COLLABORIZM

User Testing Study: Collaborizm.com

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LIS 644: Usability Theory and Practice

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

By conducting 6 user tests and analyzing the video/audio recordings, as well as reviewing the user questionnaires completed during and after the test, this report details our findings and recommendations to enhance user experience of the **Collaborizm** website.

The test sessions prompted users to complete three tasks as discussed by the founder of **Collaborizm** and the three consultants. These tasks focused on the improvement of the matching onboarding process, the ease of searching for a collaborator/project, and the ease of creating a project. Based on the review process of the user tests, our suggestions include:

1. Creating a pop-up explanation of the matching process and how the percentages are calculated.
2. Creating a button to reset answers while completing the matching questions and creating a N/A option in the matching questionnaire.
3. Changing the hierarchy of the dropdown menu for better navigation to the "Top Matches" tab.
4. Enhancing the visibility of the stars in the star ratings and adding a progress bar during the matching process.
5. Redesigning the layout of the multiple selector features and adding a "No Results" indicator when using the "Filter by Project Category" feature.
6. Establishing an email communicator within the platform for secured privacy.
7. Other suggestions and comments to consider that were mentioned by our participants.

With these recommendations, **Collaborizm** will foster a higher quality of user experience by better informing users of the idea and mission of the organization, creating more visible indicators to ensure efficient navigation and feedback throughout the site, as well as improving the way users interact with the site and other users by eliminating confusion or frustration from minor usability problems.

# INTRODUCTION

Collaborizm is an online platform that matches entrepreneurial individuals with potential partners. Collaborizm matches users based on both objective and personal criteria, while also allowing users to contact and communicate with one another regarding potential working partnerships and giving users the opportunity to create projects that they can share and work on with other Collaborizm users.

By performing a user test of Collaborizm and analyzing the data gathered, this report assesses how users interact with Collaborizm and identifies several opportunities for change that will ultimately result in a more efficient and effective engagement with the interface. Building off of these opportunities, the report provides specific recommendations for improving the Collaborizm website in order to better accommodate users who are looking to join and actively participate in the Collaborizm community.

# METHODOLOGY

## DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS AND RECRUITMENT

A total of six participants took part in our study. They were split four men to two women. Generally, our users were young and somewhat to very comfortable with technology, making them an ideal baseline for Collaborizm. Participants represented a wide range of careers and project interests. Due to the broad scope of Collaborizm's intended audience, all study participants were recruited via the personal social networks of the three consultants who developed the study and subsequent report.

## PROCEDURE

Test sessions were conducted one-on-one with participants; consultants served as both moderator and note-taker in each session. All questionnaire responses were noted utilizing Google Forms and all audio, video, and screen activity during the sessions was recorded utilizing BB Flashback Express software.[1] Each participant was asked to complete three tasks on the Collaborizm website, as seen below:

*Task 1:* You have started an account with Collaborizm and you want to get matched to collaborators/projects. Find the matching feature and answer the first two sections of questions.

*Task 2:* You have finished the matching questions and would like to find a project/collaborator of interest. Search for a project/collaborator from your matches or in the browse feature and prompt a way to communicate with them.

*Task 3:* Now create a new Collaborizm project and use the information provided by your moderator to complete the task.

While completing the tasks, participants were asked to "think aloud" in order to understand their navigational choices and general feelings about the site. After completing each task, users were asked to complete a short post-task questionnaire to gauge their immediate reaction. At the end of the third questionnaire, users also completed an AttrakDiff form in order to measure their emotional reaction to the website.

Additionally, participants completed a post-test questionnaire to gather their overall reaction to the site, as well as some demographic information. Please refer to the Appendix for samples of our post-task, AttrakDiff, post-test questionnaires, and a summary of our results.

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[1] www.bbsoftware.co.uk

# FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## DESIGN CRITIQUE: MATCHING ONBOARDING PROCESS

The matchmaking portion of Collaborizm's site, which connects users to people and projects who meet their needs and interest, is integral to the functionality of the site as a whole. Study participants expressed a few concerns related to this portion of our test which are listed below in order of most to least importance based on our user feedback:

1) The formula for creating matches is unclear and many questions do not seem particularly relevant to the success of professional projects (i.e. gender and age). This issue is related to problem two, please read on to the next section for our issue remediation recommendation.

