

Advanced Web Design Project 1

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Overview:

This assignment aims at redesign the homepage of linkedin to provide clearer visual display and prioritize critical functions.

Linkedin is the largest professional network. By successfully making people build professional connections in their careers, linkedin has become a famous company.

Problems:

Social networks are usually complex, thus, designing user-centered UI for them is more challenging. The large amount of functions freak people out, and the overwhelming information makes the circumstance even worse. At the first glance, linkedin's web user interfaces seem to be old-fashioned and exhausting. I use Nielsen's heuristics to define some major usability problems on the website:

Nielsen's Heuristic Violated: Aesthetic and minimalist design

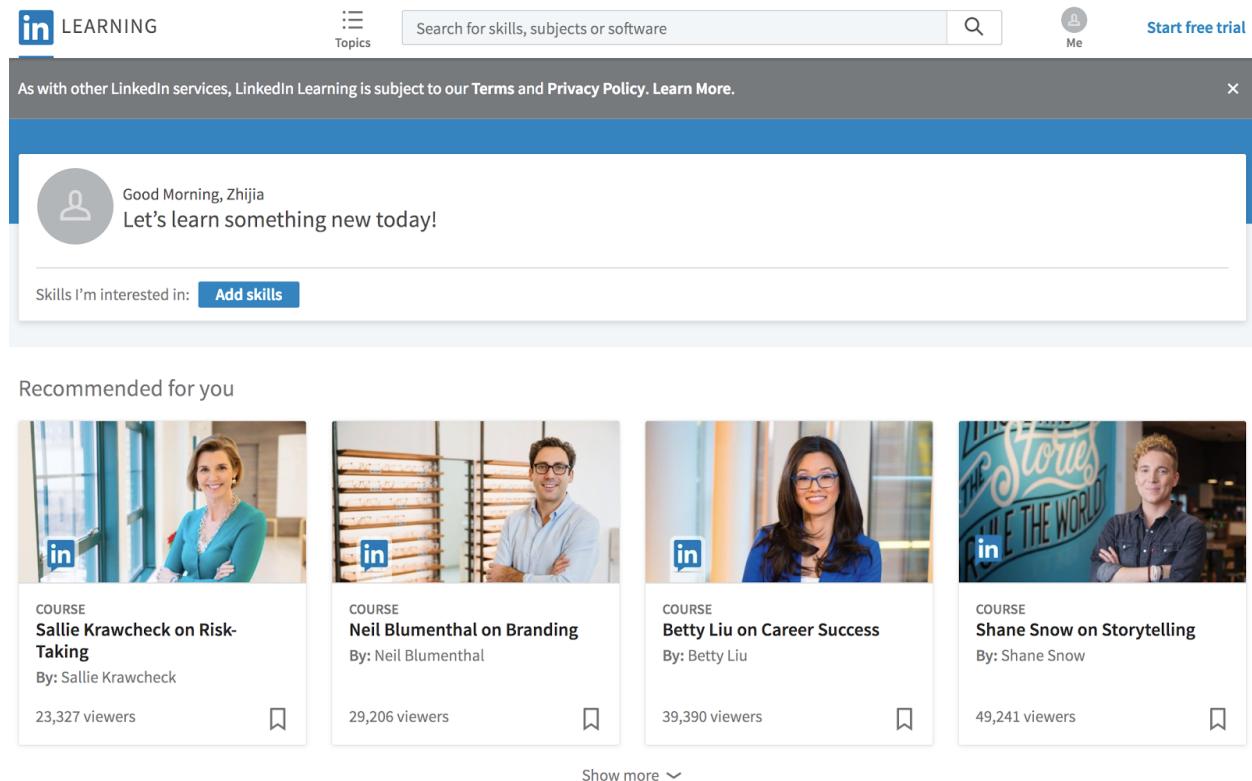
There is so much information on the landing page of linkedin. People feel really hard to identify those sections.

