

Dokeos 1.8 Beta2 Usability Evaluation

Suggestions

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Dokeos 1.8 Beta - Usability Evaluation

1 Executive Summary and Methods

In a usability analysis of the learning platform Dokeos 1.8 Beta2, the Documents, Links, Tests, Learning Path, Agenda and Announcements sections were evaluated. It was found that the application of wording, labels, layout, interface elements and interaction paradigms was in parts inconsistent which suggested the creation of basic user interface guidelines which are summarised in a separate document. In this document, guideline violations are listed, and concrete suggestions how to improve the usability of the sections are given. As requested by the developers, the suggestions are written in todo-format and abstains from detailed descriptions or screenshots.

To evaluate the software, the method "Heuristic Walkthrough" was applied. It is a combination of an evaluation along common usability heuristics and going through the application along the major use cases. By this means, both issues infringing general usability guidelines ("micro usability") and problems regarding the interaction design and information architecture ("macro usability") can be identified.

For each problem, suggestions how to improve the usability are given. A priority estimate indicates the importance to address the given problem:

- Low: Low priority
- Medium: Medium priority
- High: High priority
- UIG (User Interface Guidelines):Should be implemented for a consistent use experience
- Wish: This suggestion is a wishlist item.

2 Results: My Courses

2.1 My Courses

- UIG: Move "Create a course" into an action box and mark it as a teacher action.
- UIG: Locate the list of courses into a navigation box and label it "My Courses". Provide each category label only once and list the courses below it.
- UIG: Move "My Agenda", "My Profile" and "Course Management" into a navigation box and label it "My Settings" and locate it below the navigation box.
- UIG: Note that the breadcrumb root "My Courses" disappears on sub sections. For







consistency reasons, either show it always or never (Suggestion: never).

2.2 Course Management

2.2. 1 Overview Page

- UIG: Move the actions into an action box. If there are no items available, leave extra space between the labels.
- Medium: Do not provide "Sort my courses" as an extra item in the action box. Make it the start page.
- Low: In-place editing is nice, but the "edit" icon does not sufficiently reflect that the category is edited. Consider to repeat the category name once more and clearly align the edit icon with that category name.
- UIG: Display the current form name in the breadcrumb (Course Management \rightarrow Create course category).
- UIG: "[=CourseCategoryDeleted=]" should be "The category was deleted."

2.2.2 Create Course Category

- UIG: Form title should be "Create course category".
- UIG: Provide a label for the name field and adjust to formatting guidelines for forms.

2.2.3 Subscribe to Courses

- Medium: Consider to provide browsing and search on two different tabs, like in "Dropbox".
- High: For browsing, choose a horizontal layout: Clicking a category on the left will display available courses to its right (assuming that categories cannot be nested).

2.3 Create Course

2.1.1 Create a course area

- UIG: Adjust to formatting guidelines for forms.
- Medium: Provide a hint what to enter into "teachers" field (full name, login name, anything else?).







• UIG: Info message at bottom should be formatted like other info messages.

2.1.2 Workflow

 High: Reduce number of required clicks: After creating a course, directly show the course details instead of an empty page and a link back to the courses list.

2.4 My Profile

- UIG: Adjust to guidelines for forms.
- UIG: Fix labels: [=Lastname=], [=Firstname=], [=Username=]
- "Official code" should be "Function" or "Position".

3 Results: Course Administration

3.1 Course Overview

3.1.1 Introduction text

- UIG: The default text should be a hint or info box, not hard coded and therefore not be visible for students
- High: In-place editing is nice, but for complex editors like this an additional cancel option should be provided.

3.1.2 Navigation boxes

• UIG: Visibility icons: Their meaning only becomes clear after clicking them. Use the same icon as in the sub sections.

3.2 Course Description

3.2.1 Overview Page

- UIG: Move the options into an action box, use smaller icons and action labels ("Add objective").
- UIG: When using an action box, you can remove the info message "To create a course description, click on a heading and fill the correct form field." Optionally provide it on







demand (see guidelines).