2) The importance of the matching process is not clearly explained during account creation and, therefore, users may opt to disregard the questions and pursue opportunities via browsing rather than allow the match percentage to find potential projects or people. We recommend that a pop-up explanation of the process and how the percentages are calculated be included upon account registration, as well as in a static page, so that users are made immediately aware of the process and its impact on their Collaborizm experience.

3) Options within the questions section cannot be answered as N/A and users had difficulty in attempting to remove answers and importance ratings that they wanted to change. It is recommended to include a button for the complete removal of the star ratings once at least one has been selected. Additionally, the addition of a "Not Applicable/Doesn't Matter" option for questions would allow users to avoid answering questions they do not find important and, thus, creating more accurate match scores. A mock-up of our recommendation is included below:

4) After the initial matching questions are answered, it is difficult to find where you can go to answer more questions. This was noted in instances where participants were not satisfied with the results of their matches and wanted to continue entering information about themselves to find more viable collaborators. The drop-down for "Improve Matches" underneath the "Top Matches" tab within the header was difficult for some users to find and participants expressed confusion over the hierarchy. It is recommended that (Option A) the navigation tab either be changed to "Improve Matches" and "Top Matches" be made part of the drop-down or (Option B) that "Improve Matches" be added to the drop-down navigation underneath the "My Profile" tab, as study participants indicated that both options would be favorable when compared to the current hierarchy. Samples of the revised menu tabs can be seen below:
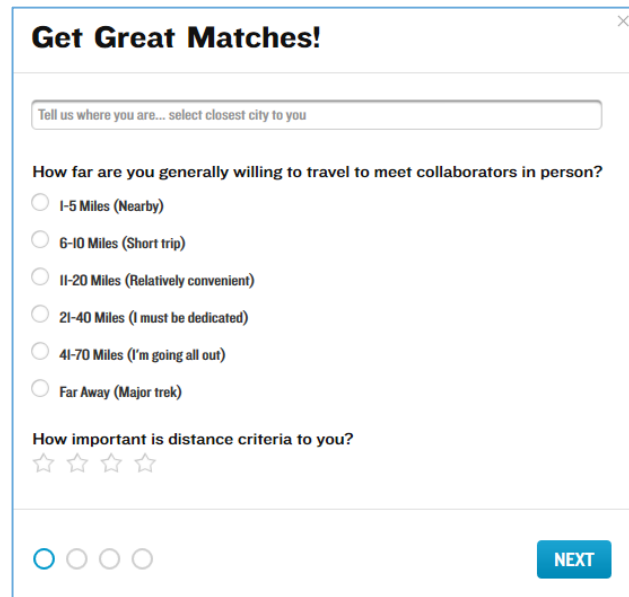
**Option A:**
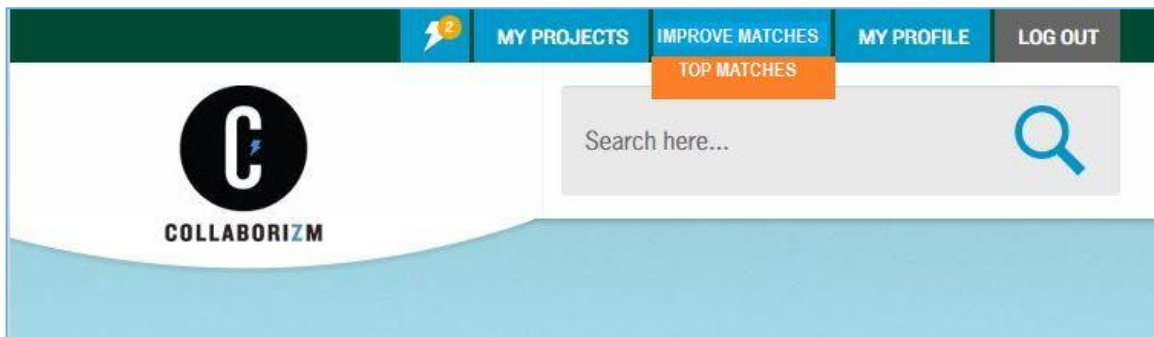


