

M8: User Interface Evaluation

From: Basketball Guzzlers

To: The Smalltalkers

CS 2340: Objects & Design

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Usability Report

Overall we found that StockMarket by The Smalltalkers was a robust application that needed little editing to bring it up to a higher level. With a little bit of polish, many of the minor usability issues could be resolved and the user experience could be heightened. We will list and highlight 3 areas, which would benefit from altering your prototype to enhance its usability.

General Overview

Usability concern #1:

Static textboxes, buttons, menu bars, and titles hinder the user experience by frequently cutting off words or titles.

Usability concern #2:

Data in columns are not aligned often giving of a feeling of claustrophobia.

Usability concern #3:

There are too many dialog boxes that could easily be remedied by other alternatives.

Specifics of usability concern #1:

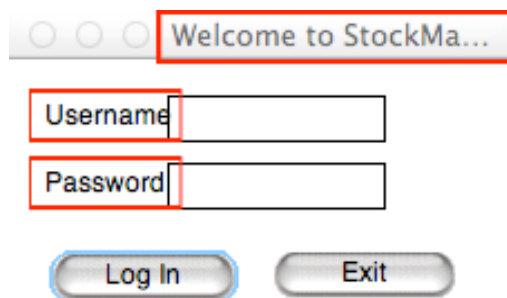


Figure 1.

As seen in figure 1, the title of the window is cut off (“Welcome to StockMarket” is “Welcome to StockMa” by default) and the “Username” text is touching the text box. The “Password” text is align with the text above, as is the text box above, but the two text boxes should have been shifted a few pixels to the right so that the text should not overlap. Also,

the “Log In” button and the “Exit” button are the same size, which could or could not be a bad thing, depending on the test. It works okay here. As a side note, it is nice that the tab key will tab between the textboxes and the buttons.

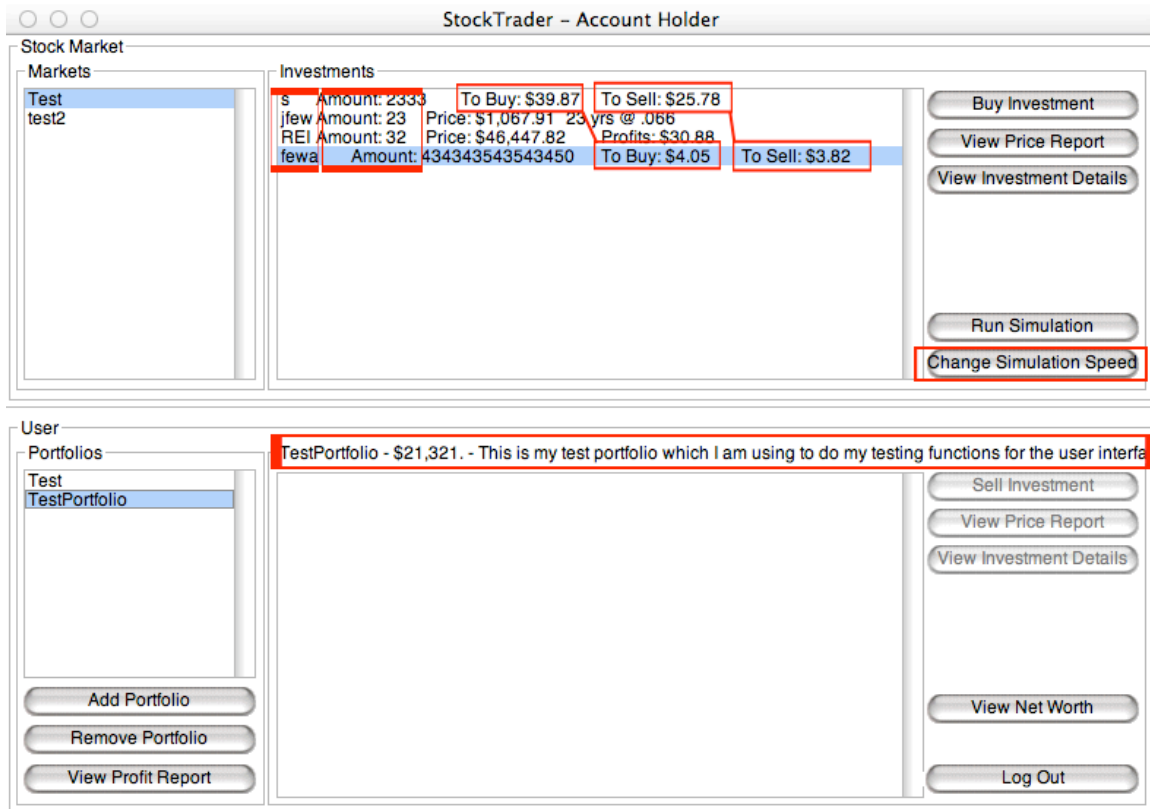
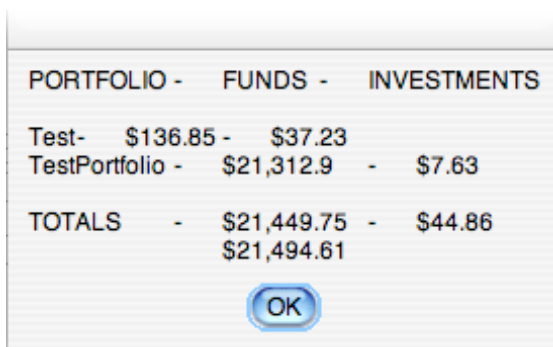