The screenshot shows the LinkedIn homepage with the following sections:

- Header:** Search bar, Advanced search, Notifications (1), Business Services, Upgrade.
- User Profile:** Home, Profile, My Network, Learning, Jobs, Interests.
- Profile Summary:** Profile picture of Zhijia Guo, Student at Tsinghua University, 6 people viewed your profile in the past 15 days, 36 connections, "Grow your network".
- Actions:** Share an update, Upload a photo, Write an article.
- Jobs:** Jobs you may be interested in (Program Director, English; Account Services Administrator; Associate Director/Manager-Advisory-).
- Network:** People in your network have new connections (Yikang Li, Yue Zhao, Chao Zhou).
- Advertisement:** "The Best Lighting Source - Our customers include Google, Apple, Microsoft, as well as individuals." | Ad.
- People you may know:** Shuo Sun (Graduate Student at Univers...), Shi Qiu (Graduate in New York Unive...).
- Offer:** Lock & Go Sales Event, Lock in a great rate until January 2019, X1 STARTER \$89.99 a month FOR TWO FULL with 2-year agreement, CHICAGO MED.
- Footer:** About, Help, Feedback, Privacy & Terms, LinkedIn Corp. © 2017.

Nielsen's Heuristic Violated: Consistency and standard

Each section in navigation bar leads to a page with different style. It is hard to define the relationship between each page.



The screenshot shows the LinkedIn Learning homepage. At the top, there is a header with the LinkedIn logo, a search bar, and a 'Start free trial' button. Below the header, a message says 'As with other LinkedIn services, LinkedIn Learning is subject to our Terms and Privacy Policy. Learn More.' A user profile icon and the word 'Me' are also present. The main content area features a greeting 'Good Morning, Zhijia' and a message 'Let's learn something new today!'. There is a section for 'Skills I'm interested in' with a 'Add skills' button. Below this, a 'Recommended for you' section displays four course cards:

- Sallie Krawcheck on Risk-Taking** by Sallie Krawcheck. 23,327 viewers.
- Neil Blumenthal on Branding** by Neil Blumenthal. 29,206 viewers.
- Betty Liu on Career Success** by Betty Liu. 39,390 viewers.
- Shane Snow on Storytelling** by Shane Snow. 49,241 viewers.

A 'Show more' button is located at the bottom of the recommended courses section.

Nielsen's Heuristic Violated: User control and freedom

On certain page, there is no instruction on what to do, and it does not allow full functions according to its name indicated.

The screenshot shows the LinkedIn homepage with a prominent search bar at the top. Below the search bar, there are navigation links for Home, Profile, My Network, Learning, Jobs, and Interests. On the right side of the header, there are links for Business Services and Upgrade, along with user-specific icons.

The main content area features a large button labeled "See who you already know on LinkedIn". To the left of this button is a blue square icon containing a white person symbol. To the right is a gear icon for settings. Below the button, the text "See who you already know on LinkedIn" is displayed, followed by the sub-instruction "The fastest way to grow your network is to import your contacts".

An input field is present for "Email", containing the text "guozj94@gmail.com". A blue "Get started" button is located below the email field. To the right of the input field, there is descriptive text: "We'll import your address book to suggest connections and help you manage your contacts. [Learn more](#)".

Below this text, there are four small profile pictures of women. To the right of these pictures, the text "Find more connections like Yining, Chenman and Sijia (Sunny)." is displayed.

On the far right, there is a grid of icons for importing contacts from various email providers:

- Gmail (with "Gmail" text)
- Yahoo! Mail (with "YAHOO!" text)
- Hotmail (with "Hotmail" text)
- 163 (with "網易" text)
- QQ (with "Mail" text)
- Other Email (with an envelope icon)
- Invite by email (with a pencil and paper icon)
- Import file (with an upward arrow icon)

At the bottom of the main content area, there are two promotional banners:

- A banner for "Want to get ahead?" featuring the Active Collab logo and the text "Active Collab is a powerful, yet simple project".
- A banner for "Alarm Training Online" featuring the Alarm Training Online logo and the text "Better your career or discover a new one. Is online training".