**Option B:**
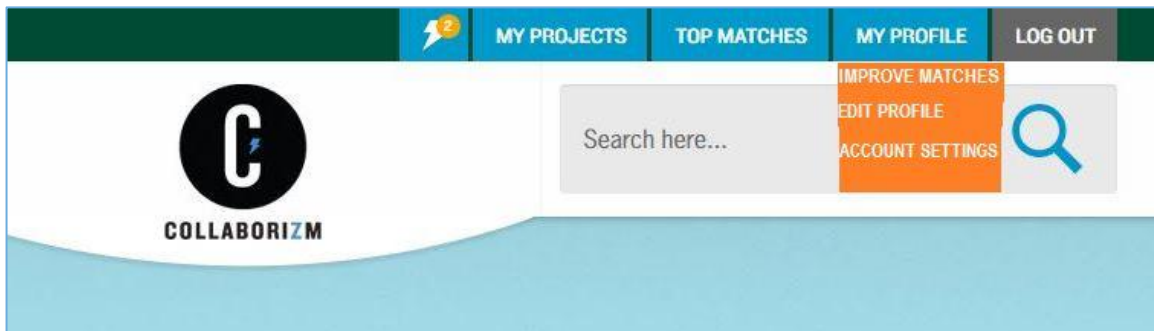
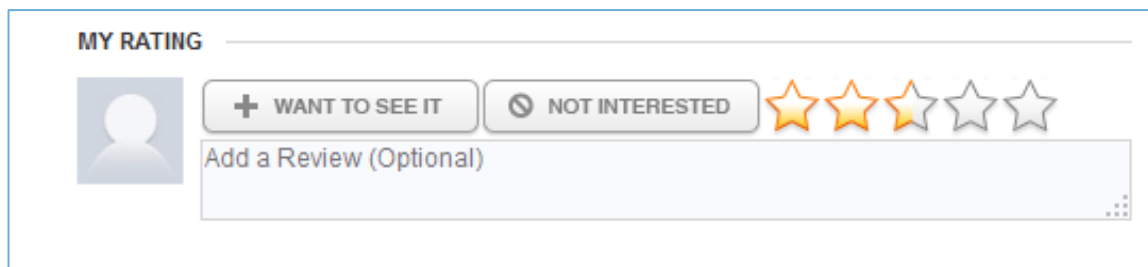## DESIGN CRITIQUE: VISIBILITY

### STARS AND SEARCH BARS

Though the participants rated the visual appearance of the website well, two particular critiques surfaced during the user testing that related to the visibility of the gray-outlined stars and the search bar in the Matching Questions task.



*Fig. 1: Matching Questions on Collaborizm*

Each participant tested on a different type of laptop and most were unable to distinguish the outline of a star or the search bar because of its opaque color. Although all computer screens have different resolution and some may not have this issue, it would still be advantageous to Collaborizm to correct the visibility with a much darker gray outline for the star. We have included two examples (Fig. 2 and Fig. 3) of current social websites, Rotten Tomatoes[2] and Goodreads[3], which demonstrate how the stars could be slightly more pronounced without losing the visual consistency of the website.



*Fig. 2: Rating System as seen on Rotten Tomatoes*

[2] http://www.rottentomatoes.com/
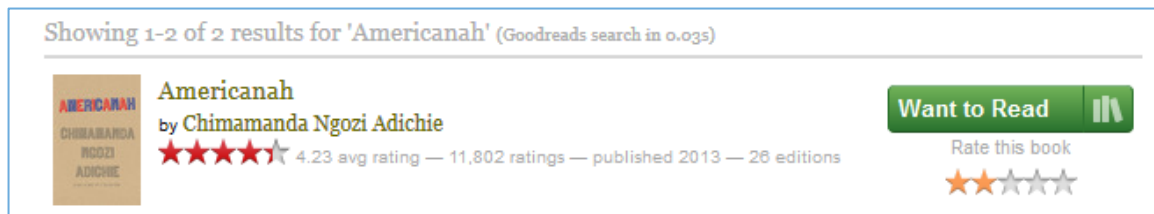[3] http://www.goodreads.com/

*Fig. 3: Rating System as seen on Goodreads.com*

In terms of the search bar to type in the participants location on Fig. 1, certain participants showed clear frustration when trying to continue on the Matching Questions, rereading the questions yet bypassing the search bar entirely. They were dumbfounded when the moderator explained the issue and said, "Oh, I didn't see that". The moderators determined the confusion is due to the visibility from the coloration of the bar/text as well as the consistency of the layout. We recommend removing the question from inside the search bar and placing it on top in bolded letters to emphasize it is a question users must answer to proceed. A mockup example of this rearrangement can be seen in Fig. 4.



