User Interface Documentation

Overall Design

Why did we make the UI as such?
• Usability
• Simplicity
• User friendly
• Neat and tidy looking
• Not too complicated

Layout
• Common tabs and links
    • Home
    • Debates
    • Users
    • Search
    • Help/F.A.Q
• Layout and tabs are placed similarly to the initial prototype
• Clear view of every system functionality

Forms (Button/Tabs/Links)
• Login (Button/Link ?)
• Logout (Button/Link ?)
• Rooms, Profile (Tabs)

Inspiration
• Various applications such as
• iChat
• Adium
• MSN Messenger
• Various websites where chatting / forums were present.
• Facebook

The main designs are based on the functionality of the project. The usability was considered and the designs are made to be simple and based around the initial prototype design with all functions included. Efficiency and user-friendliness are all considered while designing these pages and it is made to be clear and easy to use as we target users of all ages with different literate abilities.

There is a common header where some relevant information can be found such as the "help" page. So the help page will always be there when a user have difficulties in any part of the system. A search bar makes the searching of a room/title/topic easier. The common footer consists of the SVN Revision number on the bottom right of the page and the developers name/group on the bottom left.

All the sections of the projects are grouped and put as tabs. This gives a clear view of the layout of the whole website. The tabs include, "Home", "Debates", "Users", "Search" and "F.A.Q.". All these tabs should send the user a quick and easily accessible page. The colour that we have chosen are light and pleasant. It is not too dark nor too light. The words are all visible and easy to read.

In the homepage, there is "Recent" news section where the developers can update users with the new functionality/features that has been added. This can be done by editing the html of that page.

-Before Logging In/Unregister User
Users/The public will be directed to the Homepage when they first visit the page. There will be an option for register and log in. Unregistered users are not allowed to start a debate or a view the contents of the room. However, they could see the room's names/titles. They can also see the list of the registered users, but they are not allowed to view the profile of the users without logging in.

-Registering
The most practical way for the registration of this website is the forms, very simple yet effective. Users are required to enter their details and also a valid e-mail address as an email conformation would be sent, right after they click the "Submit" (button).

-While logging in
The conventional way of logging in to a website, users are prompted for their (username/email) and a password. These will be in the form of forms. **(There will be an option for forgotten password or username as well just in case the users forget their login details)**

-After logging in
After logging in, the header will show that a user is logged on and it also shows the username. A logout option will be available so that a user can log out anytime he/she likes. A logged on user has the ability to access the Debate Rooms, User Profiles and he/she can start his/her own debate.

Design Layout

Home
The "Home" section is just a page where the introduction of what our website does.
Nothing too fancy, just a brief explanation with the "Recent Updates" or "Changes" after the main welcoming section.

Debates
The "Debates" page contains a list of titles of the conference rooms. On its right side, there will be updates on the members joining the debates. The list of rooms are listed with a grayed box and to the left of each gray box, there will be the count of the number of members joining the debate. There is an extra function where the room will be locked at certain time into the debate. That will be shown as "JOIN" and "LOCK" below the number count of members participating in that particular room. Each room, the creator and when the room was created will be shown on the bottom right of the box, this will allow the users to see who and when it was created.

Conference Rooms
The conference room are laid out as such that there is a large region where the all the sent input texts are shown together for every users to read, a small one line text field where the users types in their discussions. Next to the text field is a button for the users to submit their text. This could also be done by entering "return/enter" on one's keyboard. The title of the room will stay put at the top of the messages displayed.

There is a box where all the participants of that room are shown. This will allow the participants to see who and how many people are in that same discussion. Due to the nature for this project, we decided to have it time based. Each room will have a certain amount of time for the users to discuss on their topics. Therefore, there is a count down clock. It is located below the members box. The clock will start from the duration and start counting down as it goes on. A users can decide to leave the conference at any time. There is a link where brings you out of the discussion, but before leaving, there is a warning/confirming window that a user will have to confirm their decision upon leaving,

Users

In the "Users" page, the registered users are listed. They might have a picture next to their names depending on if they have an account on Gravatar. If they don't, they would have a "Gravatar" default picture.

User Profile

Each user will have a profile. On here, information where the users added will be displayed. If the user has an avatar, it will be shown as well. There is an edit profile button for each of the users for editing their profile information.

Edit Profile

In the edit profile section, the user will be able to add information into the text box available. The text box can be dragged to enlarge the field area. There is a submit button where the user can click and save the changes made to their profile. There is also a link where user can click on that and it will bring him/her back to the user profile page without saving the changes made.

Search

The search page contains a text field where users can enter a keyword for the name of the debate. The list of debates where a word of the name matches the entered word will be shown directly below the search field. This search field will still be present after the list of rooms are listed. This enables a user to change the search entry without having to go back to the previous page.

Frequent Asked Questions (FAQ)

The "FAQ" page will contain the questions and answers likely to be asked by a user. Therefore the FAQ will cover the whole system. The layout of the content of this page is very simple. The answers will be directly below the questions. Some section will have screen shots of the pages as explaining the system in visual is much easier in some cases.

Example:

Do we need to log in to participate in the debate?

Yes you will have to register with us in order to participate in the debates.

Inspiration

After doing much research on what design would be best. It came to a conclusion that to have a user-friendly, good looking website, it will be best to stick to the old fashioned simple and nice approach. Nothing too complicated and clear seemed to be the best one to be going for. Therefore, we now have a site whereby it is looking very simple with visible links and tabs for easy access and navigation around the site. The "Frequent Asked Questions" page is accessible by registered and non-registered users.

Before designing the final design, the group had decided that it would be best to keep it around the initial prototype design. Why change something that is already looking good? During the research, various websites and applications had given us the idea on how the debates would be like. There are some websites that have forums and chatting capability. For example, our very own computer science forum page; they have their discussions listed in a list and we(as users) can see the lists of discussions available after logging in.

The debates for our project take place in a chatroom with the basic message input field, message displaying field and box where the joined users are shown. The inspiration here comes from a few chatting and instant messaging system, such as Adium on a mac and MSN Instant Messenger on a Window machine. The basic input and display boxes are essential for communications.

On the university's student union page, they have a polling where students are able to vote. The results are shown in a 3D pie chart with percentage and different colours representing different opinions or answers.