Project 2: GenderMag applied to Google Docs

By Oliver Hliddal, 18-737528

Inhalt

[1. Scenario & Script 2](#_Toc26200078)

[2. Gender Mag Walk-through 4](#_Toc26200079)

[2.1 Walk-through 1 4](#_Toc26200080)

[2.2 Walk-through 2 9](#_Toc26200081)

[3. Analysis 13](#_Toc26200082)

# 1. Scenario & Script

The task for the imaginary user named Abby is to change the background color of a text-document in Google Docs to green and changing the page-size to A4. She is sending out invites for her Christmas-party and would like to make the entire page’s background a bit more creative. Her friend who is co-organizing the party has created a Docs-document and shared it with Abby, who now wants to improve it so that her friend can print the invites out and send them to all the guests.

This task was given as this is a rather unusual action to do within Google Docs, but not one that is incredibly hard to do. For this project the Abby persona sheet was not changed.

The task can be changed to the following subgoals:

1. Open the menu to change the background color and the page size.
2. Changing the background color.
3. Changing the page size to A4.

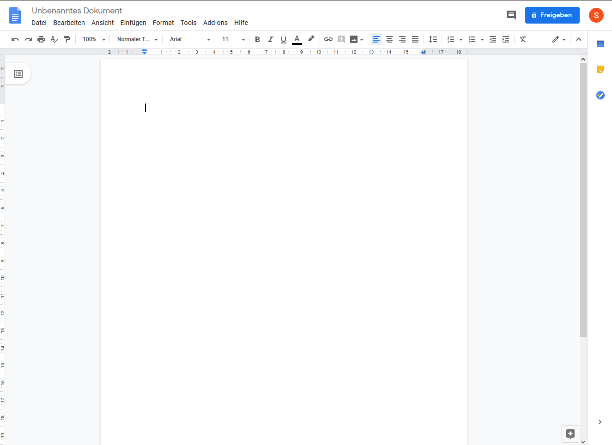
The subgoals were broken down into the following actions:

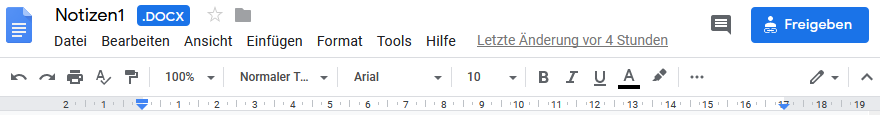
1. Open the menu to change the background color and the page size.
   1. Press “Datei”
   2. Select “Seiteneinrichtung”
2. Changing the background color.
   1. Open the color selection for the page color
   2. Select a green color
3. Changing the page size to A4 and applying the changes.
   1. Open the page-size selection
   2. Select A4 as the page size
   3. Press “OK”

The two GenderMag walkthroughs were done by me and a fellow student of the course.

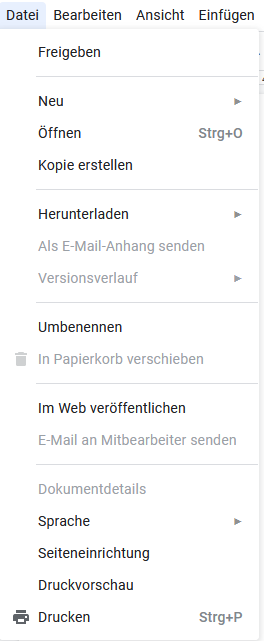
The system used for this task was Google Docs, which is a free online service hosted by Google. It is part of Google Drive, which has multiple functions. You can store data and share it with other users. The system also features different programs to change the stored documents. The most used ones are online alternatives of Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and Excel. The respecting programs are called Google Docs, Google Tables and Google Presentations. These have less functions than the Microsoft versions, but they allow for multiple people to work on the same document at the same time. It use the same document format as Word (.docx), therefor making the addition of preexisting files very easy.

Docs is generally structured the same way as all competitors. In the center of the screen, using most of the space, is the document itself, where the text can be written. Above that is a toolbar with the most used functions like changing font-size, changing to fat, cursive, … (Picture 2). There is also a big “Freigeben” button which allows for documents to be shared with other users. Other functions are divided into categories which can be opened by multiple menu-interfaces.

*Picture 1: The Interface of Google Docs.*

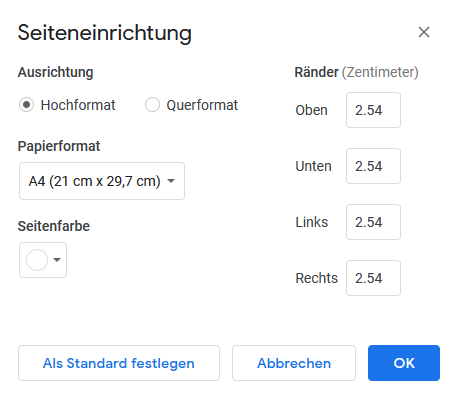


*Picture 2: Docs uses a toolbar for the most used functions.*



For the task given to the fictional character of Abby, the user must press “Datei” in Google Docs and press on Seiteneinrichtung (Picture 3). The Seiteneinrichtung menu gets opened (Picture 4). Here the user can change different layout settings including the two Abby needs.