*Fig. 4: Mockup of Question Search Bar*

# DESIGN CRITIQUE: FEEDBACK
## PROGRESS BARS, MULTIPLE SELECTIONS AND NO RESULTS

Throughout our tests, participants expressed feelings of confusion and a lack of guidance in regards to feedback in certain portions of the website.
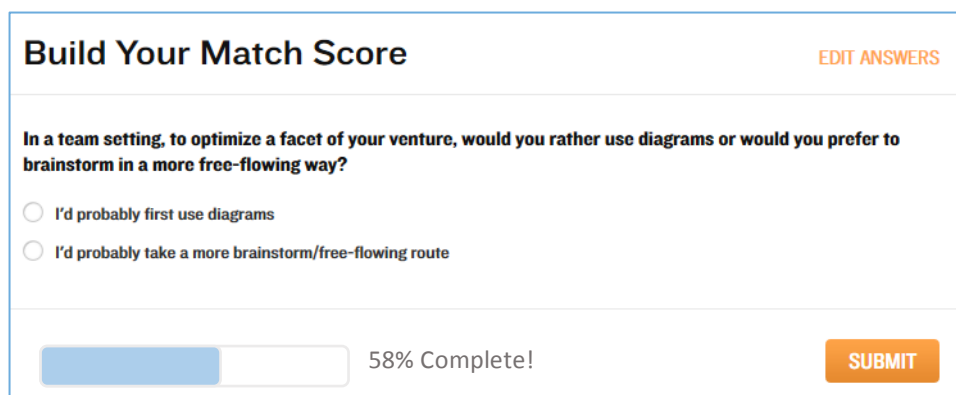
Progress indicators are essential for reassuring users how far they have advanced in a particular feature and also how many more steps they must complete. Collaborizm has utilized progress indicators effectively in certain areas but not in all. We recommend creating a progress indicator for the project creation task for users to have a guideline on how many pages they must complete to create a project. This visual indicator can be created with the same design as the previous progress circles for overall consistency.

We also recommend having a progress indicator for the remaining matching questions in the onboarding matching process. As evident in our data, we only required our users to test the first two sections of the matching questions. This is for two reason: we wanted to reduce the time it took the participants to complete all three tasks; and during our pilot test, the team noticed the lack of a progress indicator of how many remaining questions to complete and felt daunted by the uncertainty. Thus, it may not be in our testing data but it is a usability problem our team felt needed to be addressed as well. LinkedIn[4] is a great example on how to encourage completing a profile during and after the onboarding process by using a percentage indicator (see Fig. 5).



*Fig. 5: LinkedIn Progress Indicator*

This type of progress indicator could be applied to the bottom of the matching question container as shown on Fig. 6.



*Fig. 6: How to Incorporate the Progress Indicator in Collaborizm*

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[4] https://www.linkedin.com/

