

# Feedback Problem Space



This is a draft in progress.

Discussion about feedback and what components might emerge.

## Feedback Definition

Feedback is information that tells a user the result of an action taken. To be meaningful and effective, it must be immediate, readily visible, and comprehensible to the user.

## Problem/Pain

When a user takes an action, she needs immediate and clear evidence of its result. Sakai in particular often fails to provide this feedback. For example, a user in the Resources Tool may click on a folder low on a page and expect to see its contents. The contents are displayed, but not necessarily shown to the user, since the page reloads from the top, hiding anything "below the fold." Many actions do not provide "success" messages.

A slow process, such as a large file upload, should let the user know that something is happening and if possible should let her know how much longer it will take. When an error occurs, the user should see a message that tells her what is happening and what she can do about it.

This shades into situations where the issue is not feedback in the strictest sense but a matter of poor orientation and multiple design issues of workflow, layout, language, etc., that leave the user unclear as to the meaning of an possible action or where to begin/what to do next. This was the "WTF?" sheet at the summit and is grouped here under feedback.

## Scenarios

[Sarah Windsor - Primary Persona](#)  
Scenarios to come.

[Ed McClellan, Undergraduate](#)  
Scenarios to come.

## Blue Sky Vision

### Feedback Component Ideas

#### Procedural/contextual help

- Empty state orientation
- Multi-step indicator
- How do I...  
(FAQ, help oriented to workflows and tasks, not tools)
- Help sensitive to
  - Where on screen I clicked
  - Where am I in process
  - Tasks, not tools
- Wizard: how to set up your course

#### Messaging and status indication in workflow:

- Validation
- Error messages
- Success messages
- Progress meter
- Notification of events elsewhere in system

#### Where is leaving tool/losing work an issue?

- Wiki
- Email
- Announcements
- Assignments
- Poll
- Schedule

#### Best practices:

- Wizard first time?
- Ability to go back
- Good grouping/organization

## Design patterns

- Messages/warnings

## Summit Post-it Page

At the [Fluid Summit](#), pain points represented on post-it notes were grouped into problem spaces (such as Feedback), then into (usually very high level) potential components such as the ones below. Each problem area was then rated as to whether it affected 1, 2, or 3/All of the Fluid applications (Sakai, uPortal, Moodle). Each potential component was then rated on the following matrix, which indicated how severe the pain point it helped solve was for users, as well as how frequently the pain point was encountered. It helped us determine how high a priority it was, with 1 being the highest priority and 3 being the lowest. Some of the components and pain points below also have indicators as to whether they related to (S)akai, (U)portal, or (M)oodle.

|               |                |               |
|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| high severity | 1              | 2a            |
| low severity  | 2b             | 3             |
|               | high frequency | low frequency |

## Procedural Guidance

1 / All

Also known as a "Wizard". Guiding a user through a multi-step series of interfaces to complete a task.

- (S) Wizard component
  - Utilizes many good design practices
  - Clear action identified, consistent navigation, "where am I?" "How much to go?" indicators.
  - Wizard continue, back, cancel navigation
  - Inconsistent currently
  - Maybe this is wizard component at higher granularity
- (S) Multi-step indicator
- (S) Site setup checklist
  - I need to know what I should do to set up my site
  - It doesn't happen all in one session
  - I collaborate with others on this work
- (S) Easy to populate wizard

## Empty State Orientation Helper

2A / All

Properly orient the user to a tool when it has no data (empty state). An example would be an inbox with no email.

- Where should I start?
- Next step notifier, especially for unpopulated tools
- If I click this link, where will it open?
- (S) Forums, worksite setup, as student; what can I do here?
- (M) Not clear what to do to create a new course
- Should be obvious how to activate tools' initial state
- (M) We immediately wanted to add topic content but our page was not set up to edit by default. Did not notice small "Turn Editing on" button in the upper right

## Progress Indicator

2B / All

A status indicator for time to completion (for things like file upload).

- (S) Progress indicator
  - System is working indicator
  - How much longer?

## Message

1 / All

Display of messages to the user.

- (S) Feedback messaging component?
  - Success message
  - What I thought I did - I did. Could create a message for this, however, many times this is better done by highlighting and focusing on item if returned to list view
- (U) Error message container
  - When session times out, it is not clear what has happened
  - When login fails it is difficult to see the error message
- (S) Confirmation manager
- (S) In editor window, ask before close without saving

- (S) Did you really want to do that?
  - Warning when about to lose unsaved changes
  - May be needed in conjunction with breadcrumbs
- Info messages
  - Users should get info messages about actions - "you created a thingy"
- (M) It wasn't clear whether student roles assigned by the user were accepted/saved into the main page
- (M) When we clicked on the "X" to remove the link we received a message that made us believe we were deleting the entire file from our "Files", not just the resource link to the topic page

## Contextual Help

1 / All

Help within the user's context.

- (U) Contextual Help
  - Often none at all
  - If there is, inconsistent and non-holistic
  - Difficult to locate
- (S) Pop-up help component
  - In resources (uploaded files and edit details), it is unclear what the meanings of many of the data elements are (display name, creator, date created, subject, and keywords)
- (M) User looking into available (uploaded) course resources from this link in the activities box is not given any indication about what type of document is being listed
- (M) The assignment marking help does not properly explain what the dropdown menu does
- (M) Web page entry editor will accept formatted RTF but this is not specified
- (M) Calendar entry types are user or course - not defined, no help, who sees what?
- (M) In course format drop-down menu there are formats that are not described in the contextual help
- (M) When you create an assignment activity, the help menu doesn't explain the various types of assignments possible. You have to create a specific type and then see what it's like

## Info Sharer

2B / All

The ability to share information entered through one tool with other tools.

- (M) If you manually add a new event to the Calendar, it does not show up on Weekly topic page.

## RSS Aggregator

2B / All

Multiple RSS feeds displayed on a page.

- (S) RSS Aggregator
  - Allow me to set up a "news" page with news from various sources
  - Current tool only allows one RSS feed per tool
  - More general RSS feed aggregator
  - Aggregation of sets of RSS feeds

## Notification

1 / All

Sent notifications and the ability to manage and set preferences.

- (S) Notifier/Notifications
  - Particularly with adding participants, a user needs to see and customize outgoing message
  - Many notifications across Sakai - what is common? Wouldn't want to customize "file uploaded" notification
- (M) Unable to automatically notify students by email when a new resource is created

## Print Preview

2B / All

- (S) Print component with preview to capture portioned screen