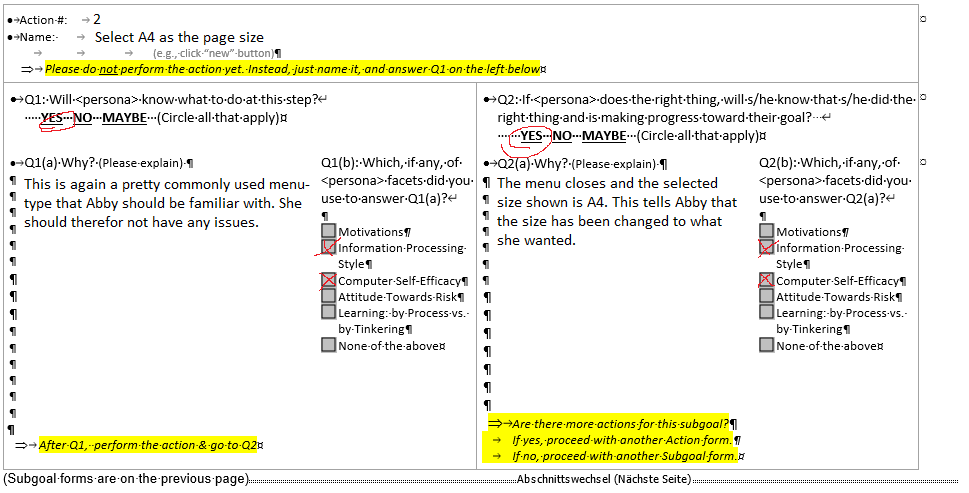
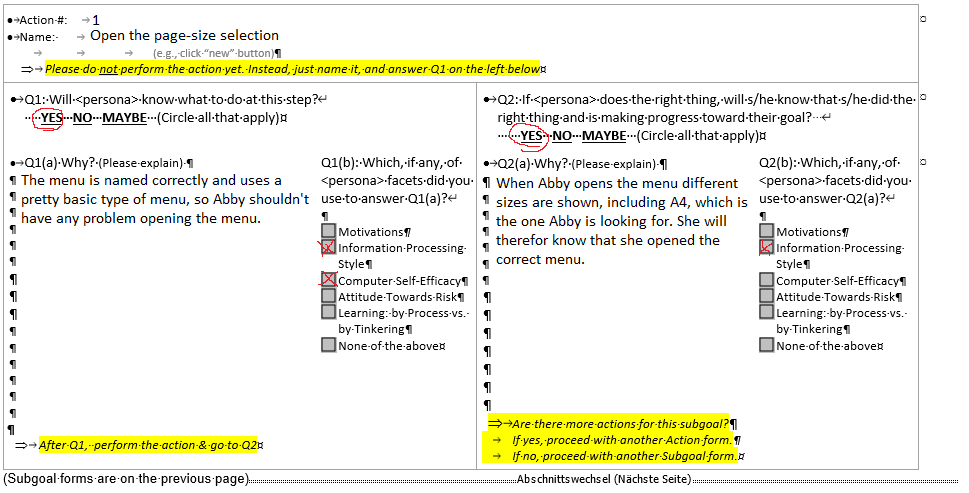
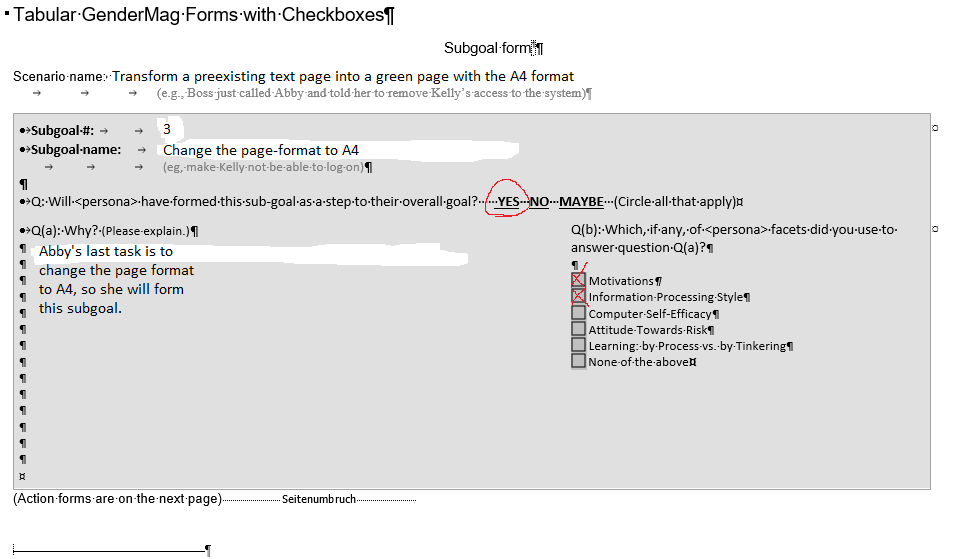
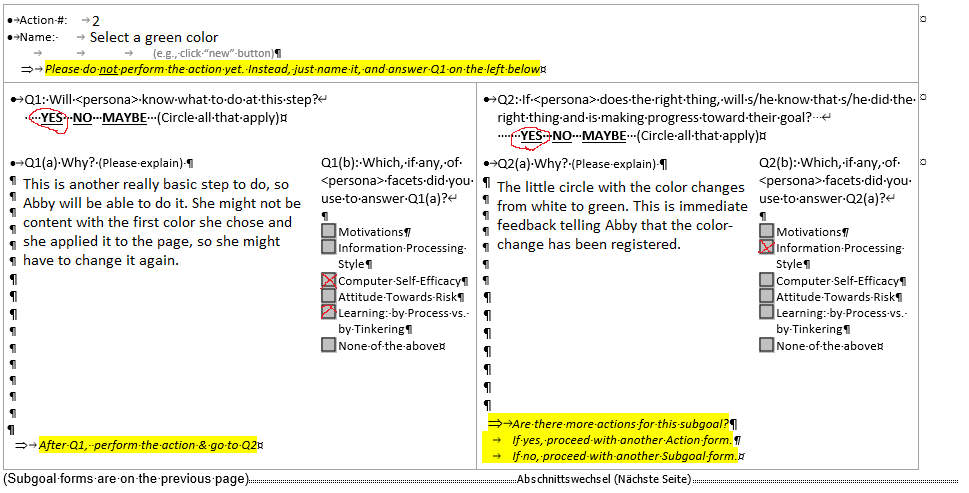
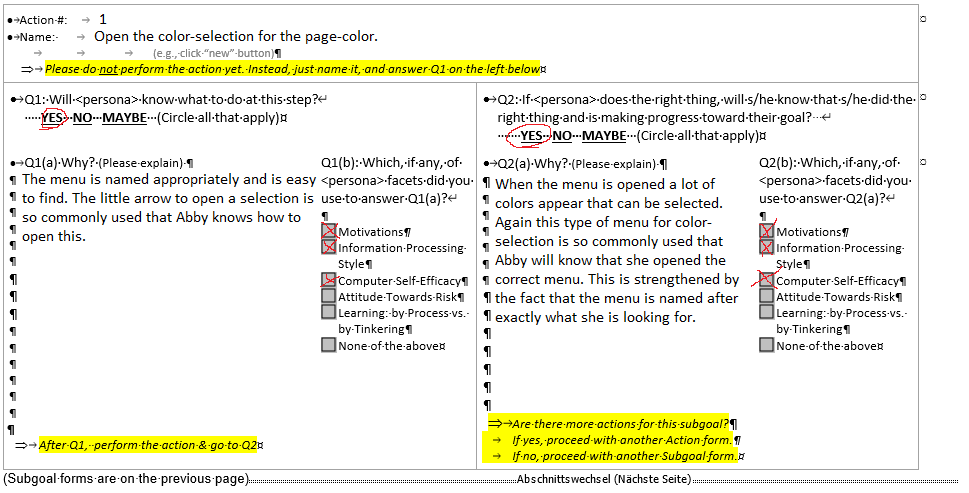
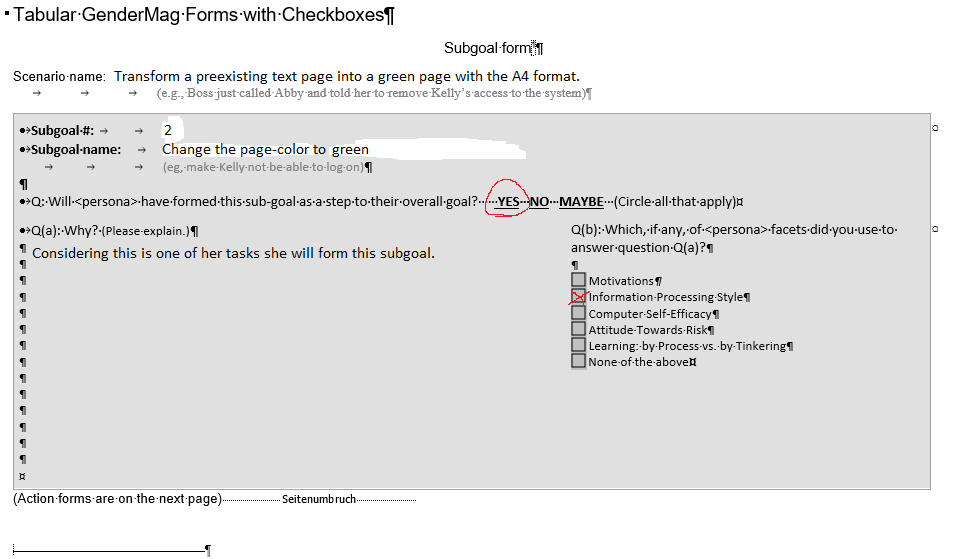