It was also evident in the video recordings that participants were unaware of being able to select multiple skills and types of project categories. Our observations confirm that the response time for the profile questions is too slow and the participant proceeds to click "Next" immediately before the selection registers on the screen. The best recommendation for this usability problem is to follow a similar layout and selection function as the website Meetup[5]. In Fig. 7, you will see an example of Meetups' onboarding process to recommend users to Meetups based on their interests. Their list of interest fields is much smaller than Collaborizm's but provides better feedback and response on selecting multiple fields.
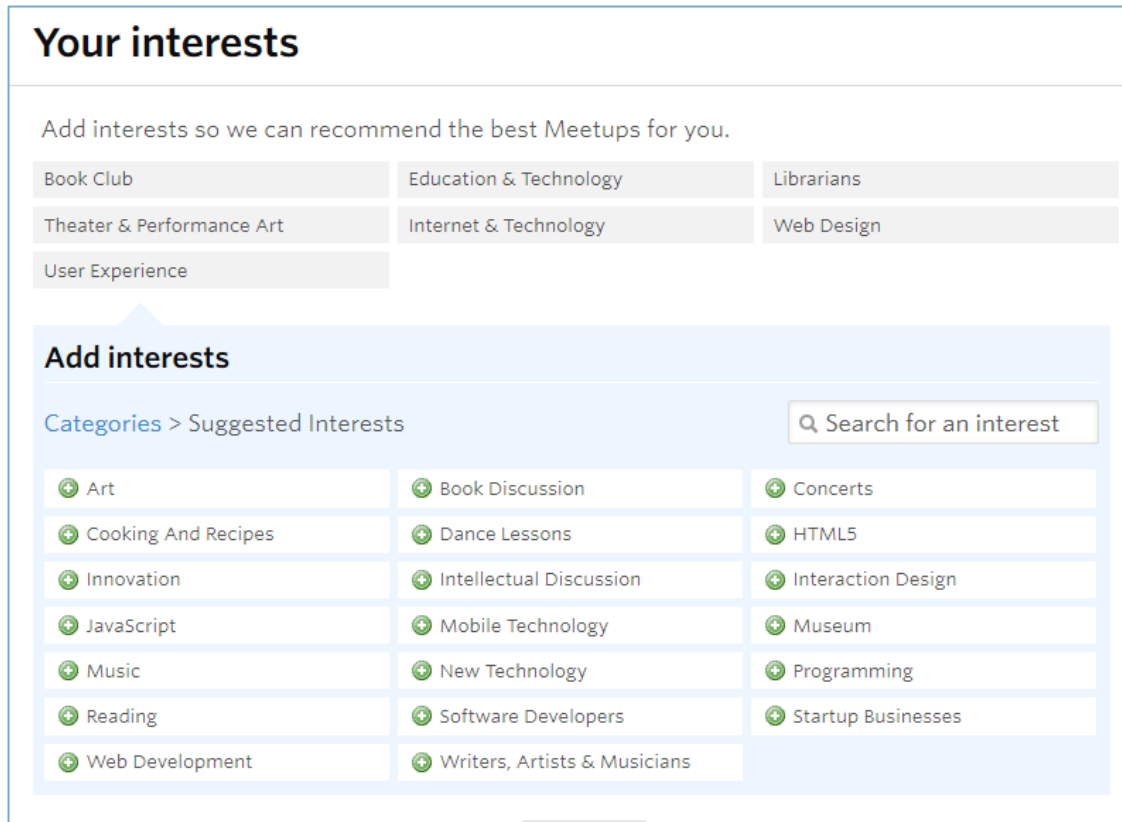


*Fig. 7: Example of Multiple Selections on Meetup.com*

Finally, a minor yet important critique we felt needed to be addressed was the absence of a prompt that indicated there were no results to be found on the project category page. The team is well aware the Collaborizm website is at its beginning stages and there are not many projects available in all categories. Yet a user still needs to be informed with a display or a label when projects of interests are not created yet. As seen in our video data, one participant was unsure if they applied the correct action to find a project through the Filter By drop down menu but after two tries they realized it was not them but the website that did not respond accurately. To eliminate this error, we recommend using the image in Fig. 8 as an example of how to give proper feedback when a project category does not have results.

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[5] http://www.meetup.com/

*Fig. 8: Example of No Results Display*

## DESIGN CRITIQUE: COMMUNICATION

Once users have been matched with their ideal collaborators and projects, providing ways for these individuals to connect and communicate is the logical next step. While users found communicating with others in the Collaborizm community to be a generally easy and understandable task, the data provided a unique insight into the preferred methods of communication for users, and also yielded a significant recommendation that is detailed below.

While the data, as illustrated in Fig. 9, shows that 80% of users have no preference when it comes to meeting their ideal collaborators virtually or face-to-face, email messaging was most often selected as the best communication method for keeping in contact with other Collaborizm users (see Fig. 10).
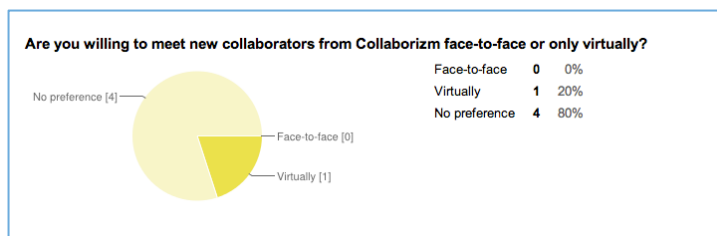


