Algonquin College

TWR2011 – Usability and UX

Assignment #4

Usability Test

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Blogger – Usability Test

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Blogger – Usability Test

Scenario 1: Account creation with initial post

Common Task (Easy): Set up a new Blogger account and publish a quick hello to the Blogger world.

**Persona 1: *Gwen Beckett***, age 68, is a retired designer and artist who lives above her garage, renting out the main house to a young family. She is an artist, with plans to self-publish a book, and is comfortable with technology. She is keen to share her ideas and experiences with others.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **+/-** | **Findings** |
| Interface |  | She created an account quickly and easily. |
| Interface |  | Her initial post went very smoothly. |

Time on task: 10 minutes

Exceptions: none

Comments: “So far, so good”

**Persona 2: *Henry Huxtable***, age 27, a gardening design specialist and is quite comfortable with technology. He competes and teaches sword fighting techniques as a side business.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **+/-** | **Findings** |
| Interface |  | Account setup went very smoothly…no trouble |
| Interface |  | He didn’t know why Blogger would present notifications (especially in yellow) of EU privacy rules, when it didn’t even know where he was. |
| Editor |  | He wondered why new blogposts begin with a space already inserted, so your first line is slightly indented if you don’t delete it. |

Time on task: 6 minutes

Exceptions: Bug (blogpost space)

Comments: “Curious that it doesn’t prompt for information it doesn’t seem to have (like what country)”

**Persona 3: *Martin Rutger***, age 16, Martin is a teenager, currently learning to drive. He regularly uses technology for school, though he doesn’t feel very experienced at it. He enjoys Dungeons and Dragons, his high school drama club, and scouting.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **+/-** | **Findings** |
| Interface |  | EU privacy statement notification right up front made him hesitant to use Blogger (messy, uncertain). |
| Interface |  | Immediate notification suggesting how to subscribe to content of interest was off-putting. |
| Interface |  | Problems entering an URL; needed assistance. Was trying to use an ‘&’ and Blogger was refusing to move to the next screen with no explanation why, or verbiage about valid characters. |
| Interface |  | He was surprised how easily the initial post could be put out (though he’d rather customize things first). |

Time on task: 18 minutes

Exceptions: 2

1. Bug: initial space character exists in new posts (report as issue in Post task)
2. Assist/Bug: stuck trying to enter ‘&’ character in URL field with no error feedback

Comments: “They should say what is wrong with an input”, “With the yellow notifications and suggestions to sign up for stuff right away, I would normally have walked away.”

Impressions

Account creation was quite successful, with a couple very minor bugs and concern that EU rules are being overstated for everyone, suggesting to them a problem.

Scenario 2: Posting and editing published entries

Common task (moderate): Publish a second, pre-written post, already available as a Word file. After publishing, make provided edits and corrections. Add an image to the post.

**Persona 1: *Gwen Beckett***, age 68, is a retired designer and artist who lives above her garage, renting out the main house to a young family. She is an artist, with plans to self-publish a book, and is comfortable with technology. She is keen to share her ideas and experiences with others.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **+/-** | **Findings** |
| Clarity |  | She found posting and editing past posts easy. |
| Clarity |  | She was able to add an image to her post quite quickly. |

Time on task: 15 minutes

Exceptions: none

Comments: “The interface is kind of boring”

**Persona 2: *Henry Huxtable***, age 27, a gardening design specialist and is quite comfortable with technology. He competes and teaches sword fighting techniques as a side business.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **+/-** | **Findings** |
| Interface |  | He did not find it obvious whether a post edit had saved. |
| Clarity |  | He wished they would provide hints (like a heads up that you can still go back and change your blog name, URL, or post title) so he’d know whether to take decisions along the way seriously. |

Time on task: 12 minutes

Exceptions: none

Comments: “It would be nice to easily control image placement without dealing with layouts and themes.”