- High: To edit, you have to go up to the action menu, while you can delete in the area below. Add an edit icon next to the delete buttons which opens the corresponding form. Closing the form will bring the user back to the previous location (use a page anchor for this).
- Wish: Even better would be in-place editing.
- UIG: Delete message should be "Do you really want to delete [name of description]?"

3.2.2 Course Description Pages

- UIG: Adjust to guidelines for forms.
- UIG: Possibly provide a preview.
- High: Triple the size of the title fields so long titles are fully shown.
- UIG: Move the information on top in info boxes and consider to show them on demand.

3.3 Documents

3.3.1 Overview Page

 Wish: Make the table look more compact: Join type icon, name, comment, size and date in one column as suggested in the guidelines and provide sort options in a dropdown in the action box.



images. Images are stored here.

3.42 MB, Last modified 8.2.2007

- Low: Sort order currently does not allow "folders first" + "alphabetical".
- Wish: If editing meta data is not a requirement, you might use in-place editing for folder name and description (provide an edit icon next to them). It will open a line edit, a small text field and an OK button in the corresponding table cell. Size and modification date are still shown below it.
- High: Otherwise reduce the number of clicks when editing a folder: OK should go back to folder overview.

3.3.2 Navigation

Medium: Consider to display the full folder path in the breadcrumb.







- UIG: Move the actions into an action box, provide a separators as follows:
 Show folder Up | Create document Upload document Create directory | Save (ZIP)
- Medium: The "current location" drop-down is both, a navigation and orientation means. Consider to label it "Show directory".
- High: "root" should be "home" or "documents".
- Low: Consider to capitalise the folder names (if there are default folders).
- Low: Consider to move both, "1-44 of 44" and "Page 1 of 1" to the right border of the table and format them as a hint.

3.3.3 Document Operations

- Low: Save is not located in the actions column but displayed next to the file name.
 This is OK if save is a frequently used action. Is that the case? Otherwise move it to the action column.
- Medium: The invisible icon is not very clear and should be changed. Possibly ask the Nuvola icon designer to create one.
- UIG: Write "Select all" and "Unselect all" in sentence capitalisation.
- Low: Add a label to the drop-down menu "Perform action:".
- UIG: Change the delete feedback message: "Please confirm your choice" should be "Do you want to delete [file names]".
- UIG: "Changed visibility of [file/folder name]" instead of "Visibility modified".

3.3.4 Create Document

- UIG: Adjust to guidelines for forms.
- Low: Currently, the field "file name" lists both, path to the file and a name input. Split path from file name, make it editable and provide a hint:

Target directory: [select]

The location where your file will be stored.

File name: [insert].html

3.3.5 Upload Document

- UIG: Adjust to guidelines for forms.
- Medium: "Current directory" should be "Target directory".







- Wish: "Create directory" should be grouped with "current directory" and allow for inplace editing:
 - Move the "create folder" link (without icon) next to the "Current directory" menu.
 Provide a tooltip instead of the action label.
 - Clicking "Create folder" should show the "New directory name" input field and "Add" button right below the link (instead of an info message).

See "Add Link" for a visualisation.

- Medium: Add "Target file name" to get meaningful names for files.
- UIG: "Uncompress zip" instead of "uncompress zip".
- High: "If file exists": Reduce the number of choices to "Ask me what to do" and "Overwrite existing file". Make "Ask me what to do" the default.
- High: When file exists, do not clear the "browse" field. Instead, show a new page showing the thumbnail of both the existing and new file and offer three options: Overwrite existing file | Rename new file: [] | Cancel upload.
- UIG: A cancel option is important here.

3.3.6 Create Directory

- UIG: When the option is offered in the general menu (action box), a new page should be loaded.
- Low: In the form, allow the user to change the target destination:

Target directory: [select]

The location where your file will be stored.

Directory name: [insert]

Medium: New directories should inherit the parent's visibility status.

3.3.7 Save (ZIP)

High: There is no indicator what the save action refers to. It neither seems to consider
the current location in the directory tree nor the current selection (via check marks).

If it is not general but refers to a certain selection, it should go into the "delete" menu on bottom. In the action box, there are only general actions.