Nielsen's Heuristic Violated: Match between system and real world

Although linkedin can provide various information, yet this information is usually organized in an inefficient and confusing manner, which does not follow real world conventions.

The screenshot shows a LinkedIn search results page for the query "carnegie mellon". The search bar at the top has "carnegie mellon" entered. Below the search bar, there are several filters and a sidebar with various categories like Location, Current Company, Industry, Years of Experience, etc. The main content area displays search results for SlideShare, Groups, and profiles. On the right side, there is a vertical sidebar with advertisements for Acura Certified Pre-Owned Vehicles and a car loan offer of 0.9% APR.

Location filters:

- All (selected)
- United States (99576)
- Greater Pittsburgh ... (25790)
- Greater New York C... (12691)
- Washington D.C. Met... (5854)
- Mexico (976)

Current Company filters:

- All (selected)
- Carnegie Mellon Univ... (7450)
- Google (1666)
- Microsoft (875)
- IBM (795)
- Amazon (669)

Industry filters:

- Years of Experience
- Past Company
- School
- Profile Language
- Nonprofit Interests
- Groups
- Function

Search results:

- SlideShare results for carnegie mellon:
 - NCIA Conference: OPEN 2011 Forecasting Methods for Product Design Development: A Compilation of Three Case Studies of Industry Collaborative Projects
 - Materials, Toys, and Vehicles
 - Waqas Chaudhry, Associate Professor, Carnegie Mellon University
 - Carnegie Mellon U - Forecasting Case Studies - the ncia** (807 views)
 - Estimating the Cost of Novel (Pre-Commercial) Systems for CO₂ Capture
 - Edward S. Rubin, Department of Engineering and Public Policy, Carnegie Mellon University
 - Presenters include CCS Case Workshop, Carnegie Mellon University, Paul Fisher, Carnegie Mellon University
 - Estimating the cost of novel (pre-commercial) systems for Global CCS I... (805 views)
- Groups results for carnegie mellon:
 - Carnegie Mellon University** (11,592 members)
 - Carnegie Mellon Bay Area Alumni** (2,181 members)
 - H. John Heinz III College at Carnegie Mellon University** (7,734 members)
- Profiles:
 - Tom Pageler** | 2nd
Chief Risk Officer and Chief Security Officer
San Francisco Bay Area • Internet
1 shared connection • Similar
 - Vida Zhang** | 1st
MHCI @ CMU | Seeking full-time UX design position
Greater Pittsburgh Area • Design
2 shared connections • Similar • 500+