**Persona 3: *Martin Rutger***, age 16, Martin is a teenager, currently learning to drive. He regularly uses technology for school, though he doesn’t feel very experienced at it. He enjoys Dungeons and Dragons, his high school drama club, and scouting.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **+/-** | **Findings** |
| Interface |  | Warning with solid fillOrange caution symbols for “no comments” were off-putting. |
| Interface |  | He was positive about getting the blog online and really interested in checking out options right away: languages, Ad Sense, customizations, … |
| Interface |  | He wishes there were hover tips for tools & settings to let him know what they do. |
| Editor |  | He was bothered that the editor underlined a text reference to his blog URL indicating a spelling mistake, when it should be aware the user may refer to their own blog. |
| Settings |  | He didn’t like that the post location was defaulting to Australia. |
| Editor |  | He did not like the levels of intuitiveness and features for the editor. An example was the font size choices of xsmall to xlarge, rather than ‘proper’ numerical values. |
| Interface |  | He found it unclear whether edits to a post were live, saved as a draft, or neither. If something is going live the Published indication should be clear. |

Time on task: 20 minutes

Exceptions: none

Comments: “I like it overall, but I never would have stuck with it to get here on my own.”

Impressions

Posting and Editing were well received, with minor but consistent concerns over lack of hints, clarity, and feedback in the overall interface. Initial warnings may be over-emphasized.

Scenario 3 (Individualized persona tasks)

Scenario 3.1: Personalization

Task (moderate): Personalize the look for Blogger, including themes and additional graphics. Check for any other settings you’d like to customize.

**Persona 1: *Gwen Beckett***, age 68, is a retired designer and artist who lives above her garage, renting out the main house to a young family. She is an artist, with plans to self-publish a book, and is comfortable with technology. She is keen to share her ideas and experiences with others.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **+/-** | **Findings** |
| Clarity |  | Time zone was wrong and when she couldn’t find a recognizable city quickly enough, she just set it to Chicago as being close enough. |
| Clarity |  | She couldn’t find where/how to invite another author to publish on her blog. Instead, she googled how to do it (with quick results). |
| Settings |  | Privacy settings were a non-issue; she goes with all locked down or nobody has access. |
| Settings |  | Customization of themes and images was straightforward |
| Clarity |  | The Flavicon setup was not obviously successful, and it took a while to appear in previews. |
| Interface |  | Background colour choices don’t affect the image as you would expect (eg: background colour changes sidebar sub-menu choices, not blog post background). |
| Interface |  | Save icon is not obvious enough in layout customization. |

Time on task: 25 minutes

Exceptions: self-Assist (Googled for help)

Comments: “This is a little clunky, but simple enough to keep using.”

Scenario 3.2: Synchronization

Task (moderate): Adjust time zone settings and invite another author to contribute to your Blogger account.

**Persona 2: *Henry Huxtable***, age 27, a gardening design specialist and is quite comfortable with technology. He competes and teaches sword fighting techniques as a side business.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **+/-** | **Findings** |
| Clarity |  | He was not clear what some of the notification setups were for (like “Invite more people to post notifications”). |
| Settings |  | Time zone starts out in LA; it’s not hard to fix, but he assumes it has some idea where he is, or there should be a prompt at setup to check it. |
| Settings |  | Doesn’t know what country you are in; would have expected it to check something about location to start (or again…to prompt you). |
| Interface |  | Inviting another author to contribute to the blog went very well. |

Time on task: 10 minutes

Exceptions: none

Comments: “There should be a tutorial right there for basics, including blog administration and tips for businesses.”

Scenario 3.3: Privacy and Sharing

Task (moderate): Customize the Blogger account to restrict access to those who have been given permission. Check for other related settings (like search engine visibility) and invite some friends to check out the blog.