*Fig. 9: Graph on how users prefer meeting collaborators*
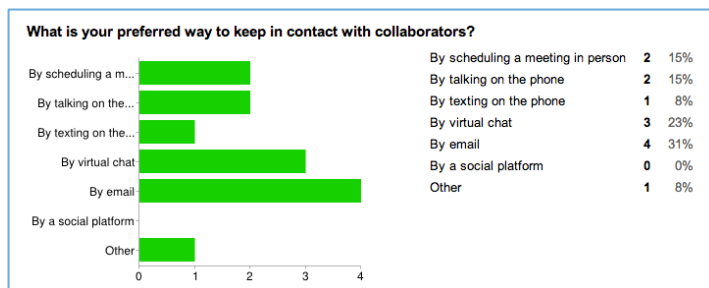


*Fig. 10: Graph of Contact Preference*

And a close second to email was virtual chat, which introduces an important communication recommendation:

1) Add message sending and chat capability to the website to keep users communicating via Collaborizm.

Collaborizm already has a virtual chat option for contacting customer support, but this chat feature should also be available for users to contact one another. Additionally, a private messaging platform modeled off of successful social interaction sites like Gmail, Facebook, and Twitter should also be implemented on the site. Fig. 11 below shows how these features can be worked into the current Collaborizm interface.
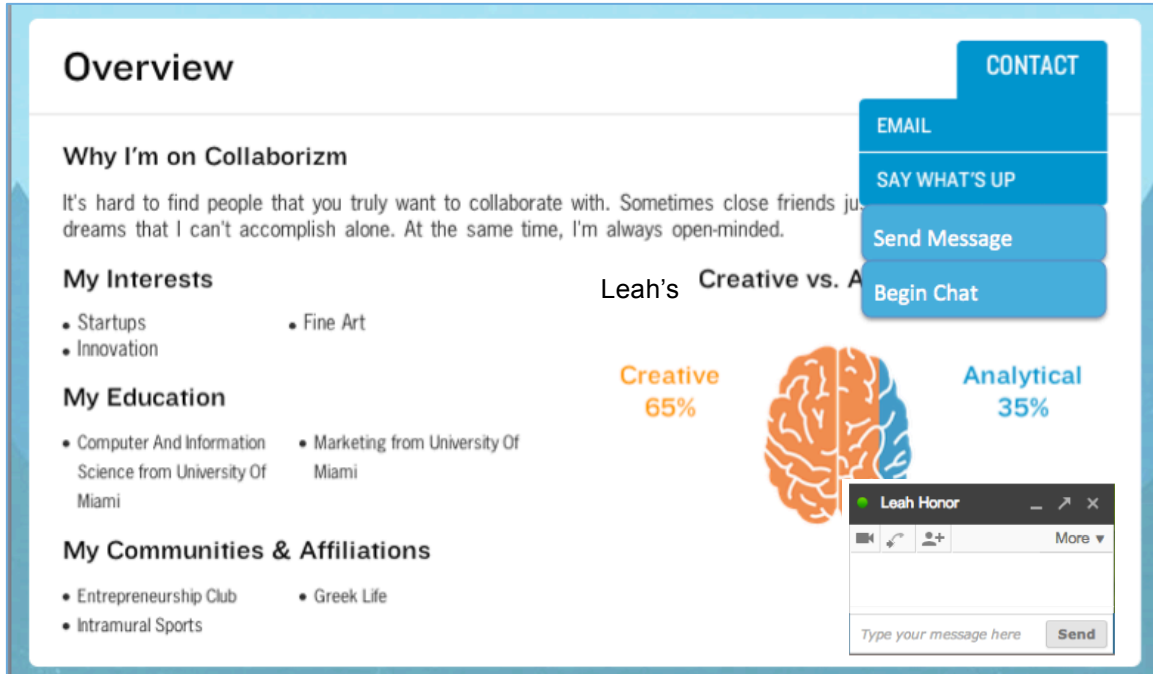
*Fig. 11: Example of how to apply chat box*

Adding message sending and virtual chat capability will create a more meaningful interaction with the Collaborizm interface because users will be able to communicate with one another while staying on the site. It will also encourage users to engage at a deeper level with Collaborizm while increasing the functional scope of Collaborizm from simply matching individuals with potential partners and projects to encouraging them to connect with another without ever leaving the site.