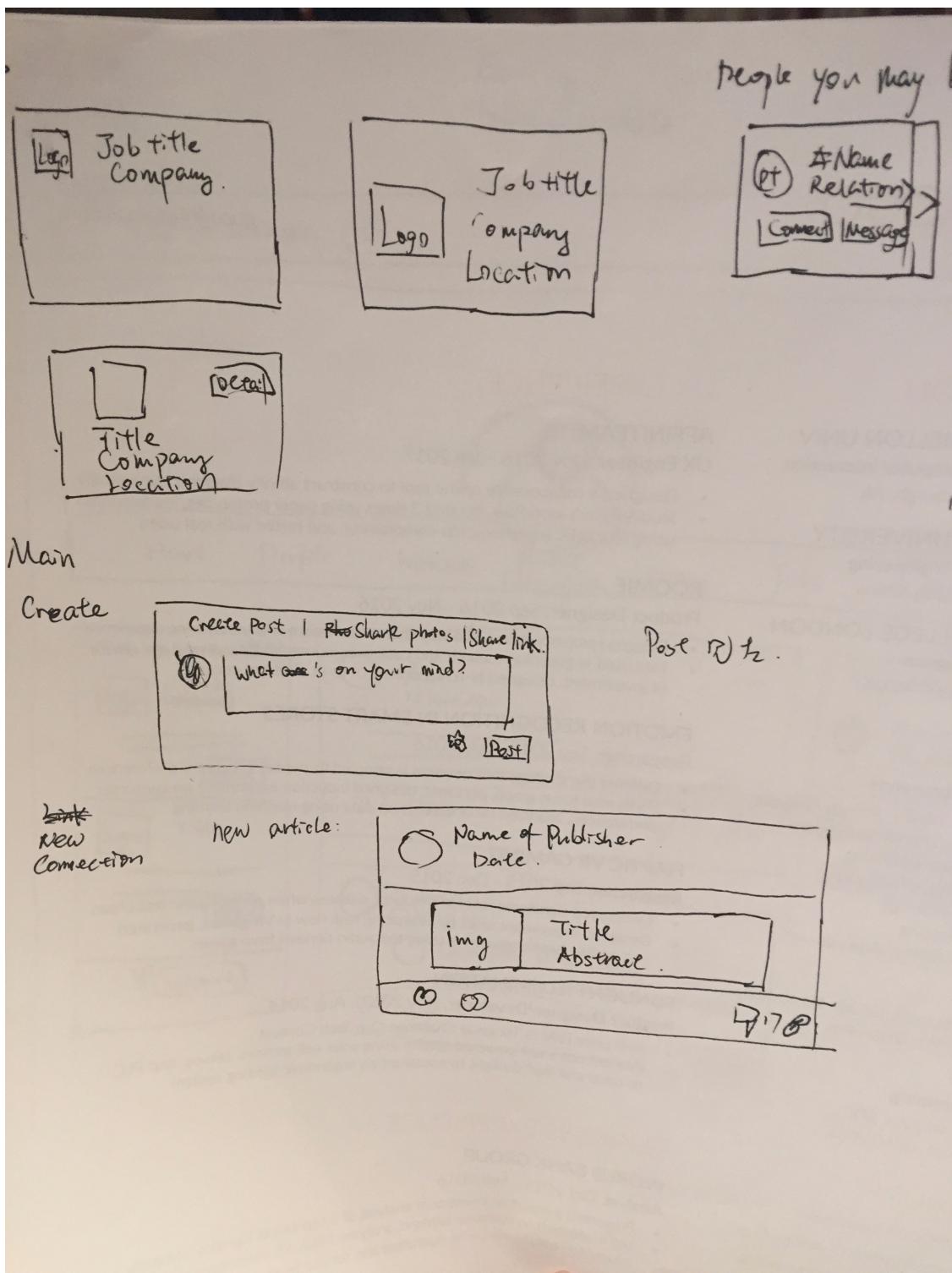
Ideation

Phase 1: Interview & Component Design

I first interviewed 5 MHCI students, and the insights, or the expectations to these professional social network are:

- People want to see what other people are doing and thinking by reviewing their posts.
- People seek to meet more professional people, as well as finding jobs through these.

