Persona X

fresh perspective | optimal outcome

Selected Usability Findings

SciStarter.com

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SciStarter.com: Citizen Science Hub

Primary Evaluation Methods

User interviews

i. 5 users
ii. Approximately one hour each

Survey

i. 68 users
ii. Site feature breakdown

Comparative Analysis

i. 8 comparators
ii. Five types: Direct, indirect, partial, parallel, analogous

Heuristics Evaluation

i. 5 testers
ii. Critique based upon established usability standards

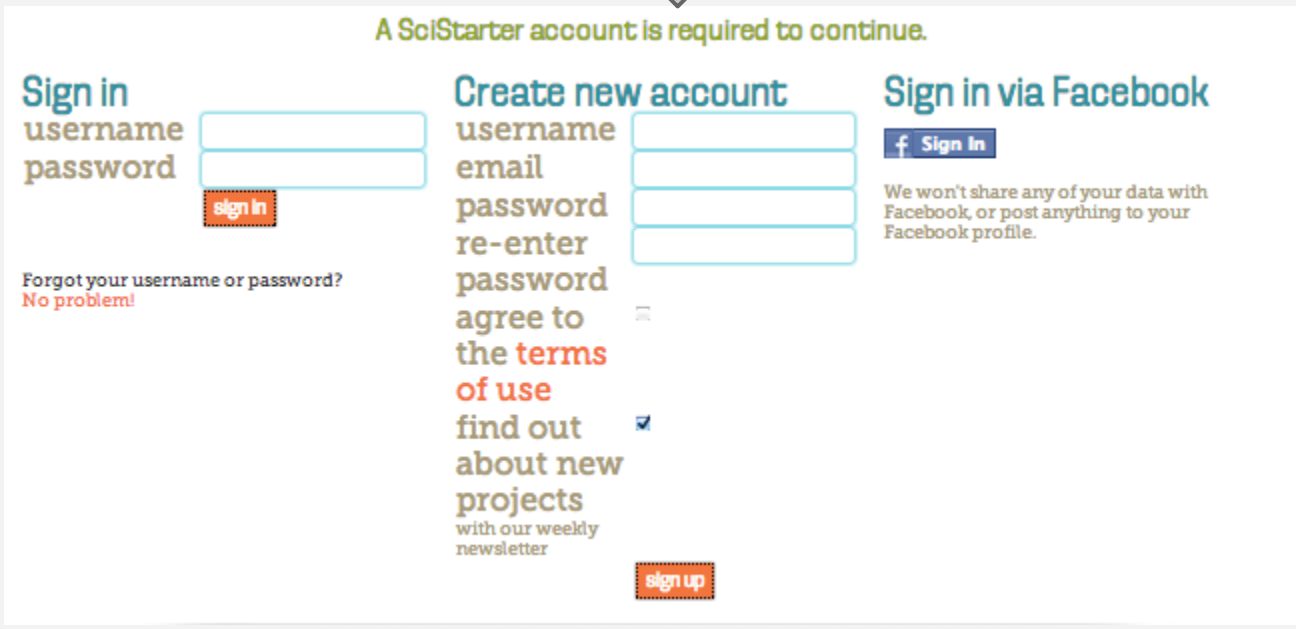
Usability Evaluation

i. In-depth site walkthrough with potential/unfamiliar user
ii. Generation of immediately salient feedback

Finding 1

Rethinking the login feature will increase the site's value.

- Account creation currently benefits SciStarter but not users (per usability evaluation)
- Requiring a login to participate in site community, receive the SciStarter newsletter and track achievements increases site value to users



Recommendation 1

- Develop a user profile page
- Add a sidebar displaying recently visited projects
- Unify user identity across site login/discussion platform

Finding 2

Revising the search platform will reduce friction and increase engagement.

- Advanced search contains multiple methods for finding a project, but date/location search methods are either not supported or not effective.

Recommendation 2

- Rewrite topics/activities categories
- Add project start/end date search
- Build mapping tool for location search, and geolocate users by IP address to provide a default location. Standardize location criteria to latitude/longitude and use API to translate.

Finding 3

Structuring site information efficiently creates a more usable “place” for citizen science.

Our evaluation indicate the users are satisfied with the amount of information presented on a page at once. However, we found the organization of the information in certain cases caused confusion and frustration for users. The way the search results are presented in advanced search lack the visual cues the users requires to quickly process the information. The results appear below the search options that take up most of the screen space. There is no summary of search outcome, such as the number of results, pagination, or highlighting of keywords. Each project listing provides the name and a brief description but does not include other pertinent information, such as the date and the location. In the “discussion” tab of a project, extraneous content is placed above the comment entry form, which distracts the users from their main goal that is to post comments.

Recommendation 3

Provide summary of search outcome by clearly indicating the number of projects returned including zero, highlighting of matched keywords, and pagination if necessary.
Include the types of information users find the most useful, such as the start/end dates and location, in the summary of projects.

Relocate extraneous content, such as advertisement and related links, in the “discussion” tab of the project page and move the comment entry form to the top where the users’ attention is.

Finding 4

Creating a coherent image of SciStarter will broaden the appeal of the site.

When users decide to participate in a project, they are directed to the project site that is external to SciStarter. It opens in the same browser and users need to use the back button to come back to the project page in SciStarter, which creates a disconnect in the users' experience with SciStarter.

Recommendation 4

Open external website on new tabs or windows, giving the user the option to simply close the project site and come back to SciStarter.
Add SciStarter's image on third-party's sites

include "bookmark me" icon and or pop/up to like on facebook as other means to let users find SciStarter

Discussion

Content building

- Current Content
- Blog Promotion

Project Search

- Project Filtration Methods
- Overview

Form Factor

- Community, Resource via App
- Achievement Tracking & Data tool via Mobile

Thank you!

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