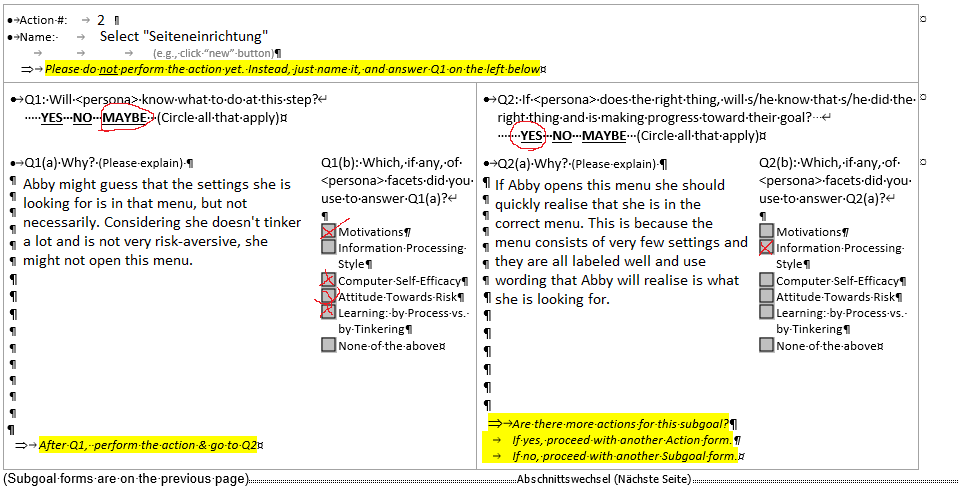
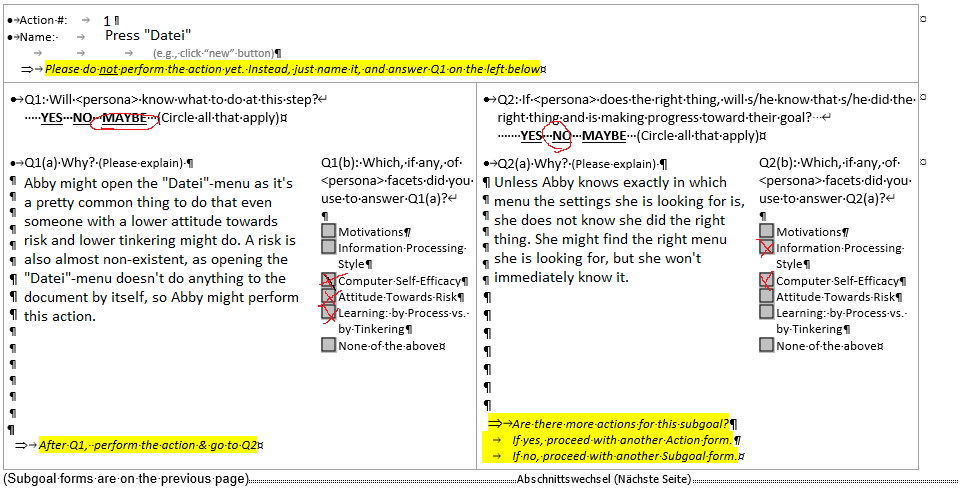
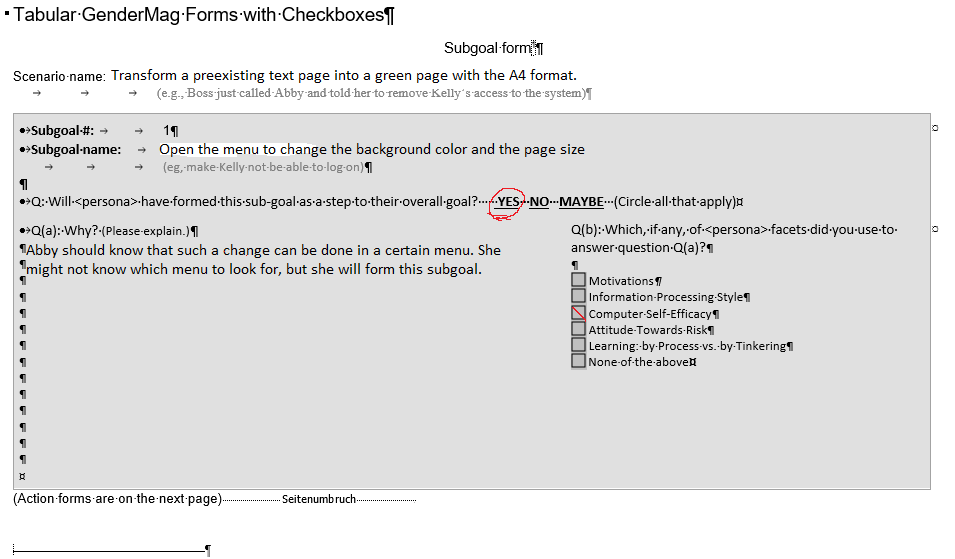
*Picture 3: Docs uses menu interfaces to access all other functions not visible in the writing interface.*