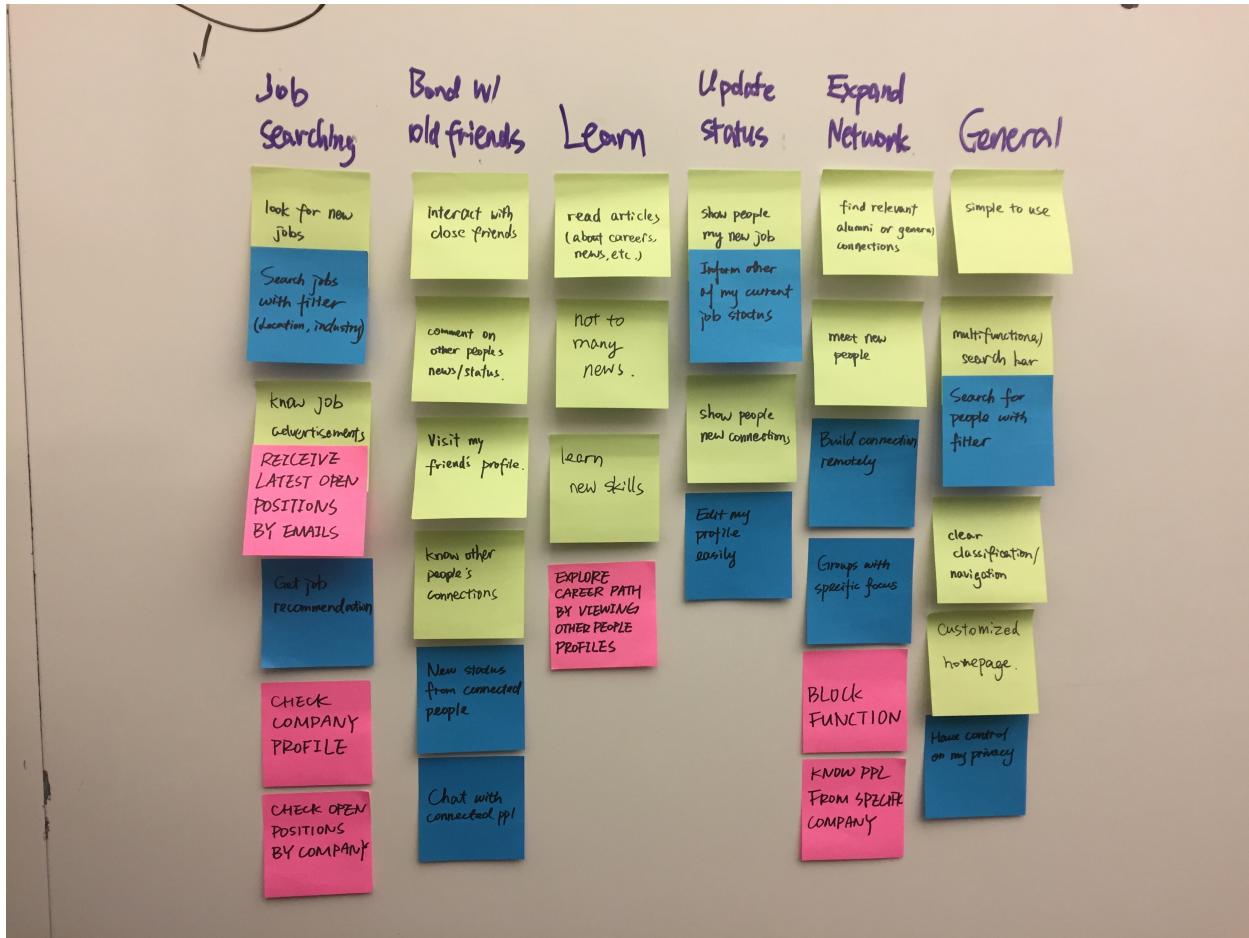
After the interview and interpretation, I sketched several key components on the paper.



Phase 2:

After talking with Andrew, I thought learning from MHCI students were not convincing enough. Since the students are a main user segmentation of linkedin, I decided to expand to all students

