system status, Aesthetic and minimalist design*

When searching for a discussion post, there is no feedback that the search is happening until the user is done. Also, there is an overlap on the right side that is distracting to look at.
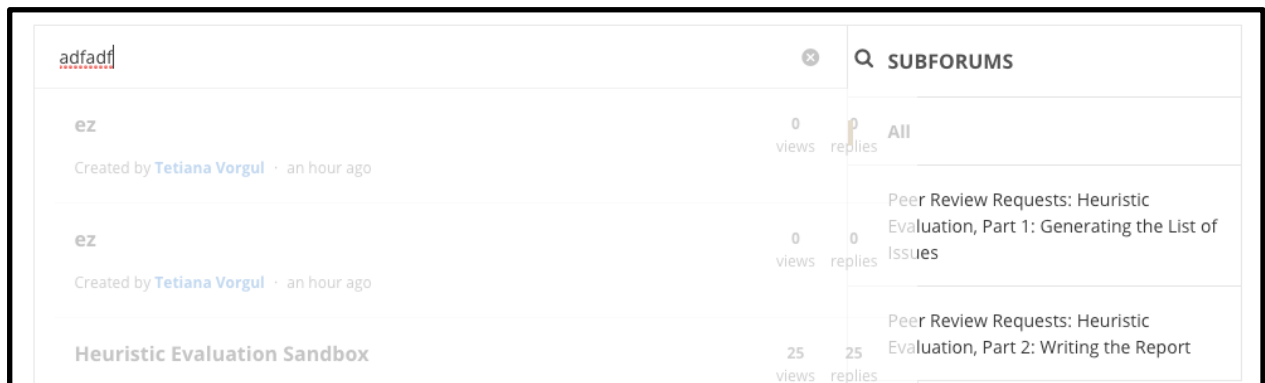

Figure 7: The search does not show possible results and is not visually attractive

Recommendation: Searching should be dynamic like on Google meaning that the system shows potential results as the user is typing his search query. The overlap on the right should be fixed.
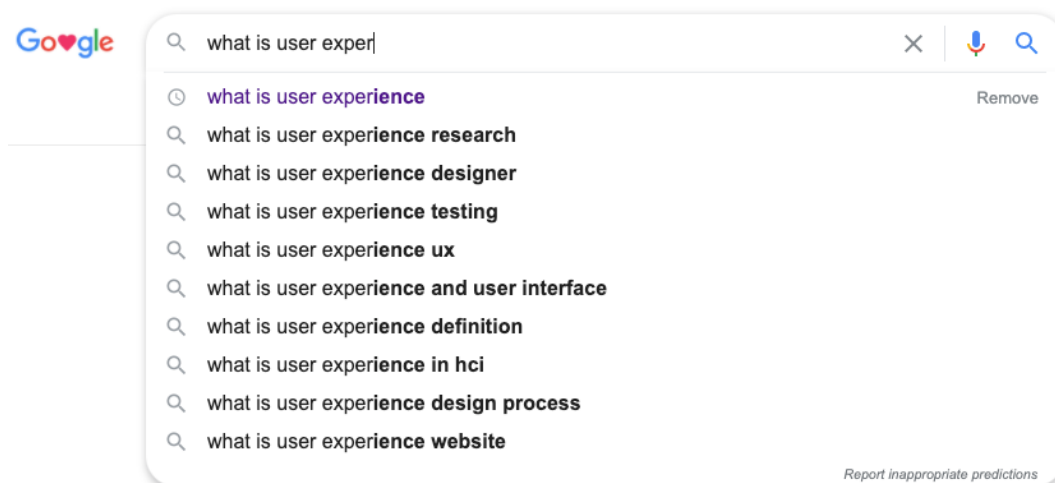

Figure 8: Google displays potential results as the user typs providing them with feedback