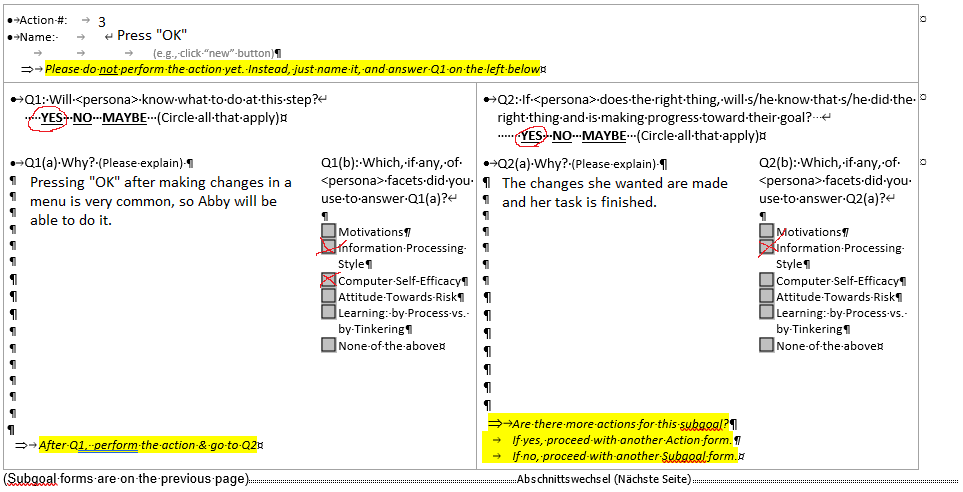


*Picture 4: The Seiteneinrichtung-menu.*

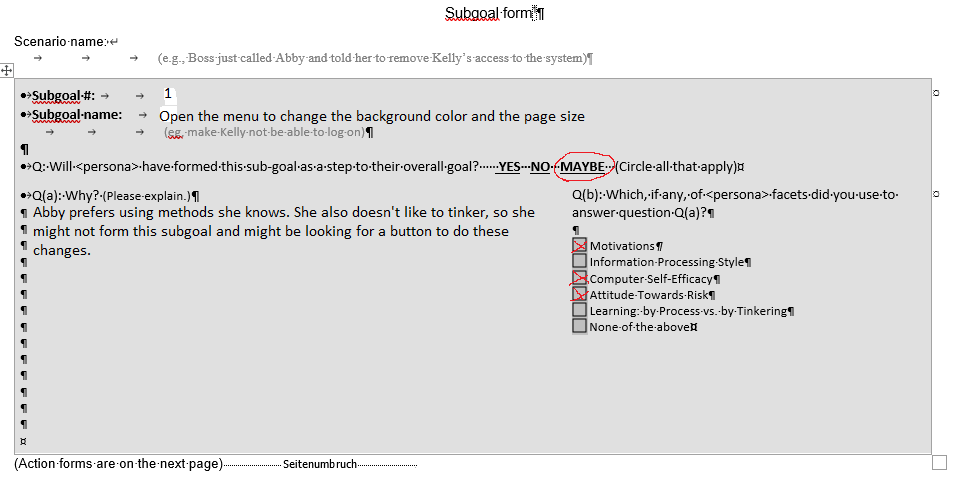
# 2. Gender Mag Walk-through

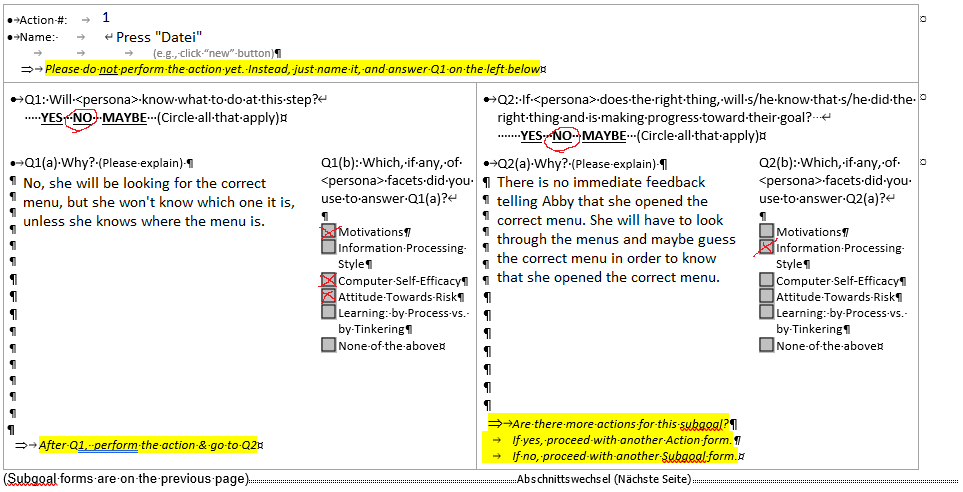
