

New Notification features

user study findings

WMF Design Research | Jonathan Morgan & Pau Giner | January 2016

Goals

1. Understand how people use notifications now

- triage
- configuration
- valuable features
- pain points

2. Evaluate new notification features

- secondary action
- volume control
- bundled notifications
- mark as (un)read
- notification page

Methods

Interviewees

- 4 active editors
- Primary projects: en.wiki, nl.wik, he.wiki, de.wiki, ca.wiki

Protocol

- Part 1: ask questions about current process
- Part 2: have participants perform tasks with notification panel
- Part 3: have participants perform tasks with notification page

Prototype

- <http://pauginer.github.io/prototypes/notifications/notification-panel-actions/>

Notification panel
+ page

Overview

- participants were enthusiastic about new notification features, especially the ability to ‘thank’ people within the panel, bundling, new icons
- participants had very little trouble performing tasks within the notification panel
- reaction to notification page redesign was generally positive as well, despite faceted filtering issues and limitations of the prototype

Overview

- participants were unclear whether actions they performed within the notification panel effected their watchlists
- participants wanted to have a 'diff' link (or other permalink) available for all notifications
- inconsistencies in wording within notification and menu content caused confusion. Examples:
 - “view reverted edit”
 - “this page”
 - “left you a message” vs. “new topic was created”
 - “view settings for all events”
 - “watch new activity”

secondary actions

- participants had few, if any, issues discovering and identifying “...” this time around
- “watch new activity” (terminology & use of filled-in star icon) caused confusion
- participants often expected to find a diff, talkpage link in SE menu
- inconsistency in availability of SE options may be an issue

muting and volume control

- participants criticized the sound analogy, but understood it
- participants unfamiliar with Flow were confused by “mute topic”
- “adjust notification volume” functionality not directly tested (absent from prototype)

bundled notification

- expand bundled notifications was discoverable and well understood
- username + post preview were useful
- only bundled Flow notifications were tested

mark as (un)read

- “Mark all as read” was discoverable and well understood
- most participants were able to mark individual notifications as unread when prompted
- poor color contrast between read/unread notifications confused several participants

notification page

- link to “all notifications” was discoverable and well understood
- faceted notification (left rail) was not obviously interactive
- several participants attempted to perform the task using the Search/View widgets first, which were not interactive in the prototype

Next steps

Short-term design changes

1. make diff, talkpage links consistently available for all relevant notification types
2. revise design of faceted filter panel on notification page
3. make identified changes to wording throughout the interface (see report)
4. increase color contrast between read and unread notifications

Future testing

1. Test more fully-featured Notification page prototype
2. Test notification panel with more notification types
 - a. e.g. @mentions, translations, page links, non-Flow talkpage notifications
3. Test multiple approaches to bundling
4. Test multi-step volume control settings and muting workflows

General recommendations

- Avoid creating (or suggesting) interactions between watchlist and notification panel, settings
- Focus on complementing, rather than duplicating, current watchlist functionality
- Consider providing user education tips upon feature activation, to help adopters understand new functionality (cf. VE)
- Develop and publish detailed notification design guidelines to ensure consistency among current and future notifications

Questions for the team

- what are the most important questions to answer next?
- what other research needs do you anticipate for this project, and when?

Resources

Videos

- P1: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ogPiWY_L1ik
- P2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OUOUKQhxz7Y>
 - (not public, shared by request)
- P3: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6btcqQSot5Q>
- P4: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=seZACa5AXAU>

Study report

- https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Research:Global_notifications_user_research