3.3.8 Images Slideshow

- UIG: Use an action label, e.g. "Start image slideshow".
- UIG: Actions and navigation elements should be framed by an action box.
- UIG: Format the status info (1 of 40 + file name) as a hint.
- Medium: The heading ("Slideshow") should include the current folder name ("Slideshow Examples -> small")
- Wish: Optionally provide a directory drop-down to switch slideshow folder.
- UIG: Slideshow options:
 - Adjust to guidelines for forms.
 - Do not use upper case words.
 - Remove [= =] from the breadcrumb title for this form.

3.4 Links

3.4.1 Overview Page

- UIG: Provide an action box for the actions.
- Low: Instead of "No category", write "General" or omit the heading.
- UIG: Make the expander icon (+/-) for categories bigger. Use the same icon as for "Open/Close all categories".
- UIG: In the link list, show actions right of the link instead of below (like an action column, even if there is no visible table).
- UIG: Add tooltips to the action icons.
- Wish: Consider to show the target page's favicon instead of the same icon for all links.
- Wish: Consider to introduce a special icon for ftp (if used frequently).
- UIG: Change the delete message to "Are you sure you want to delete [filename]?"
- UIG: "Changed visibility of [link name]" instead of "VisibilityChanged".

3.4.2 Add Link

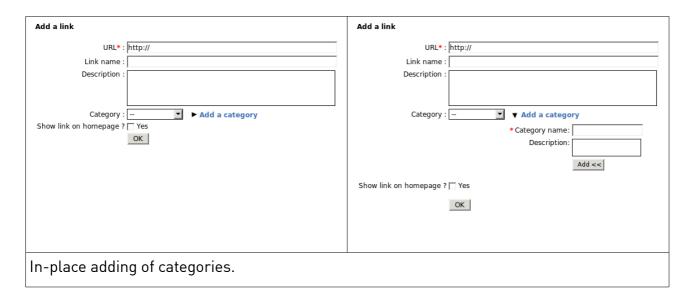
- UIG: Adjust to guidelines for forms.
- Wish: Provide an "Add category" link next to category selection and allow in-place editing: Show the category name field (opt: and comment) right below the link, including an "Add" button.

After adding, the new category is preselected and the input fields disappear.









- UIG: Do not show the contents of the overview page below the form (interaction is not possible at this point, and an overview over categories is given by the drop-down).
- UIG: Display "Add link" in the breadcrumb.
- Low: "Show link on homepage" instead of "Show link on homepage?". Provide a hint "Will show the link on the overview page of this course."
- UIG: "This field is required" below OK button is missing.
- UIG: "* " should be in front of the labels.

3.4.3 Add Category

- UIG: Adjust to guidelines for forms.
- UIG: "This field is required" below OK button is missing.
- UIG: * should be in front of label + space
- UIG: Do not show the contents of the overview page below the form (interaction is not possible at this point). You might consider, however, to list existing categories on demand below the OK/Cancel buttons.
- UIG: Display "Add category" in the breadcrumb.

3.4.4 Link on Homepage

- UIG: Remove [= =] from link on homepage.
- Medium: If a homepage link is removed from the links section, ask if it should also be deleted on homepage.







- Low: Fix bug that a link removed from the links section is aligned slightly more to the right than other links on the homepage.
- Medium: Should they really be listed on the same level as the major Dokeos components?

3.5 Tests

3.5.1 Overview Page

• Wish: Make the table look more compact: Join type icon, name, description and number of questions in one column as suggested in the guidelines and provide sort options in a drop-down in the action box.



Sample Test. About irony.

One question per page.

1 Question.

- Medium: If you stick to the old layout, the table inside the table should not have a visible bottom, outer left and outer right line.
- Medium: Currently, editing the test description is not in-place editing. If you do not change it to in-place editing, move the action icon to the action column.
- Wish: If you decide to offer in-place editing, clicking the edit icon next to label and description will open a line edit, a small text field and an OK button in the corresponding table cell. Another edit icon next to one question per page will show a drop-down menu (which replaces the text label) and an OK button.
- UIG: Provide descriptive tooltips for all action icons (currently [=Build=] for add question).
- Wish: If there are numerous questions, moving via arrows can become quite painful. Think of providing a drop down "Insert after [select]".
- UIG: Change the delete confirmation to "Are you sure you want to delete question [Nr]?" instead of "Please confirm your choice".
- UIG: There is no message when changing the visibility. Use a success message with the text "Changed visibility of [test name]".