## 2.1 Walk-through 1

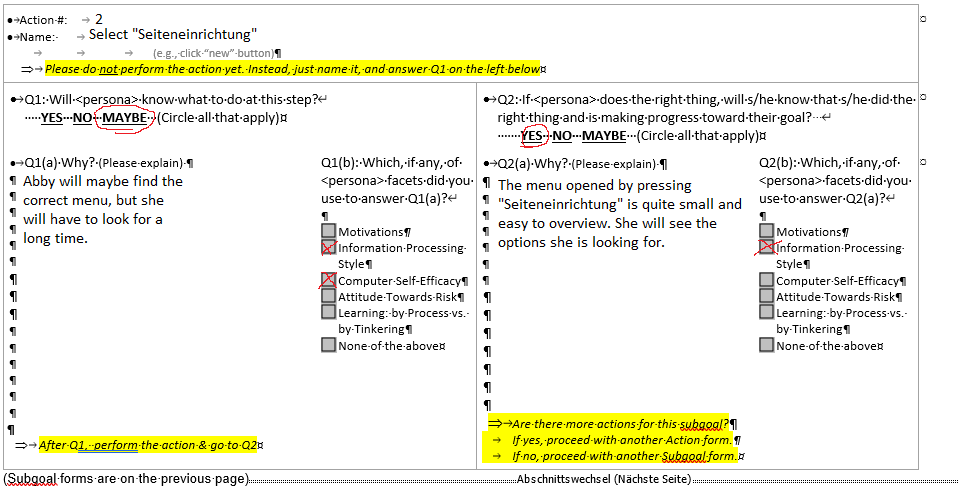


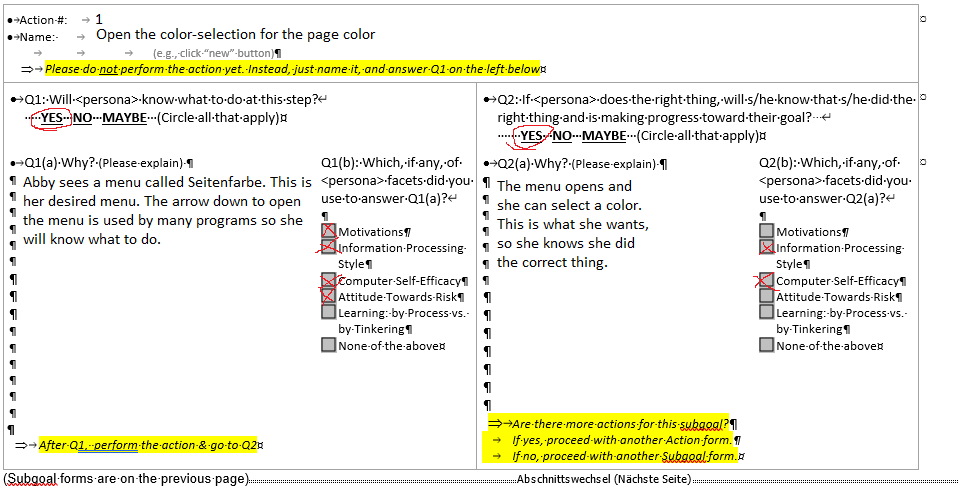
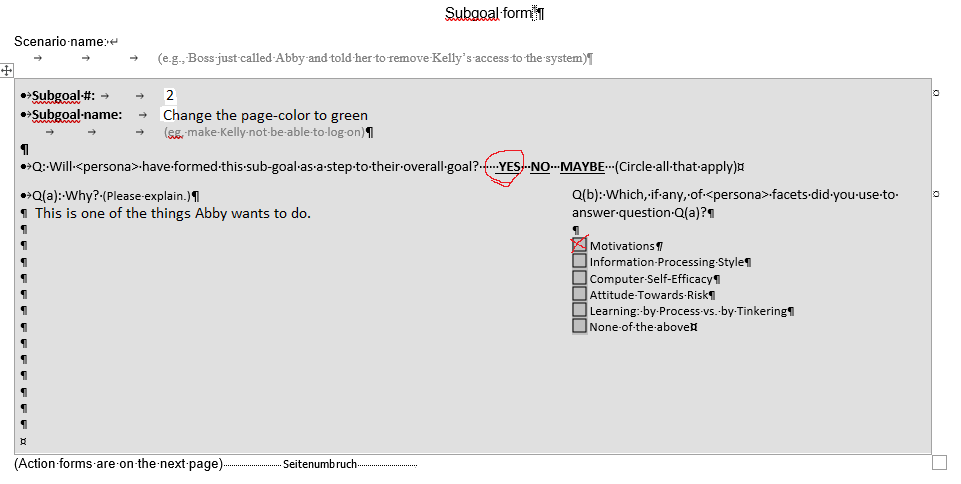