## DESIGN CRITIQUE: GENERAL USER SUGGESTIONS

In addition to this report's specific recommendations, further analysis of the user test revealed several general suggestions stemming from the user's experience with Collaborizm. The table below summarizes these notes.

| GENERAL USER SUGGESTIONS |
| --- |
| **TERMS AND AGREEMENTS** |
| • Users did NOT read the terms and agreements before agreeing to start a project. |
| • When questioned, users felt somewhat, but not very, comfortable with the site's IP rights policy. |
| • Users chose (1) to add members to their projects by approval only and (2) not to have their projects publicly viewable. |
| **PROFILES/EXPERIENCE AND SKILLS** |
| • Users thought that the Profile Page did not provide enough specific information about skills and experience and suggested short- and long-form questions to improve this. |
| • Some users suggested that a Myers-Briggs Type Indicator could be integrated into the matching questions in order to more accurately assess users' personalities. |
| • Users expressed confusion about what specifically defines experience and skills (is it formal training and education, a certain number of years, etc.?). |
| • Some users thought that a profile picture should be a required field. |
| **MATCHING** |
| • Some users suggested that matching functionality would be more comprehensive if users could be matched by project skill requirements and by the skills of the project leader. |
| **OTHER** |
| • Some users commented, "This is like a dating site," and, "The language is weird, like a dating site." |
| • Some users expressed doubt that New Yorkers would be open to the overall concept of collaborating with strangers. |

# CONCLUSION

Collaborizm is an innovative resource for entrepreneurial individuals seeking to find working partnerships in an increasingly digital world. However, the ease with which a user can access Collaborizm's matching, communication, and project creation services is met with several opportunities for change.

The completion of a comprehensive and controlled formative user test and the subsequent analysis of data gathered demonstrated how users approach Collaborizm's current interface and identified where this interface can be improved to more efficiently and effectively engage users.

Ultimately, this report recommends implementing several simple changes that will in turn yield a significantly quicker, easier, and more understandable experience for users who are looking to join and actively participate in the Collaborizm community.

# APPENDIX

## QUESTIONNAIRES

### POST-TASK 1:

**Task #1 Questionnaire: Matching Questions**

**Overall, how difficult or easy did you find this task?***

        1  2  3  4  5  6  7

Very Easy  ○  ○  ○  ○  ○  ○  ○  Very Difficult

**Are the questions in the matching process appropriate for the website's intended use?**

**Are the matching questions clear and informative? If not, explain why.**

**Are there changes that you would make or features that you would add for a better experience?**

Add item  ▾

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POST-TASK 2:

## Task #2 Questions: Find a Project/Collaborator and Communication

**Overall, how difficult or easy did you find this task?***

       1  2  3  4  5  6  7

Very Easy  ○  ○  ○  ○  ○  ○  ○  Very Difficult

**Do the profiles provide relevant information about the projects/collaborators?**

○ Yes

○ No

**Does the project/collaborator page entice a visitor deeper into the site?**

## Communication

**Are you willing to meet new collaborators from Collaborizm face-to-face or only virtually?***

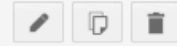○ Face-to-face

○ Virtually

○ No preference

**What is your preferred way to keep in contact with collaborators?***
Check all that apply.

☐ By scheduling a meeting in person

☐ By talking on the phone

☐ By texting on the phone

☐ By virtual chat

☐ By email

☐ By a social platform

☐ Other:

Add item  ▾

POST-TASK 3:

## Task #3 Questionnaire: Create a Project

**Overall, how difficult or easy did you find this task?***

       1  2  3  4  5  6  7

Very Easy  ○  ○  ○  ○  ○  ○  ○  Very Difficult

**Is the design of this page appropriate and appealing?**

**How comfortable do you feel about your intellectual property rights on the site when posting a new project?***

○ Very comfortable

○ Somewhat comfortable

○ Not comfortable

○ I do not have an opinion

## You have completed all three tasks! Please proceed to the next and final questionnaire.

Add item ▾

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ATTRAKDIFF/POST-TEST:

## Post-Test Questionnaire

With the help of the word-pairs please enter what you consider the most appropriate description for Collaborizm. Please click on your choice in every line!