3.5.2 Navigation

• High: In the test section, the navigational scheme is different from the other sections. Change it in the following way:







- Clicking a test name ("sample test") on the test overview page should open a preview of the test (like currently).
 - In teacher view, there should be two view options: "Display" and "Edit". When clicking edit, the user is directed to "Test Management".
- o If the test is on multiple pages, the view options have to be shown on all pages.
- Wish: It would be useful to provide "edit" icons next to each question in teacher mode
 which lead directly to the "Edit Question" form. Confirming the dialog then should
 return to the correct position in the preview.

3.5.3 Add Test

- UIG: Follow the guidelines for forms.
- Low: Change wording of the option "On an unique page" to "All questions on one page".

3.5.4 Test Management

- Medium: If the test description is longer than 3 lines, shorten it ("...").
- Medium: Provide option to edit test name and description in-place.
- UIG: Move the question types into an action box, use smaller icons and action labels ("Add multiple choice").

3.5.5 Add Multiple Choice and Multiple Answers

- UIG: Adjust to guidelines for forms.
- High: Provide option to remove specific answers (show a delete icon to the right of each answer).
- High: Allow to move answers up or down (also show this to the right of each answer).
- Medium: Write the status "true/false" below the radio button as a hint (depending on the choice).
- Low: Limit the max width of the table.
- UIG: There is no error message when confirming the dialog and no answer was marked as "right".
- Medium: An info box shown on demand to explain weighting would be useful.
- UIG: Mark required fields by *.
- UIG: "This field is required" error message is missing for "Question".







• High: If there is an empty answer in the end, do not throw an error message.

3.5.6 Fill in Blanks

- UIG: Adjust to guidelines for forms.
- UIG: Mark required fields by *.
- UIG: "This field is required" error message is missing for "Question".
- Low: "[British people] live in the [United Kingdom]." should be identified as missing value and throw an error.

3.5.7 Matching

- UIG: Adjust to guidelines for forms.
- High: Provide option to remove specific answers (show a delete icon to the right of each answer).
- High: Allow to move answers up or down (also show this to the right of each answer).
- Medium: Limit the max width of the table otherwise the relations are not visualised properly.
- UIG: Mark required fields by *
- UIG: "This field is required" error message is missing for "Question".

3.5.8 Open Question

- UIG: Adjust to the guidelines for forms.
- UIG: Mark required fields by *.
- UIG: "This field is required" error message is missing for "Question".
- Wish: Weighting: Would it make sense to check for keywords here and give a point per keyword?

3.5.9 Image Zones

- UIG: Adjust to guidelines for forms.
- Medium: Put all elements on one page. Following the guideline of responsive disclosure, first show title, optional comment and upload, then remove upload and show hotspot below.
- High: Provide a hint next to the "Upload" field that only jpg is accepted.







- High: In the hotspot area, provide option to remove specific answers (show a delete icon to the right of each answer).
- High: In the hotspot area, allow to move answers up or down (also show this to the right of each answer).
- UIG: Move the explanation how to create hotspots into an info message, and possibly show it on demand.
- UIG: Mark required fields by *.
- UIG: "This field is required" error message is missing for "Question".
- UIG: If the last answer field is empty and no corresponding hotspot was drawn, do not throw an error.
- High: Sidemark: The student view is difficult to understand without further explanation. Dots visualising the clicks should contain the numbers of the answers.

3.5.10 Question Pool:

• I could not evaluate this feature as I did not find an option to add questions.

3.6 Learning Path

3.6.1 Overview Page

- UIG: Breadcrumb says "[=doc=]", should be "Learning Path".
- UIG: Provide action box for actions
- Wish: Make the table look more compact: Join type icon, name, description and progress in one column as suggested in the guidelines and provide sort options in a drop-down in the action box.



Sample Path. Dokeos local ISO-8859-1

Progress 0% (0/0)

- High: Currently, editing the test description is not in-place editing. If you do not change it to in-place editing, move the action icon to the action column and fix the "[=Location=]" label in the dialog.
- UIG: Delete confirmation should be "Are you sure you want to delete [learning path name]?" instead of "Are you sure to delete?"







