

Evaluation 2: Heuristic Evaluation

Application: Keweenaw Time Traveler

Team 4: Ob100

Design Description

The main purpose of the Keweenaw Time Traveler application is to bring and present the user submitted history to the public in an organized way. The application can be accessed through mobile and desktop web browsers, but the responsiveness of mobile browser is not as good when compared to that of desktop browser. Team 0b100 is working on to improve and enhance the existing Time Traveler application, which implies that they will be working on modifying existing user interface. The primary focus is on updating the “Search” functionality, such that more relevant results are brought to the user. Also the emphasis on querying function and scalability of database is required by scientists. The submitted information from the users is stored in the database. Explorers can view and extract this information form database.

Identification of UI Domain

Keweenaw Time Traveler application is web application and it is part of Web UI Domain. The users submit their experiences or documents as stories and link these stories to specific time period and location in Keweenaw. These stories are sent as data to the database. This information gives great reading experience to the explorers and also the scientists can gather this collected data to perform some analysis and research.

Usability Principles

1. Visibility

One of the key usability principles of web application is Visibility. The web application should give great user experience. when creating or searching a story the navigation should be clearly visible. Explorers should not face any difficulty while searching or reading the information.

2. Error Prevention

The application should be error free. This implies that when the user is trying to search for a story it should not crash due to errors. it should also be robust as there will be new and existing users.

3. Flexibility and Efficiency of Use

The application should give a very nice experience to the users. The design and functionality should be very flexible and easy.

4. Consistency and Standards

When the search is done, the application should give clear and consistent results. It should display the stories clearly, in order and it should not confuse the users. Pink dots on the map should serve its main purpose by giving the results clearly and not in a clumsy way.

5. User Control and Freedom

The users should have freedom over the screen and map. If by chance they click on some wrong pink dots on the map, there should be a way so that they can undo the action.

6. Aesthetic and Minimal Design

The search functionality should retrieve and present only relevant results. The pink dots on the map corresponding to these stories must be highlighted. This will protect the overall visibility.

7. Help and Documentation

Another key aspect of an application is that it has proper documentation explaining how to use it to the users. Any users when going through this document should get a clear understanding on using the application.

8. Feedback

By taking the feedback from users/explorers, the application can be further updated updated and enhanced.

Usability Problems

- 1) A lot of modification/improvement is needed for the application in terms of search API, query tool optimization and scaling the database. The user design can also become more user friendly and appealing.
- 2) The results page that pops up is shallow and vague. The results should be organized so that the users can understand it properly.
- 3) Also the map has a lot of pink dots which are clumsy . This makes the user design less attractive and also it would not help much in differentiating the themes of stories. By using different colors for dots and also organizing it properly would make the design look good.
- 4) There should be proper pagination for search results so that they are divided into discrete sections.

Critical Usability Concerns

When the search is made, the results are mapped to wrong dots by Explorer app. This will affect the core functionality of the application and exploration based on themes is lost. Also when the map is zoomed out a lot of pink dots are shown up which makes design more clumsy.

Scenario : Ross is a high school student in Keweenaw. He has to give a presentation about the history of Keweenaw as part of his coursework. He uses the Keweenaw time traveller app, and uses the search functionality to explore the stories. When he searched for the story and clicked on the pink dot it did not point to the relevant story. This confused him and also he found out that a lot of pink dots which are put in a disorganized way. Therefore it was difficult for him to achieve his goal. This will lead to a bad user experience.

