

Pain Points & Problem Spaces

This page serves as a collection point for identifiable generic recurring user-problematics. [User testing](#) and [walkthroughs](#) are used to reveal pain points, such as [those gathered at the Fluid Summit](#), which are synthesized into problem spaces. Component ideas are subsequently teased from the problem spaces.

Feedback Problem Space

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.

File Management Problem Space

The Resources Tool in Sakai tries to do too much. It is the file manager within a site, the place for all site members to view files in a variety of contexts, the place users can pull files from other sites into the current site, the place to set conditions for content availability -- it even allows users to create links and in-line documents. It does so much that it can be difficult to know how to accomplish the particular task in view. General consensus is that the functionality needs to be chunked out in different ways and the UI generally simplified. The Resources Tool is also challenged by several usability issues for specific interactions. Those details will be fleshed out through the work of this project. For some examples, check out [Allison's UX Walkthrough](#) which focused on the Resources tool.

File management is a common activity and users have expectations based on their experience with their personal computers and the desktop metaphor.

Layout Problem Space

Problem description.

Navigation Problem Space

The user must have at all times a sense of location and status. These should be manifest, but often they are not.

Preferences & Permissions Problem Space


Problem description.

Terminology Problem Space

Problem description.

Workflow Problem Space

Tools are isolated and siloed. Tasks that require more than one tool to complete require a user to halt the main task, leave the tool, navigate to another tool, interface with the other tool to complete a secondary task, and then navigate back to the original tool to proceed with the main task. This halt and interrupt may happen several times to complete the main task/goal. A user may also lose the work on the main task when having to navigate away for secondary tasks, or minimally be forced into some kind of additionally cumbersome Save process when dealing with secondary tasks.

 Pain points may also be identified without walkthroughs or user testing, from personal domain expertise.

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