3.6.2 Navigation

- The current navigation scheme is highly confusing. There are the following views:
 - \circ Basic overview \rightarrow shows overview of all steps and option to move them.
 - \circ Advanced \rightarrow shows option to add chapters and steps.
 - \circ Build \rightarrow shows option to add chapters and steps.
 - Display → Shows student view.
 - Basic overview (student mode) → Student view.
 - Advanced (student mode) → Student view.

There is no indicator which view is currently selected.

High: Provide the following view navigation:

- o Reduce to two navigation elements: "Edit" and "Display" (or "Preview").
- o Do not show this navigation in student view (they can't switch to edit anyway).
- If you still want to provide the "Basic overview", add an item "Organize pages" below "New chapter" and "New step" in the action box in edit mode.

3.6.3 SCORM and AICC Import

- UIG: Adjust to guidelines for forms.
- UIG: Form title should not contain "[= =]".
- UIG: File should be required.
- High: Provide hint for content proximity.
- High: Button label should be "Upload" instead of "Download"
- High: "Or upload local file from main/garbage directory" is difficult to understand and should not be shown when the garbage is empty. A better approach might be "Or upload local file: [] [Browse]" and open main/garbage by default.
- The activity feedback is good.
- High: Message "File uploaded successfully" was shown even if the learning path was not added to the overview.

3.6.4 Power Point Conversion

- Medium: Change the wording of the info message:
 - Browse your hard disk for a presentation (.ppt or .odp).
 - o Upload it to Oogie. It will tranform the presentation into a Scorm learning path.







- You will then be allowed to add audio comments to each slide and insert tests for evaluation.
- High: The error message in case of an unsuccessful upload is not helpful. It tells the user to check the file name for special characters in the file name. This check might be performed by the system.

3.6.5 Add Learning Path

- Low: Typo in "Your learning path has been successfully created adnd has been added to the left menu."
- UIG: Show hints in info boxes, not in an orange box or as plain text.
- UIG: Adjust layout of "New Chapter" and "New Step" box to action box.
- Chapters do not behave as expected. Expected behaviour is:
 - o Pages should be subordinate to chapters. Currently, nesting is not possible.
 - If a chapter is selected on the left and a new step is added, it should be added to the last position of this chapter by default.
 - o New chapter should always be added after last element.
 - When moving chapters, sub pages should be moved as well by default.
 - o In student view mode, chapter start page should show the chapter description and possibly a table of contents. Currently, it shows "redirection error".
 - High: Suggestion: Either fix chapters to show the expected behaviour or do not provide them.
- UIG: Delete confirmation should be "Are you sure you want to delete [chapter name]?" Instead of "Are you sure to delete? Are you sure you want to delete these steps?"

3.6.6 Add Chapter

- UIG: Label should be "Add chapter" instead of "New".
- UIG: Adjust to guidelines for forms.
- UIG: Mark required fields and provide error message (currently nothing is shown).
- High: This form makes use of another style for input elements which is specified inline. Use global CSS instead of inline tags.

3.6.7 Chapter Page

• UIG: Use an action box for Edit, Move and Delete.







- Medium: Edit and move are redundant. Either remove "Move" or the position fields from Edit.
- UIG: The breadcrumb does not display the current page.
- UIG: "The new chapter has been created. You can now add another chapter or a step to it." should be formatted like a success message.

3.6.8 New Step

- UIG: Label should be "Add step" instead of "New".
- Low: Consider to insert a new step after the selected one instead of adding it to the end.
- Medium: Make "New document" more eye-catching by providing a label and putting it into an action box.
- UIG: Mark links in existing resources as normal links (here: black instead of blue). Otherwise adjust the layout to action boxes.
- High: For nested structures (e.g. Documents and categories in links), only show the first-level structure by default and allow user to open categories on demand.
- Low: Indent the first level by a few pixels (this is done for Documents, but not for the other resources).

3.6.9 New Document

- UIG: Label should be "Create Document" instead of "New".
- UIG: Adjust to guidelines for forms.
- UIG: Mark required fields and provide error message (currently nothing is shown).
- High: This form makes use of another style for input elements which is specified inline. Use global CSS instead of inline tags.

