

Target Users:

Users

The target users are authors, editors, researchers, and project managers in the publishing or communications industries. The typical user is experienced at using word processing applications and collaborating to produce documents on deadline. This will likely be academics; however, the system may be used by anyone doing collaborative research with a largely text-based product.

Methodology

Our testing group had a research and managing slant, with many of the respondents coming from fields where they were required to collaborate in a non-geolocated setting in order to collect, analyze, and strategize around data.

- Student: 4
- Manager: 3 (social media, online content, public relations)
- Writer: 2 (editor, marketing)
- Consultant: 1 (media)

How Will Users Interact with the System

We created a questionnaire to determine how people currently interact with collaborative editing systems, what frustrations they face, and what types of functionalities they may want. You can see the entire questionnaire here:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dHVRSjNjVI9INHZjLTBLMERjRGJ4X3c6MQ>

The Experience Goals grew out of the initial user survey, which tracked responses from 10 people. During that questionnaire session, users were asked to describe various working environments where they used collaborative editing software. The results of that questionnaire, combined with the Experience Goals scaling, provide a concrete look at how people use collaborative editing software, what they expect from these systems, and what we should build within our environment.

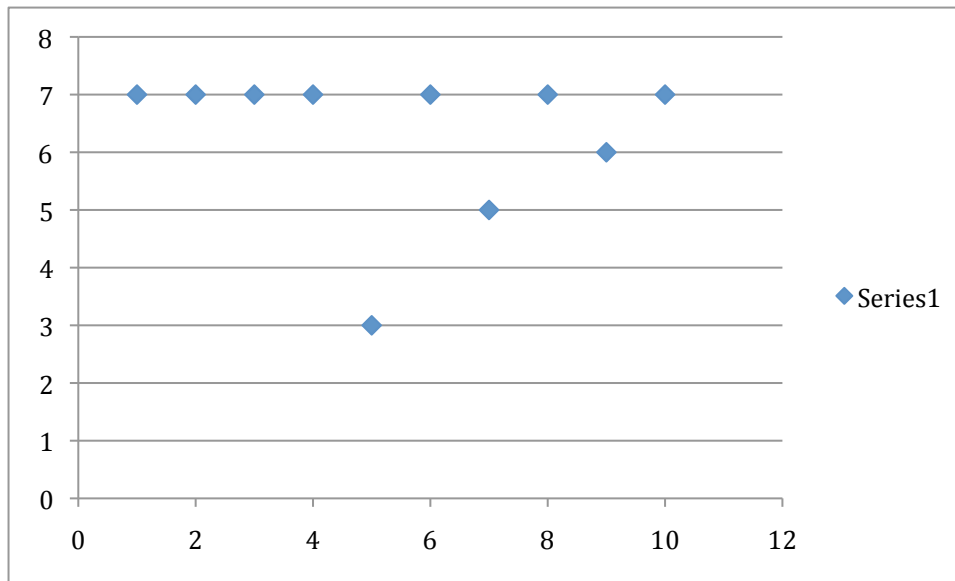
How Users Work:

Most people worked with small, manageable groups. Seven of the groups worked in teams ranging from 4-8 people, 2 worked in teams ranging from 1-3 people, and 1 worked in a team of more than 9 people. Despite that small number, though, a majority of users worked on collaborative teams that were non-geolocated, which was possible because of the collaborative editing software. Of the ten respondents, 5 worked on groups that were exclusively non-geolocated and 4 worked on mixed groups that were sometimes in the same location but equally non-geolocated. Only 1 group was located in the same place regularly.

We asked the users to rate various work tasks on a 7-point Likert scale. The questions were meant to gauge the frustrations with current collaborative editing software. The questions -- listed below -- show us that while people are excited

by the idea of collaborative editing, the current tools are oftentimes set up in such a way that frustration sets in when people are non-geolocated. This is a problem, since 9 of the 10 respondents to our survey said that they work at least 50 percent of the time in that type of environment.

