



HCI 460-710 Usability Evaluation Methods | Fall 2008 | Purple Group

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GLUBBLE

Usability Study Summary

Overview

- Glubble is a Firefox add-on that allows parents to control the web content their elementary school-age children can see online.
- A study was undertaken to assess Glubble's usability and parents' satisfaction with it.
- Four participants were tested to evaluate the processes of creating new student accounts, as well as adding and removing websites from the accounts.
- A range of moderate and serious usability issues were revealed, including a lack of adequate instructional text and help content, poor error handling, obscure paths to core tasks, unintuitive nomenclature and control labeling, and confusing visual hierarchy of content/functionality.
- The study revealed some surprising findings and several important lessons for future tests.

Important Findings

- Lack of Adequate Instructional Text and Help Content
 - All four participants showed some hesitation before starting the task of adding a new student account, and looked around for instructions and help, which they did not find.
- Inadequate Error Handling
 - One participant was completely unable to recover from an account naming error while creating a new student account.
- Obscure Paths to Core Tasks
 - The current path to adding and/or removing websites from student accounts was challenging for all participants.

Important Findings (Continued)

- Unintuitive Nomenclature and Control Labeling
 - Participants expressed confusion around “My Glubble Library”, “Edit” and “Add”.
- Confusing Visual Hierarchy of Content and Functionality
 - The hierarchy of information and functionality is confusing to users within the Glubble library and individual Glubbles (sets of approved sites).

Surprising Finding

- The testing revealed drastically different levels of basic computer knowledge even among those participants with similar user profiles
 - One participant completely did not understand the following error message and could not recover from the error:
Invalid contents (use a-Z, 0-9, dash, dot or underscore)
 - Task completion times varied drastically between users.

Lessons Learned

- Chatty participants took longer to complete tasks.
 - ▣ Some participants went-off on tangents during the execution of tasks, which may have inflated task completion times.
 - ▣ The test monitor needs to have a standard means of keeping the participant on-task without discouraging thinking aloud.
- Sequential dependencies between tasks caused problems when tasks could not be completed.
 - ▣ A participant could not complete the task of adding a website, so the task of removing a website was problematic.
 - ▣ The test monitor must ensure that the participant completes each task, even when it requires direct intervention to do so.

Report Format



- The test report was formatted into the following sections:
 - ▣ Executive Summary
 - ▣ Method
 - ▣ Results
 - ▣ Findings and Recommendations
 - ▣ Appendix I: Recruiting Quotas and Criteria
 - ▣ Appendix II: Participant Screener
 - ▣ Appendix III: Consent Form
 - ▣ Appendix IV: Usability Test Script
 - ▣ Appendix V: Usability Test Log
 - ▣ Appendix VI: Questionnaire
 - ▣ Appendix VII: Completed Test Logs and Questionnaires