3.6.10 Edit Document

- UIG: Use action box for Edit, Move and Delete
- Medium: Edit and move are redundant. Either remove "Move" or the position fields from Edit.







3.7 Agenda

3.7.1 Overview Page

- UIG: Move "Add agenda item", "User group filter", "Sort Agenda" and "Show current Agenda" into an action box.
- Low: Provide an option to navigate months and years in the calendar.
- Low: "Jump to top" button is very small and therefore difficult to hit.
- Agenda items in overview:
 - Medium: Make sure start and end are located closer to each other (in full screen the end moves way too far to the right).
 - UIG: Move teacher actions to the right of the item (like an action column in a table). Provide tooltips for all icons.
- UIG: Delete confirmation should be "Are you sure you want to delete [agenda item name]?" instead of "Please confirm your choice".
- UIG: Say "Changed visibility for [agenda item name]" instead of "Visibility changed" and format the message as a success message.

3.7.2 Edit Agenda Item

- UIG: Adjust to guidelines for forms.
- UIG: The destination is missing in the breadcrumb.
- UIG: Page title should be "Edit" instead of "Modify".
- High: Adjust layout of "Select Groups/Users" to in-place editing of categories (See section "Links").
 - Provide a label "Visible for:". Right to it, "Everybody" is displayed (pure text) and the "Select users" all right of it as a link (instead of a button).
 - When the user clicks "Select users", the two lists to assign users are shown below the link. The lists have labels on top ("Invisible for" / "Visible for"). Clicking the link again will close the user selection.
 - o If possible, introduce an extra column in the lists showing an item for user groups versus users.
 - o If "everybody" was selected, all groups must be shown in the "visible" column.
 - If only a subset of users was chosen, "Everybody" is changed to "Selected users", so label and selection always correspond.
 - Allow for easy interaction by providing a "Select all" and "Unselect all" as toggle options below each of the two lists.
- Medium: Move start and end time closer to start and end date (relevant in full screen)







mode).

- Medium: For suggested default time, use quarter hours only.
- Low: Put "Title" label above the title input field to make it consistent with other forms.
- High: Move the user selection below the body (most important options first!).
- Medium: On confirm, check if start date is before end date.

3.7.3 Create Announcement from Agenda Item

- Medium: Consider to introduce an additional step summarising the contents of the announcement and offering the user an option to send an announcement email to the selected users/groups.
- UIG: Message should not say "Copied as announcement: New announcement" but "Created a new announcement from Agenda item: [Name of announcement]".

3.8 Announcement

3.8.1 Overview Page

- UIG: Move "Add announcement" and "Clear up list of announcements" into an action box.
- Low: "Jump to top" button is very small and therefore difficult to hit.
- Announcement items in overview:
 - UIG: Move teacher actions to the right of the item (like an action column in a table). Provide tooltips for all icons.
 - o UIG: Visibility is usually the last icon in action columns, here it's located before move up/down. Switch their position.
 - Medium: Make look more consistent with agenda items, e.g. by using the same colour scheme.
- UIG: Delete confirmations should be "Are you sure you want to delete [announcement title]?" instead of "Please confirm your choice", and "Are you sure you want to delete all announcements?" instead of "Please confirm your choice".
- UIG: "Visible/invisible" should be "Changed visibility of announcement [title]" and formatted as a success message.

3.8.2 Add Announcement

• UIG: Adjust to guidelines for forms.







- UIG: Move actions into an action box.
- UIG: "Add announcement" missing in breadcrumb.
- UIG: Do not show the contents of the overview page below the form (interaction is not possible at this point, and an overview over announcements is given on the left).
- High: Adjust layout of "Select Groups/Users" to the one described for agenda.
- Medium: Instead of "Subject for this mail" use the label "Title:" as sending a mail is optional.
- High: Move the user selection below the body (most important options first!). Move the checkbox option ("Send announcement by email to selected users") below the user selection.

3.8.3 Edit Announcement

- UIG: Display form title in the breadcrumb.
- UIG: For layout, see add announcement.