|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Human | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | Technical |

|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Isolating | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | Connective |

|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pleasant | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | Unpleasant |

|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Inventive | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | Conventional |

|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Simple | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | Complicated |

|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Professional | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | Unprofessional |

|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Practical | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | Impractical |

**For a questionnaire results summary, please visit:**

*https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0Aj8JS9_aYQeJdHkwcGlqVWh1VU9GeXFnQTBQcUl5LXc&usp=sharing*

**What is your age?**

33   22   23   24   27   30

**What is your highest level of education?**
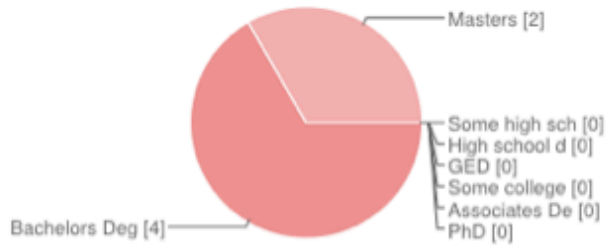


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Some high school | 0 | 0% |
| High school diploma | 0 | 0% |
| GED | 0 | 0% |
| Some college | 0 | 0% |
| Associates Degree | 0 | 0% |
| Bachelors Degree | 4 | 67% |
| Masters | 2 | 33% |
| PhD | 0 | 0% |

**What is your level of proficiency with technology?**
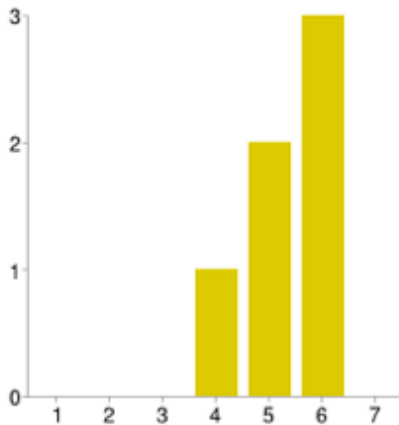


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 0 | 0% |
| 2 | 0 | 0% |
| 3 | 0 | 0% |
| 4 | 1 | 17% |
| 5 | 2 | 33% |
| 6 | 3 | 50% |
| 7 | 0 | 0% |

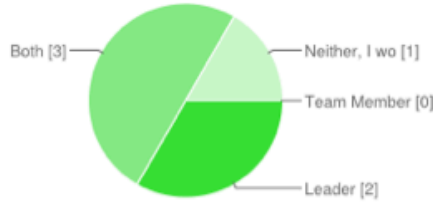**What industry do you work in?**

Medical Librarianship   pratt   Startups   Student   Restaurant/Service Industry   Technology

**How many hours a week do you work?**
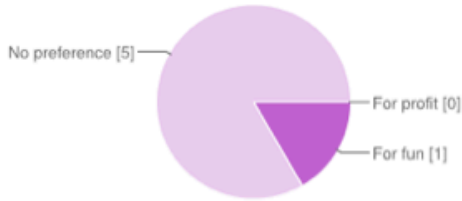
34   40   12-15 hours   depends   60

**What role do you initially take in a team project: team member or leader?**



| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Team Member | 0 | 0% |
| Leader | 2 | 33% |
| Both | 3 | 50% |
| Neither, I work alone | 1 | 17% |

**If you had an idea, would you collaborate for profit or for fun?**



| | | |
|---|---|---|
| For profit | 0 | 0% |
| For fun | 1 | 17% |
| No preference | 5 | 83% |

**What are some factors that prevent you from starting or finishing a project?**
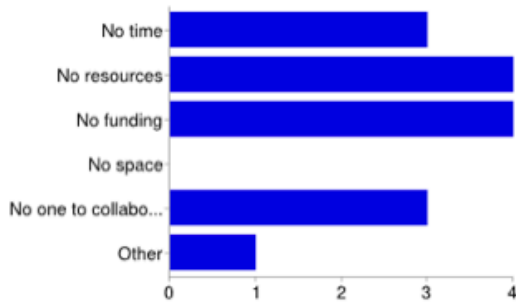


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| No time | 3 | 20% |
| No resources | 4 | 27% |
| No funding | 4 | 27% |
| No space | 0 | 0% |
| No one to collaborate | 3 | 20% |
| Other | 1 | 7% |