

USABILITY STUDY

FanFiction.net Mobile

Participants

Participant One – Age 24, Female. Fair Computer Experience.

Enjoys reading fan fiction about Harry Potter, and has even dabbled with writing some.

Participant Two – Age 31, Female. Fair Computer Experience

Enjoys terrible Harry Potter fanfiction. Also reads some Dragon Age fanfics.

Participant Three – Age 25, Male. Excellent Computer Experience. Reads fanfics for an Anime series that he likes. *Failed to show up for the interview.*

Notes

Participant One

Search Button:

“This? Why is it hidden down there? It is not as easy to find as it should be.”

How do you feel about the look of the search functionality?

“Fine. Yeah, It’s decent. I want the search box to be bigger.”

Quickly found the Author item in the drop down. Took about 1 second.

Found the filters button easily.

“The filter’s dropdowns feel a little bit overwhelming.”

Took 5 seconds to filter down to stories with Arthur and Merlin.

“The search button should be combined with the filters menu. It is weird that there is a button at the top for filtering, and then a ways down the side of the page you have a big search icon/button. Filtering and searching aren’t separate activities. Searching is filtering, so it feels weird to me to have them be in such different places.

I could probably find whatever stories I want with this functionality. I don’t think there is anything wrong with the functionality. I just feel like it will take me longer to do what I want to do than it should.”

Participant Two

Search Button:

“Is there a search button?” Took three seconds to find.

Search functionality seems fine.

Search by Author?

“Author Filter? Oh man. Hmmm.... *long pause while they search for it* By a particular author you said?” (They were searching under the filters tab. With some guidance, they found the dropdown in search).

Took 15+ seconds to find the author search.

Easily Found Filter button

Filtering for Arthur and Merlin took approx. 10 seconds

Thoughts and feelings about the Filtering/Searching”

“Having filters on the front page feels a bit strange. I use fanfiction.net, and I like being able to search within the genre or story. This filter could pull Merlin and Arthur from any fandom, but if I wanted it within a specific fandom, this would give me bad results”

“If they wanted to keep the filter on the front page they should allow you narrow things down without having to click within each grouping, or to be able to search within a specific fandom.”

“What does pairing mean? What does a pairing apply to?”

Participant Three

This participant failed to show up for our scheduled interview, and I was unable to find a replacement in time.

Report

Analysis

One of the users had a difficult time finding the search button. When asked to filter, instead of using the dropdown in the search box, they clicked the filters button, and attempted to find author in that menu instead. Using the interpretation guidelines for items 1 and 2, this design was not successful.

Once the filters were identified, they were able to switch between them without much difficulty. One participant said they felt overwhelmed by the arrangement and number of filter items. They said the functionality should be good though. By the interpretation guidelines for items 3 and 4, this is a mixed success.

Recommendations

Hypothesis 1: Mixed results. Needs higher visibility, perhaps by placing it higher in the reading order.

Hypothesis 2: Poor results. Once located, filters could be applied. I recommend better grouping for the search and filters functionality.

Hypothesis 3: Mixed results. While one user had a concern about the scope of their searches, once they understood the system, they both seemed confident that the search functionality would find them stories they wanted to read. Neither of them were comfortable with the design. Consider reducing the 18 controls on the filters page to 7 +/- 2 to increase comfort with the design.

	Exceptional 100%	Good 90%	Acceptable 70%	Developing 50%	Missing 0%
Participants 20%	"Compelling" evidence supports that all the participants are members of the target audience	Every participant nicely matched the participant selection criteria	One or two notes about the participants indicates they are members of the target audience	One can infer from the notes that the participants were members of the target audience	No mention of how the participants matched the persona
Notes 30%	Notes record completely every event that occurred during the study	Notes paint a complete picture of what occurred during the study	Notes record what occurred	Notes present but lacking any detail	Notes missing
Analysis 20%	Observations are insightful and illuminating	Mastery of the qualitative data analysis techniques were demonstrated	There is at least one type of qualitative data analysis applied to the data	Analysis inconsistent, lacking any detail, off topic, or applied incorrectly	There is no analysis presented in the report
Recommendations 20%	Recommendations are highly likely to address every usability issue found and improve the product	Every recommendation is likely to address the issues found to some degree	Recommendations are consistent with the observations	At least one recommendation betrays a lack of understanding of the user, the design, or the principles	Recommendations are missing
Objectivity and Tact 10%	Everything about the report is accurate and paints things in a positive light	Objectivity and tact maintained in the study and in the report		One instance of subjectivity or loss of tact exist	Lack of objectivity or tact severely tarnish the value of the report