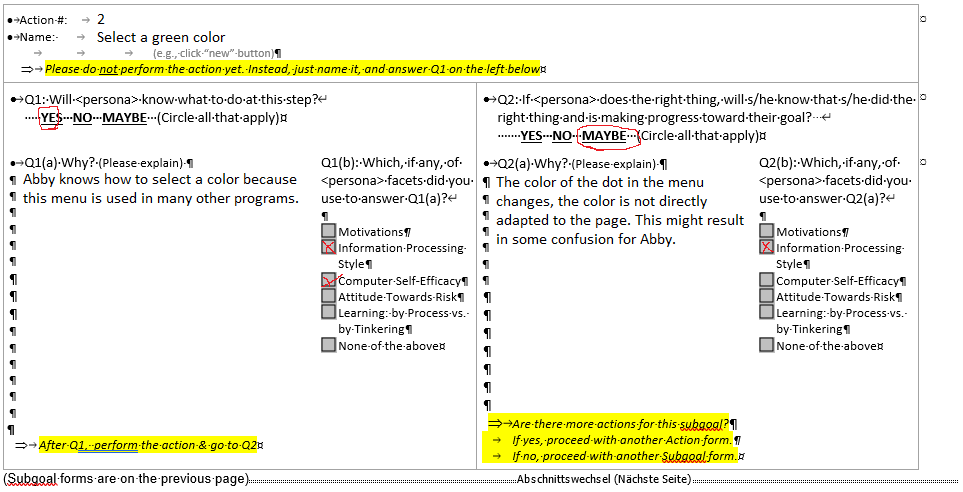
## 2.2 Walk-through 2

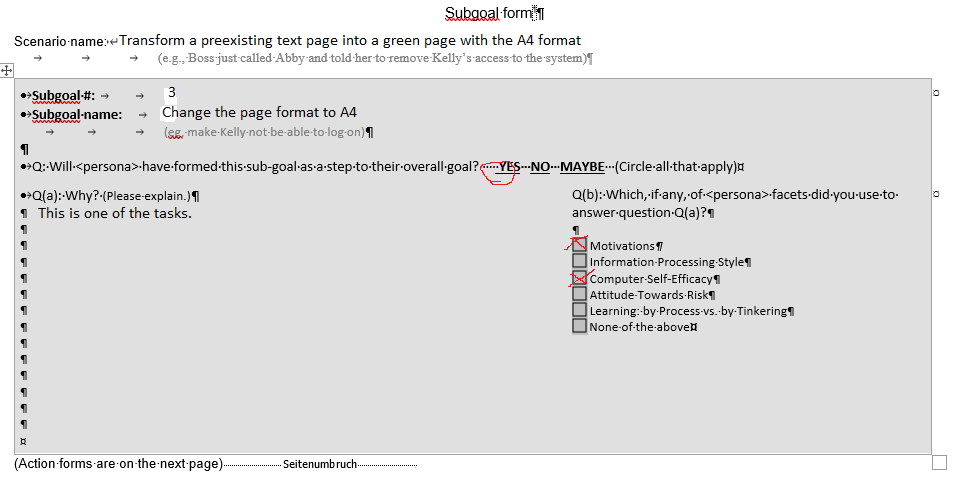


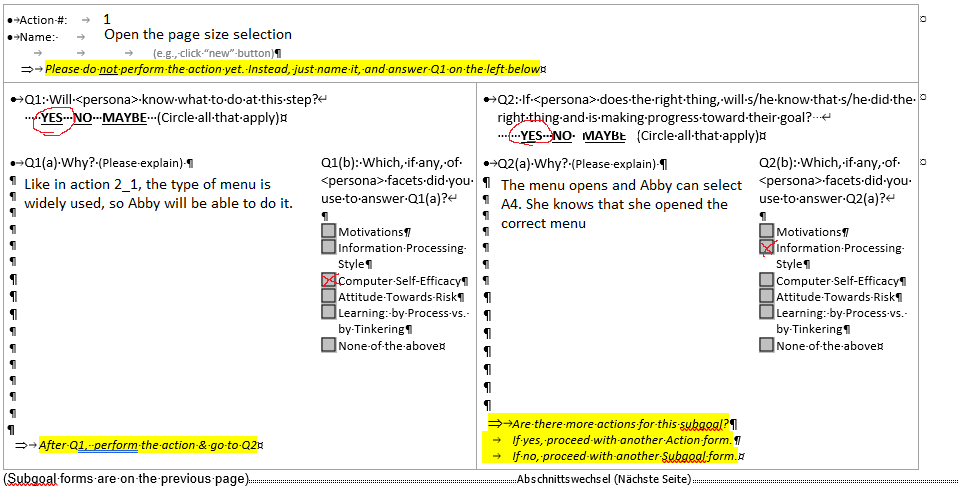


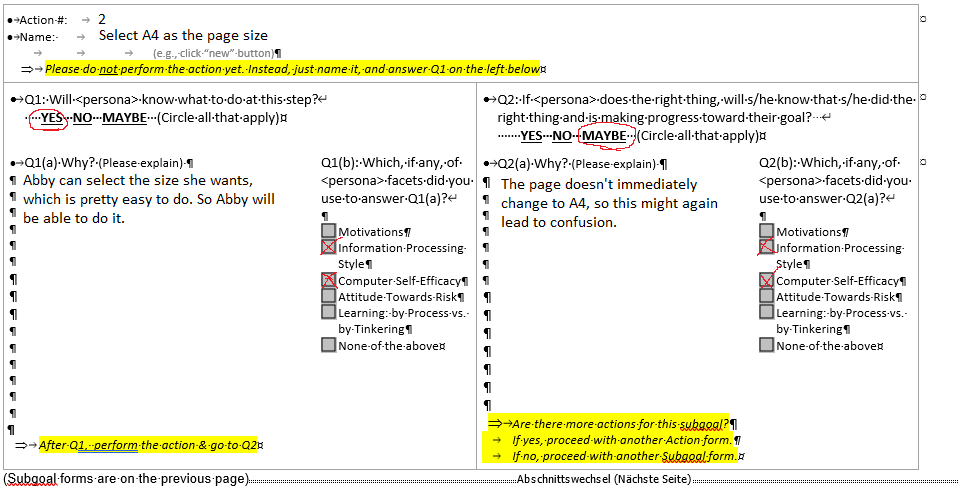


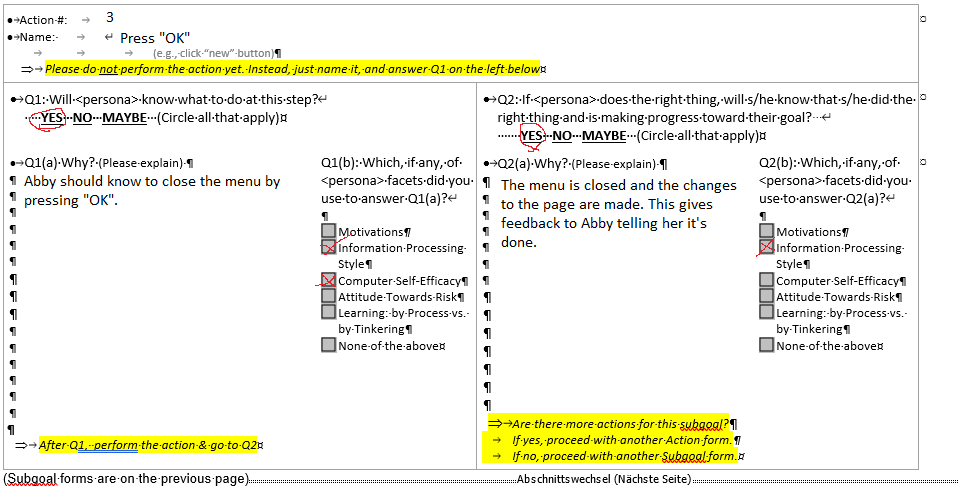






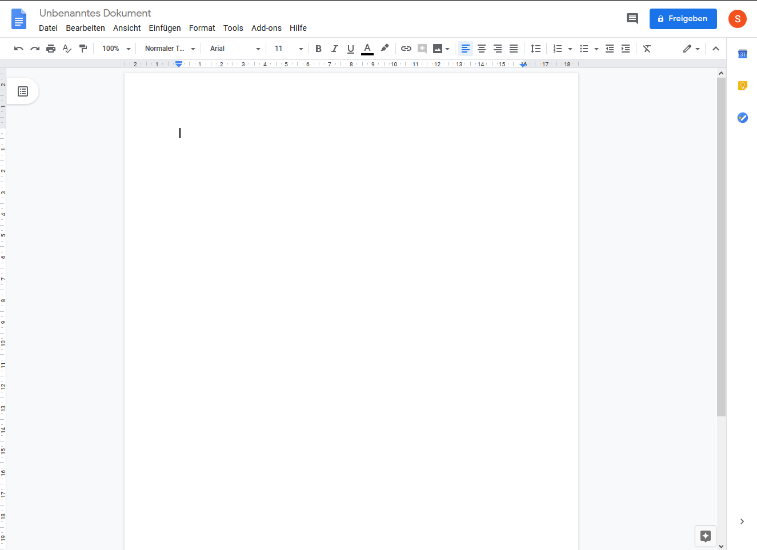




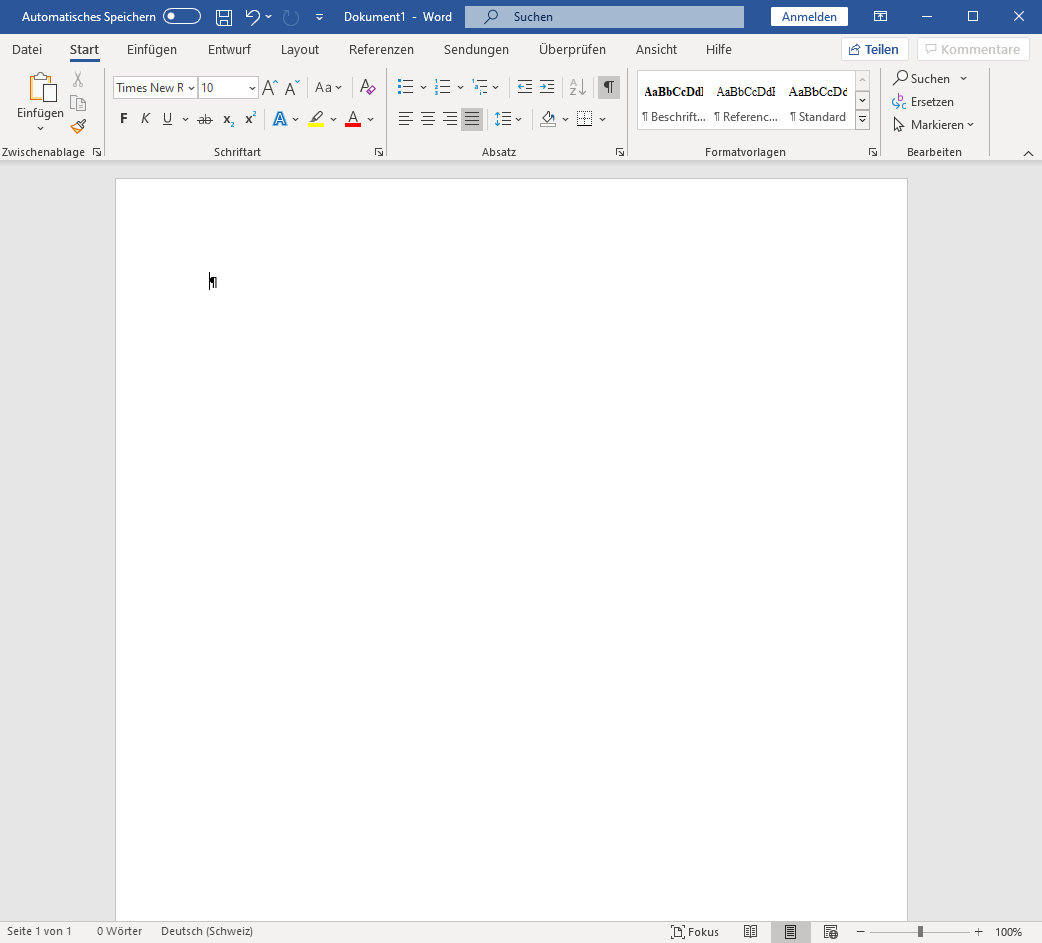


# 3. Analysis

For this task Google Docs was used which is best compared with Microsoft Word. The main difference is that Word offers more functions, but Docs offers multiple people working on the same document at the same time without merging errors occurring, as the document is updated in real-time. Other people can be given access to a document by pressing “Freigeben” in the top right corner (see Picture 5) and either sending them a link to the document