Figure 2.

When in Account Holder mode, as seen in Figure 2, we see that if you give a description to a Portfolio (lower part of window) that is quite lengthy, its description is cut off so that you cannot read anymore of it without resizing the window. Also, as previously stated, we see another button, “Change Simulation Speed,” (which by the way took me a long time to find due to the overall clutter) is barely contained in its button due to its extended title. Usability concern #1 deals with a certain discomfort users might face when using the application as text that disappears or is enclosed in a tight bubble might induce claustrophobia or a sense of incompleteness.

Specifics of usability concern #2:

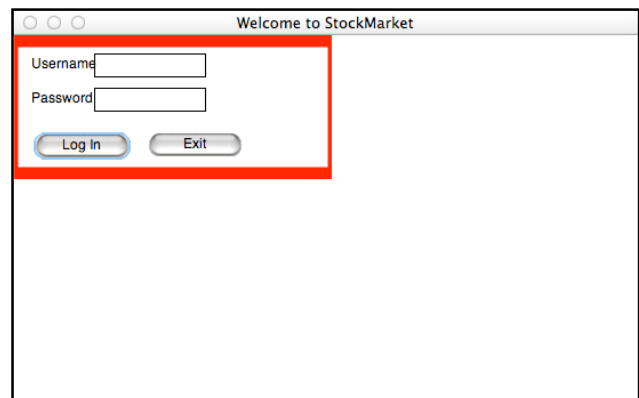
The issue with usability concern #2 is in the fact that much of the data when clumped large table is often unreadable. This is most apparent in Figure 2 where it's hard to tell where each column starts or ends. Also, there is too much clutter and it also induces claustrophobia. A little bit of space in between each column would help and also if the columns were labeled with the label name this would help a lot. In the first row the "To Buy" price is extremely disjointed with the third buy price in the third row. Also, what happens when one of the investments do not have a certain column? How can we tell if a certain investment is a stock, bond, REIT, or something else? Also, see figure 3 for the general clutter in all the dialog boxes. It is often difficult to comprehend anything.



PORTFOLIO -	FUNDS -	INVESTMENTS
Test-	\$136.85 -	\$37.23
TestPortfolio -	\$21,312.9 -	\$7.63
TOTALS	\$21,449.75 -	\$44.86
	\$21,494.61	

OK

Figure 3.



Welcome to StockMarket

Username

Password

Log In Exit

Figure 4.

Specifics of usability concern #3:

To add multiple users, multiple investments, multiple portfolios, etc. would pop up with many dialogs and makes using the program very cumbersome. Having an input field that shows the current selection allows for multiple additions to be very efficient. Along with this, as you can see in Figure 4, any time you resize any windows, the layout is not flexible enough to accommodate. You can either choose a dynamic layout that allows for deviance or hard code a certain width and height. If at all possible, try to keep the status and features of the system visible on the interface, instead of bringing up another dialog box.