



Concordia
UNIVERSITY

Faculty of Engineering & Computer Science

SOEN 357

Assignment 1: Heuristic evaluation of a software application



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1. APPLICATION DESCRIPTION

The chosen application is Ananke Neptune, designed for use by an institute of co-operative education, such as the one we have at Concordia University. Ananke Neptune is a web-based enterprise application with a separate interface for each of its direct users: coordinators, academic directors, students, and employers.

Coordinators at the institute of co-operative education can use the system to view and maintain student information, including academic records and details regarding internship placements. They can also maintain a list of employers and contact information, along with their job postings and interview schedules.

Academic directors have the ability to access student information, including their academic records and placements. However, unlike coordinators, they do not have the ability to modify the information.

Neptune also allows employers to submit internship postings. They can then view applicants for each posting, along with their resumes and cover letters. The system also provides employers with the ability to schedule interviews and rank the students by preference once an interview has taken place.

Finally, we have chosen to evaluate the user interface of Neptune's student module. This module provides students with the ability to create and edit cover letters and resumes. They can view available job postings, and apply to a job using any stored resume and cover letter, and the system will inform them if an interview has been scheduled. Once interviews have taken place, students can view their ranking, and choose to accept jobs for which they are ranked first.

2. USABILITY PROBLEMS

	Heuristic	Description	Severity	Comments	Relationships
1	Simple and natural dialogue	In the Academic Grid, courses that have been dropped with DNE codes are listed	1	Occurs when viewing academic records	Associated with the issue of having multiple entries per course
		In the Academic Grid, a same course may be listed multiple times, once or twice without a grade and once with a grade	2	Occurs when viewing academic records	
		The user is given the opportunity to select a resume style, however there is only a single choice available	1	Occurs when editing a resume	
2	Speak the user's language	“Resave” and “save” buttons do not conform to any standards the user is familiar with (most windows applications have “Save” and “Save as...” to perform the same functions)	2	Occurs when editing a resume	
		Usable fields appear to greyed out	3	Occurs when editing personal information or a resume	
3	Minimize the user's memory load	When writing a cover letter, the user must remember company and job information from a previous dialog	2		
		When creating a resume, information that does not change always has to be re-entered	2		

4	Consistency	A user clicking on the “x” does not know whether s/he is closing the window or logging out (the “x” in the application and the “x” in Microsoft Windows accomplish different things)	2	Is present on all interfaces, except for the BugBase Console	
		The same “x” button in the application sometimes closes the window and at other times logs out	3	Varies from one interface to another	
5	Feedback	When submitting a job application, no confirmation is displayed	2		
		When saving a cover letter or resume, no confirmation is displayed	2		
6	Clearly marked exits	BugBase Console does not have a clearly marked exit	2		
		In placements page, when viewing information about a previous placement, there is no clearly marked exit	2		
7	Shortcuts	There are no shortcuts for advanced users of the system	1		
8	Good error messages	When in the placements page with no job offers, clicking on “Accept” will result in a broken link	3		
		When in the placements page with no job offers, clicking on “Deny” gives no error message	2		

9	Prevent errors	A resume can be “saved” as an inappropriate filename (containing extended characters), and then cannot be accessed	3	Occurs when creating or editing a resume	
		By changing the id in the URL, a user can apply to a job past a deadline	4		
10	Help and documentation	Link to help page is broken in the French UI	3		
		Help page is not clearly marked	2	A user searching for the help page does not know that the question mark is supposed to bring him to the help page	

3. SCREENSHOTS

Neptune	
SOEN 337	
SOEN 337	
SOEN 337	
SOEN 341	
SOEN 341	
CWTE 200	PASS
CWTE 200	INC
COMP 445	
COMP 445	
COMP 472	
COMP 472	
COMP 472	DNE
COMP 472	
ENGR 202	
ENGR 202	
ENGR 202	DNE
ENGR 202	
ENGR 202	DNE
GEOL 208	DNE
SOEN 321	
SOEN 321	DNE

Figure 1 - Violation of Heuristic #1

ananke
neptune
Concordia University Institute for Co-operative Education
Neptune

Resume Builder

Select Resume Style

Your Name Here

Education

Work Experience

Skills

References

Style 1

Name Font: Arial, Helvetica, Sans-Serif

- ♦ Arial, Helvetica, Sans-Serif
- ♦ Times New Roman, Times, Serif

Resume Steps

- Step 1: Resume Style
- Step 2: Personal Information
- Step 3: Education
- Step 4: Specialized Training
- Step 5: Licenses & Certifications
- Step 6: Honours, Awards, & Distinctions
- Step 7: Competencies
- Step 8: Languages
- Step 9: Computer Skills
- Step 10: Work Experience
- Step 11: Internship Experience
- Step 12: Volunteer Work
- Step 13: Extracurricular Activities
- Step 14: Interests
- Step 15: References & Portfolio