or sending an invite to their Google Account. One can also differ between people being able to change the document or just see it.

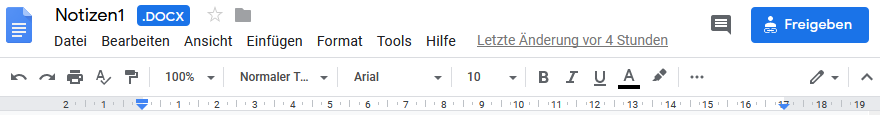


*Picture 5: The Interface of Google Docs. It offers less functions than Microsoft Word, but the most used/ important functions are available in both.*

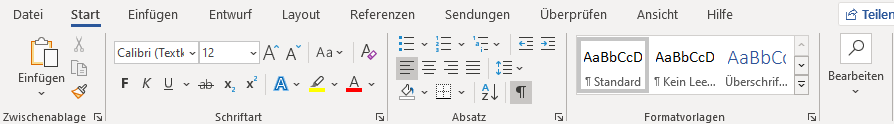


*Picture 6: The Interface of Microsoft Word.*

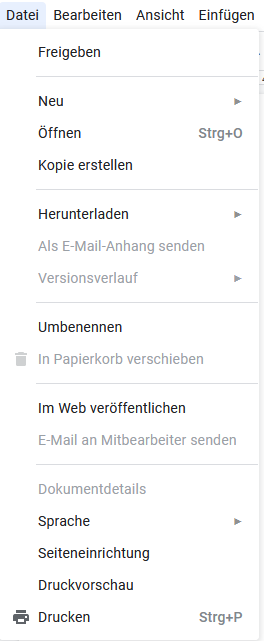
The amount of difference in functions can best be seen when looking at the amount of buttons and function-categories between the two systems (See pictures 7 & 8). Something interesting to note here is that both systems use a toolbar to allow for quick use of the most used function (i.e. font-style & -size, text-color, …).