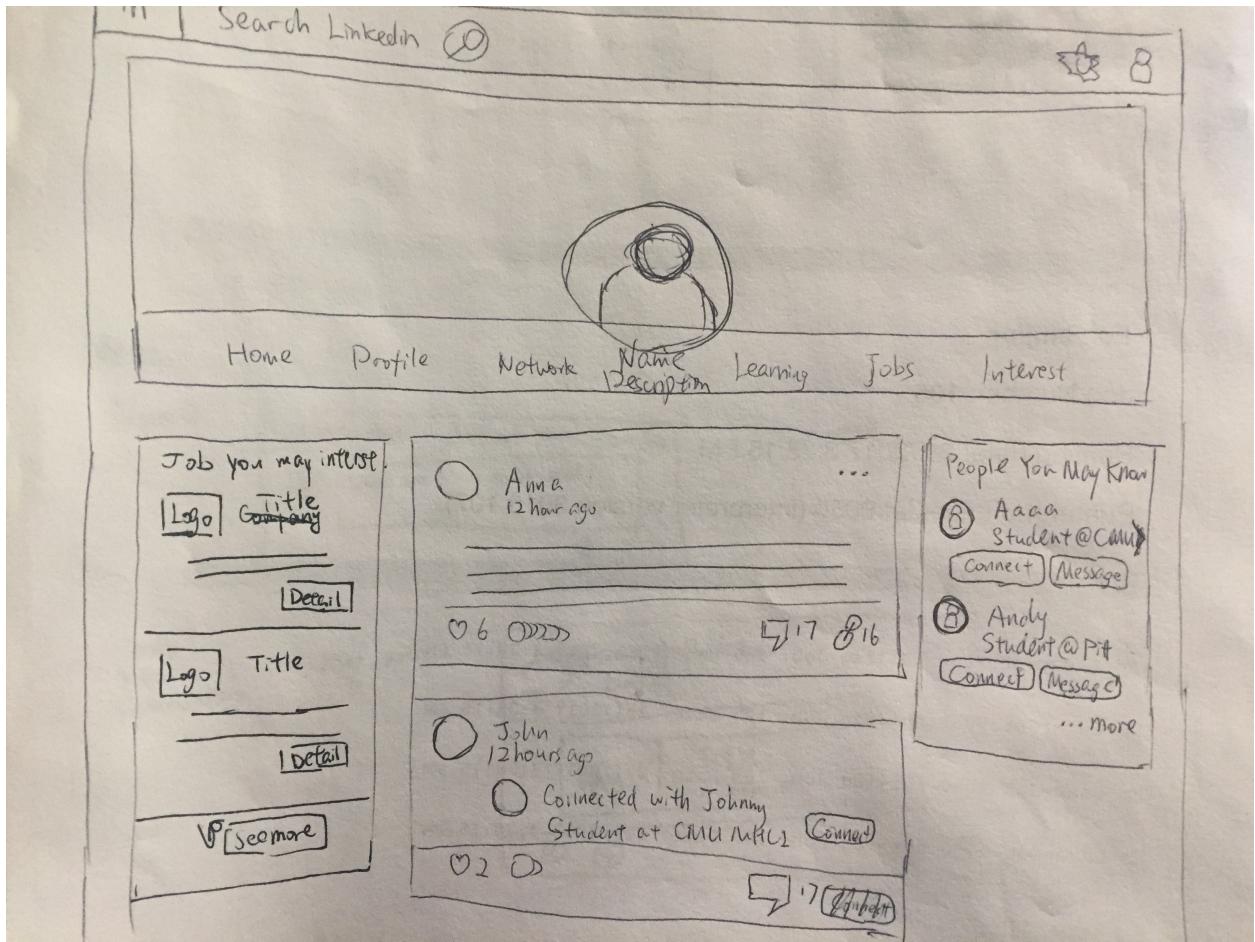
in the CMU. I did the card sorting with other students, and I also allowed students to create their own notes.



The card sorting results can be classified into 6 categories, which I thought should be the main functions or requirements of my new design:

- Students want easy job-searching on the website
- Students want to bond with people they've connected
- Students want to learn new information or skills
- Students want to keep their networks updated
- Students want to expand their professional network
- General requirements include: customizable homepage, clean navigation, etc.

According to the results from user research, I sketched the homepage, arranging the components I already had.



Implementation

I coded the website using plain html and css, with flexbox layout (spring and strut model).

I also implemented some interactive components:

- User can post new message, and select among text message, media, and link.
- User can like other people's status. When the user clicks "like", the profile photo will be displayed next to the icon.

Reflection

I took the software structure of user interface before, and I have some experience coding front end. However, this is the first time that I create an entire static html page emphasizing on visual design. In the lectures and this assignment, I had a deeper understanding about CSS, and I learned to use chrome developer mode to debug the html and css. Also, I practiced some techniques of guerrilla user research that I learned in my HCI courses when designing this webpage. This is a pretty thorough fast-pace web design task.