Figure 2 - Violation of Heuristics #1 and #2

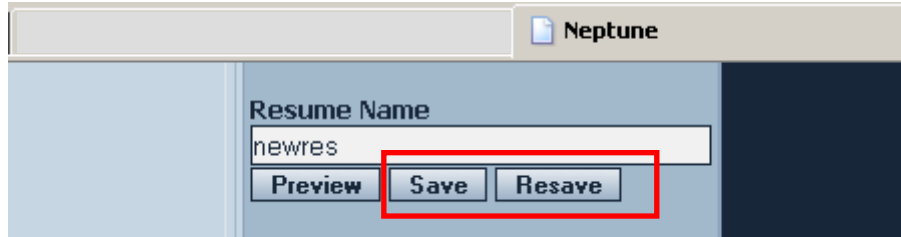


Figure 3 - Violation of Heuristic #2

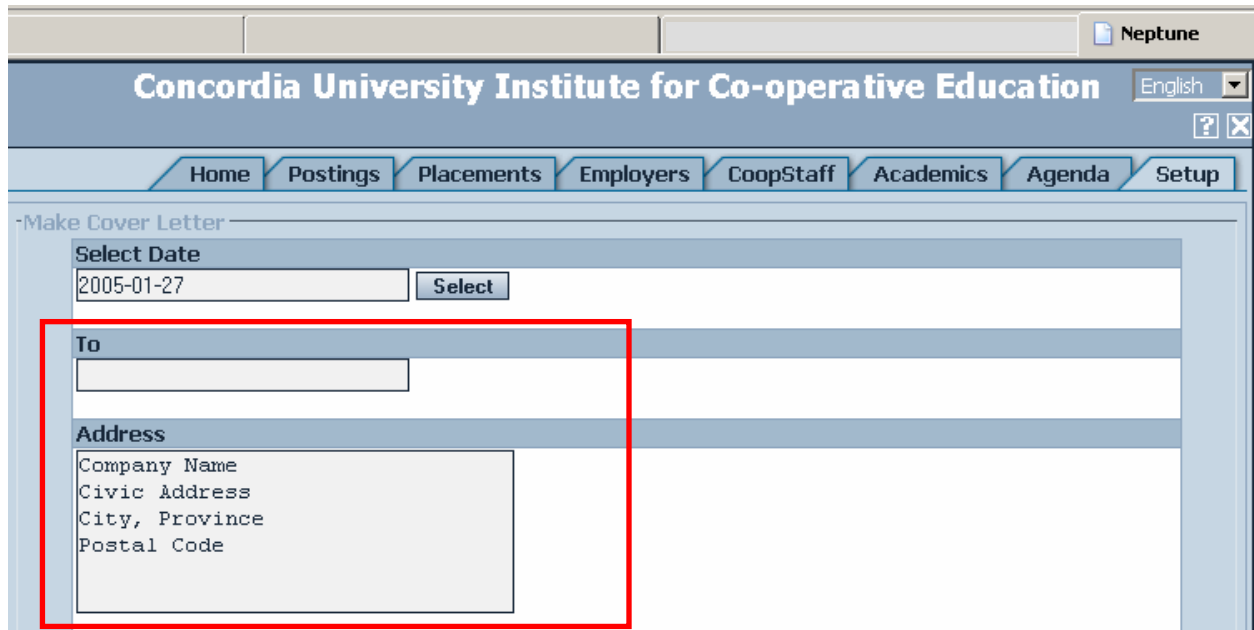


Figure 4 - Violation of Heuristic #3

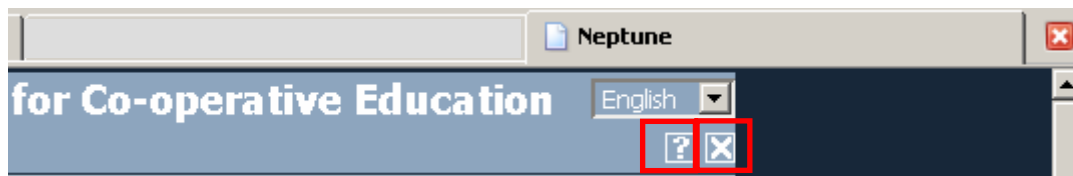


Figure 5 - Violation of Heuristics #4 and #10

Neptune

Concordia University Institute for Co-operative Education

English

Home Postings Placements Employers CoopStaff Academics Agenda Setup

ew Cover Letters

Cover Letter Files	File Name	Last Modified
	letter1	2004-02-17 12:03:04
	ottawa_let_drc	2004-03-15 03:07:36
	working2	2005-01-25 01:07:26
		2005-01-27 08:05:19

Figure 6 - Violation of Heuristic #9

4. PROCEDURE FOR COMPILING AND DOCUMENTING PROBLEMS

In order to perform the heuristic evaluation in such a way as to identify the largest number of existing heuristic violations in Ananke Neptune, the following procedure was followed:

1. Team members first familiarize themselves with the application to be evaluated.
2. Users of the subsystem being tested for heuristic evaluation are identified.
3. The tasks performed by each of the users are identified.
4. Using a checklist based on Nielsen's heuristics each team member tests the functionalities of the application in greater detail, while keeping in mind the role that they've been assigned.
5. Once individual analysis is complete, the team discusses and deliberates to gain agreement on the finalized checklist, as seen in Appendix A.
6. Using this finalized checklist as a guide to system weaknesses, team members attempt to find heuristic violations by executing the tasks identified in step 3.
7. Heuristic violations are then compiled into a table, as seen in Section 2 of this document. The severity of each heuristic violation is assessed and placed on a scale from 0 to 4, where 0 is cosmetic, 1 is minor, 2 is medium, 3 is major and 4 is catastrophic. Relationships between heuristic violations are also documented in this table. Finally, screenshots, as seen in Section 3, are taken, to complement the explanations given in the table.