*Picture 7: The toolbar of Docs.*

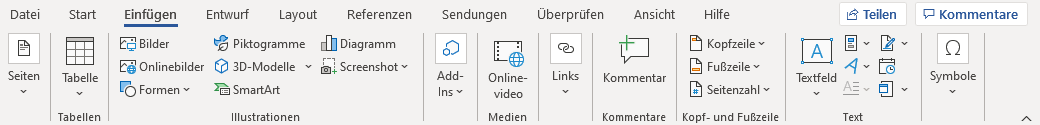


*Picture 8: The starting toolbar for Word.*



The sub-categories are also designed quite differently between the two systems. While Docs uses menu interfaces to show all the options (Picture 9), Word replaces the basic toolbar as shown in picture 4 with a different one that allows the user to use the functions of the sub-category (Picture 10).

*Picture 9: sub-category menu in Google Docs visualized as a menu interface.*

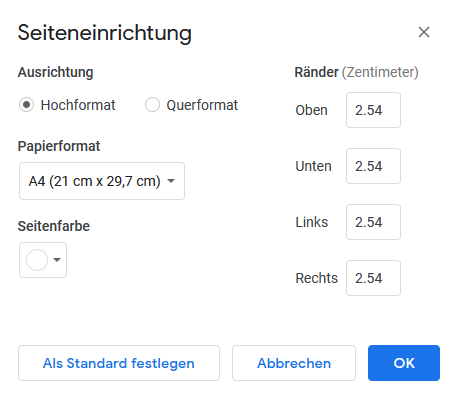
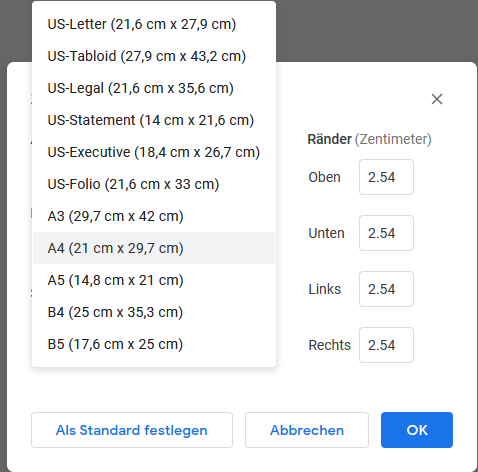


*Picture 10: Sub-category menu in Microsoft Word visualized as a toolbar.*

The first potential issues for Abby arise when she starts her task. Unless she knows where the menu she is looking for is, it will take her a lot of time to find the appropriate menu. While it is possible that Abby first looks in the Datei-menu, it would also be possible for her to look in Ansicht or Format, as the word Datei suggests more settings concerning how the computer handles the data-file and less layout related changes. It’s also the case that Abby, who doesn’t tinker a lot, might not be content with going through all the menus in order to find the correct one.

The second action of opening the Seiteneinrichtung-menu is less problematic, but the word Seiteneinrichtung doesn’t immediately make someone who is rather risk-aversive to open it. This is something that Word does better. The page-color can be directly changed in the Entwurf-toolbar. This is more friendly to people who don’t tinker as much and are more risk-aversive, as it only takes them one click that they know is risk-free to get to that function. The same goes for the page size. This can be found directly under Layout.

These issues are quite hard to fix, as Docs offers a lot of possible actions and a certain tree structure can’t really be avoided without the interface becoming chaotic.

*Picture 11: The Seiteneinrichtung-menu.*

Once Abby has opened the Seiteneinrichtung-menu, she shouldn’t have any issues finding the settings she is looking for. Both open a pop-up-menu that show all the different options available for this setting. The default is US-letter and a white background, but this can be changed by changing the settings and pressing “Als Standard festlegen”. All the newly selected settings can be reset by pressing “abbrechen” or they can be applied to the document by pressing “OK”. Pressing “OK” will close this window.

This is where another potential issue arises. While all the settings here use very widely spread and efficient ways to change them, the changes don’t get applied immediately. This can result in the user not noticing them doing something they did not want to and having to reopen the menu again after it has been closed. This can be challenging for people who are risk-aversive, as they might be afraid to destroy a recently formatted document by changing the page-size. This issue can be resolved in different ways:

1. **Show a preview**: If a small picture of what the document would look like would be shown while the user is tinkering with the settings, they could see potential issues before applying them to the document. This also makes it easier to revoke changes made, as it’s more likely that the user still knows the setting there has been before.
2. **Apply the changes directly**: If the changes are done directly without the menu having to be closed, potential issues could be seen again directly after having done the change and the reversing of said change is easier.
3. **Add the menu to the toolbar**: This can be done in different ways. Either all the sub-categories are separate toolbars (like Word) or just these settings are added to unsure that changes are done quicker, and the menu is not closed after a change has been applied.

One other issue that stuck out, which doesn’t really relate to the GenderMag was that the default page-size is set to US-letter. This format differs from the standard european A4, which can lead to printing issues. This is something that could be improved easily, as Google already does location tracking when one uses their system. The system could therefor set the default to something different according to what is the default page-size in that region. Another way of solving this would be to determine the location after a potential address that was added to a Google-account.

Overall the system is quite efficient and can be used quickly. While there is room for improvement, most functions do not discriminate against one Gender or more risk-aversive/ non-tinkery people. In general, the entire system is quite risk-free as any change made can be reversed by either pressing CTRL+Z or by pressing the arrow facing left in the top left corner. Both are widely used methods of undoing the last action and make the system easy to use. The system is only recommended, if multiple people need to work on the same document at the same time, otherwise applications like Word or OpenOffice are superior in many ways. If combined with a data server or a cloud service, sharing files can easily be done in other ways.