Roots

Andy Lincoln, Daniel Kolsoi

UMass Lowell
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Usability Test Report

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Prepared for: Prof. Jesse M. Heines
Email: heines@cs.uml.edu

Prepared by: Andrew Lincoln
Email: Andrew_lincoln@student.uml.edu

Prepared by: Daniel Kolsoi
Email: Daniel_Kolsoi@student.uml.edu

Executive Summary

This usability test was conducted to evaluate the current status of the application in terms of user satisfaction and technical performance. Each participant was presented the Roots homepage and instructed in its use from account to tree creation, and ultimately the logout process. Each participant was able to successfully complete the test, with varying degrees of difficulty.

Overall, the test was successful. Issues from the previous usability test were addressed such as user interaction with the tree workspace due to our tooltip tutorial. However, some new bugs were introduced in the tree workspace. The new connections functionality for creating the tree caused some confusion. This was due to a visual error that occurred during multiple tests.

Who we tested

Four participants, having the following characteristics, evaluated Roots.

Audience Type		Gender	
Software Developer	3	Male	3
Graphic Designer	1	Female	1
TOTAL (participants)	**4**	**TOTAL (participants)**	**4**

Ver 1.6

What participants did

Our participants spent five to fifteen minutes with our application and test facilitators learning how to use Roots. Subjects were asked to begin by signing up and logging into the application. They were then given instructions to follow an on-screen tutorial. The tutorial instructed our users on how to control the interface, beginning with creating family trees in a step-by-step fashion. Upon completion of the test, our participants filled out a questionnaire to assess satisfaction and facilitate feedback from the users.

What data we collected

During the test our goal was to collect as much information on the performance of our interface. In particular, we looked for any signs of difficulty from the user, such as long periods of pause in between tasks. Observing our users' reactions to events on the screen, taking notes of any verbal feedback given during testing, as well as written feedback from the questionnaire was important.

Major findings and recommendations

- Ability to save highly requested
- "Living?" Button was confusing for many
- Title input box is not obvious to the users
- Nodes react to connections differently depending upon order of execution

Detailed findings and recommendations

Participant #1
   Notes
   - Followed the instructions specifically, did not deviate from them.
   - Did not cause any bugs to surface
   - No verbal feedback

   Feedback
   - Positive review, liked the tutorial
   - No supplemental feedback

Participant #2
   Notes
   - Confused by start page, assumed login page was the register page.
   - Tried to move nodes once placed several times
   - After logging in, ignored the instructions sheet and followed the tooltips exclusively
   - Living? Button caused confusion, when entering a new person clicked it each time after entering dates

   Feedback
   - Larger type for tooltips
   - Shorter sentences for tooltips
   - Ability to save the state of the tree

Participant #3
   Notes
   - Made an account using an email with non alphanumeric characters, still worked, but seemed to take longer
   - After learning how to create a node, spent more time creating more on the screen
   - Tried connecting nodes that had no data in them, which doesn't work
   - Found a bug where the date of birth can be after the date of death

   Feedback
   - Have a visual indication of the detail panel's purpose when nothing is selected
   - Tree Title could use better placement, should look separate from the rest of the detail panel
   - Zoom in/ Out Feature for large trees
   - Should automatically redirect to application upon login

Participant #4
   Notes
   - Was confused by the 'generation' section of the person details
   - Tried putting a name in the Tree title section several times before noticing the names section of the details

   Feedback
   - Liked the tooltip tutorial
   - Hover over tooltips needed to explain person details

Exit Questions/User Impressions

Questions	Participants' Responses
What did you think about the overall experiences? Anything you liked or disliked?	Was a good experience and the instructions in the tutorial were clear. Pretty straightforward, tutorial was helpful but the controls need work. After refreshing the page, my entire tree disappeared; however the tutorial was very helpful and made the overall experience good.
What did you think of the tutorial? Did it help or just get in the way?	Yes it did help. Straight to the point and clear. Great use of the jQuery tooltips. Pretty good, went through all of the features. Tutorial is very helpful, it should outline instructions like "To add a parent, first connect spouses then connect children" so to avoid users breaking the site.
Any features you would like to see?	Should be a tooltip for "generation" & others. Should be a "droppable" affordance for lines. Maybe add to the tutorial to name the family tree. Moving circles. Right-click to add spouse/parent/child. I would like the ability to move nodes freely on the canvas; also I would like the tree to be saved in case something happened.
Additional Comments	The transition from canvas to background is a bit jarring. Title doesn't really look like the title of a tree. Use first names or first initial. Last names or pictures in the future, readability of the initials on the nodes could be better, family members with the same initials may be confusing. Should be a delete prompt before nodes are deleted. There are a few bugs with the dashed line connections. Other than that excellent experience.

Analysis

Necessary Changes

Being able to save trees was a commonly requested feature. As this was part of our original plan, it will be in our final version because it is essential to being able to share family trees with other people. Some of the users also wanted to have tooltips in the display panel to provide additional information within the form. This is very reasonable as we are already using tooltips for the tutorial and so we plan on having this implemented for our final version. Another reasonable request was to add a confirmation dialog when attempting to delete a node.

Unlikely Changes

There were some suggested features that are great ideas but wouldn't be able to be implemented in time. One user suggested adding a picture of the person on a particular node to help distinguish individuals better than just using his or her initials. This was actually an idea that we originally had but was scrapped due to time constraints and unfortunately will still not be implemented. A few users said the tree manipulation controls require a bit more work. One such user suggested adding a right click menu on nodes that will allow an alternate method to create and connect nodes. Although we plan to continue refining the controls, this idea will likely not be implemented.

Quality of Our Interface & Conclusions

Overall it seemed that the majority of the users seemed to enjoy the interface, often giving high regards of the tutorial and visual appearance. Our interface not only provides more features than during alpha, but also has a greater user experience. This is thanks to the tutorial and the changes we have made to the detail panel. The quality of

our feedback was much better as well, with both design and implementation feedback.

The suggestion of adding a connections menu on right-click was one such quality

critique, as it would supplement the existing functionality rather than a complete

overhaul. This testing experience was very valuable in assuring this project is in the right

the direction and what steps could be taken to improve it further.