Usability Report

**Introduction:**

I began developing tooltips as an interactive element for my client’s website according to my overriding purpose of ensuring an element contributes value for the user on the website where the element appears. In this case, that website promotes a novel with a narrative that depicts the intrusive thoughts of a character suffering from depression. Because my client wrote his novel in the second-person voice, we agreed that this provided a further analogy to the customary use of the second-person voice in web content. Therefore, we agreed that a collection of “pop-ups” (as we called these tooltips at the time), each of which appear when the user’s mouse pass over a given area of the website, and all of which deliver additional text content in a playful tone, would altogether suit his promotional website perfectly.

Although I had no experience in producing this kind of interactive element, both my client and I had encountered enough analogous elements across the internet that I felt confident in my ability to produce at least a prototype of the interactive element we discussed. Still, we might say I misled myself just with the initial assumption (based on no known evidence besides a perceived “common knowledge) that programming that interactive element would require JavaScript. Besides the difficulty of learning JavaScript, I found that attempting to add its objects and functions to the website’s HTML would inexplicably reconfigure its appearance. Accordingly, I sought another means of implementing the interactive element my client and I had discussed (which I discovered in the form of tooltips), and designed another HTML index with those reconfigured elements eliminated. In effect, I created a simplified adaptation of my client’s preexisting design for a static website so that I could implement my tooltips interactive element within an index adapted to serve as that interactive element’s “proof of concept.”

**Audience Analysis:**

In considering the audience for this interactive element, I developed shallow personas for site visitors who might arrive from various websites, including: the Steemit (<https://steemit.com/@aron.wolde>) and Medium (<https://medium.com/@aronwolde>) accounts with which Aron has been releasing his novel in a serialized format; other accounts of Aron’s on social media; or after searching his name due to his involvement in another project, such as Minnesota Tonight (<http://www.mntonight.com/>). Aron and I both agreed on text content for these tooltips that would indirectly imitate multiple features of the book that this website promotes, thereby providing the visitor with an unexpected preview (though in another medium) of the book itself. Overall, I designed the tooltips to present that text content to reflect our overall desire for an interactive element that simultaneously enhances a site visitor’s experience as well as encourages ongoing user engagement with the website.

**Method:**

Having taken so long to discover the best means of implementing the interactive experience element I had discussed with my client, my “test subjects” consist of only a single user, to whom I could expose only the barest example of the tooltip as I had originally conceived it. I provided the subject with a folder containing the index.html and styles.css files for the element I designed, and asked them to please load the index in Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, and Opera Browser, and to report whether they see visual objects corresponding to a tooltip appear as they browse the screen.

**Results:**

Though some browsers varied in their interpretation of either the HTML or the CSS and presented the website in slightly different manners, I feel happy to report that the tooltips I designed successfully appeared in all three browsers. Nonetheless, my single test subject echoed my own thoughts and early plans for designing this interactive element, remarking that the tooltips all appear in the center of the website. For example, I could improve these tooltips through learning how to correctly specify their orientation to the area of the website that activates their appearance: for example, making sure that the balloon of a tooltip points away from the division in which it appears as an element, so that it doesn’t obscure the text content of that division.

**Conclusion:**

I couldn’t design an interactive element of the type I had planned within the allotted time; or, at least, not any example of such that meets my personal standards. Nonetheless, I did eventually succeeding at producing functional tooltips, even if I have thus far proved unable to customize them as I would desire. However, because the work I have planned for my 8505 Capstone Project will undoubtedly include the same website, I look forward to the opportunity to build upon the foundations I’ve built thus far.