**Persona 3: *Martin Rutger***, age 16, Martin is a teenager, currently learning to drive. He regularly uses technology for school, though he doesn’t feel very experienced at it. He enjoys Dungeons and Dragons, his high school drama club, and scouting.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **+/-** | **Findings** |
| Clarity |  | He did not find it clear what some of the privacy options meant (like custom readers). |
| Clarity |  | He wasn’t clear what effect the search engine visibility and other restrictive options might have for his friends (whether they might over-ride their access to see it). |
| Interface |  | He found the unformatted text entry box for email lists odd and confusing. (Just a blank space to type multiple emails with delineating commas, but no explanations.) |

Time on task: 15 minutes

Exceptions: minor Assists (questions to clarify visibility options)

Comments: “They expect you know what they are going to accept.” [In reference to text entry formats, like whether you can add multiple email addresses at the same time, with commas or enter keys.]

Combined Impressions

Initial account settings make assumptions about location and are not communicated to the user. The use of various settings is unclear, and they are difficult to find without external help.

Findings Summary

Statistical Summary

Additional information captures for each scenario tested are summarized in the table below.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Parameter** | **Account Creation with Post** | **Editing Posts & Adding Images** | **Individualized Tasks** | | |
| **Personalize** | **Synchronize** | **Privacy** |
| **Task Difficulty** | Easy | Moderate | Moderate | Moderate | Moderate |
| **Times on Task** | 10, 6, 18 min. | 15, 12, 20 min. | 25 min. | 10 min. | 15 min. |
| **Average Time on Task** | 11 min. | 16 min. | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| **Failures** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Assists** | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| **Bugs** | 1 (URL error feedback) | 1 (New posts have space character) | 0 | 0 | 0 |

The categories of issues seen are summarized in the following table, where the number of issues noted are tallied by category, and weights are applied. The resulting weighted scores provide a degree of severity for each category; the more negative the score, the more attention the category may need. Note that the weights used are subjective, but when maintained across multiple user tests with duplicate findings removed, are an indicator of required rework and usability progress. When comparing test results across overall sessions, be sure to normalize for the number of participants and tests. Also, total scores will tend to be negative, and when a category shows negative contribution it means exactly that: if the total score is negative, a negative contribution is in the opposite direction (it would represent positive feedback, helping to pull back a negative total score). The opposite is also possible, should the total score rise above zero.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Critical (-3**×**)** | **Concern (-1**×**)** | **Positive (+1**×**)** | **Total Score** | **Avg Score** | **Category Contribution** |
| ***Clarity*** | 0 | 8 | 1 | -7 | -0.79 | 39% |
| ***Settings*** | 0 | 3 | 2 | -1 | -0.20 | 6% |
| ***Interface*** | 1 | 9 | 7 | -5 | -0.29 | 28% |
| ***Editor*** | 1 | 2 | 0 | -5 | -1.67 | 27% |
| **Total** | 2 | 22 | 10 | -18 | -0.53 | 100% |

Overall Impressions

Aside from a couple minor bugs, most findings were non-critical. Clusters of concerns were repeatedly raised over Clarity and Interface issues, both of which resulted from a lack of hints and feedback.

Daily usage functions, like posting blogs were smooth. A lack of guidance, explanations, and hints hindered access to less frequent and fringe functionality, like initial setup and notification settings.

Missing account information like location create confusion in a few ways. Undefined or default locations can result in EU Rules being displayed as a warning, incorrect time zones, and claims that posts have been made from somewhere abroad. These issues could all be avoided if location was properly set by detection or by the user, but the user is likely unaware these settings are incorrect.

Primary Recommendations

Initial testing suggests the Blogger interface for primary features is simple and effective. Efforts providing more informative wording, hover tips, and error feedback would be well spent. This is particularly true of the setup procedure and the settings interface, where users focus efforts less often.

A setup dialog should be considered, where inexperienced users are lead through initial settings with explanations. This would ensure default settings are appropriate and provide users with a little background on the settings and options available to them.

The two minor bugs noted in the scenario should also be addressed, one to provide helpful feedback on errant entries, and one addressing the space character present at post creations.

Pending an update or need for clarification on a setup dialog, the next rounds of testing could focus on other areas of Blogger, including working with themes, images, and collaboration. As soon as an update is available with the recommendations discussed here, the changes should be prioritized for testing.

References

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