Collaborative Editing Software is better for group work than simply sharing documents through Dropbox or Email



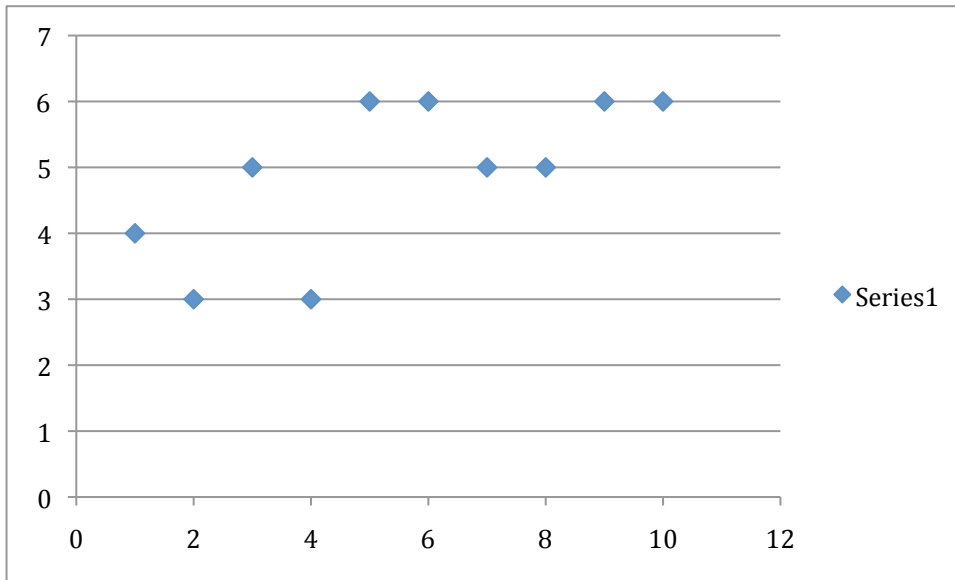
Mean: 6.3

Standard Deviation: 1.3

Scale:

- Strongly Disagree: 1
- Strongly Agree: 7

Collaborative Editing Software works best when the group is located in the same physical space



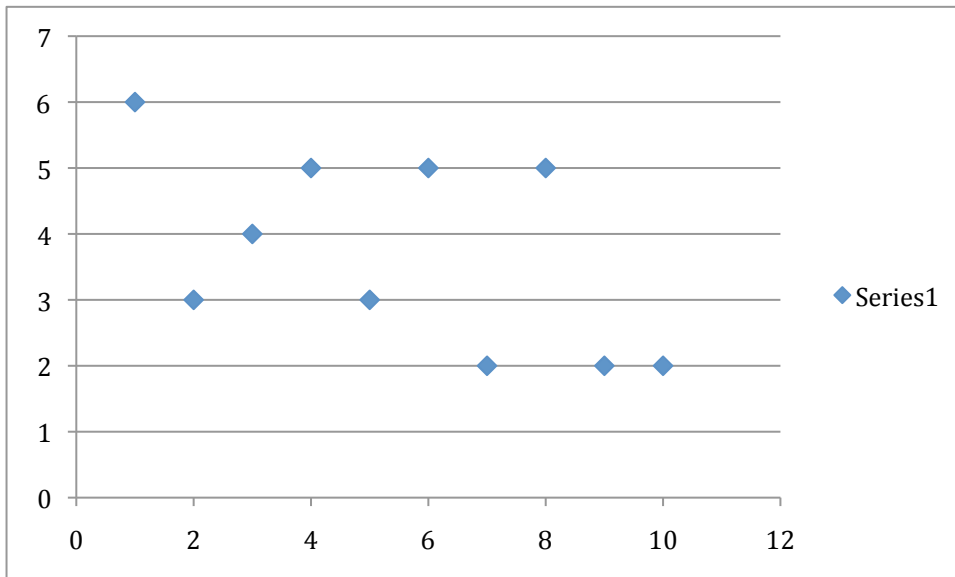
Mean: 4.9

Standard Deviation: 1.2

Scale:

- Strongly Disagree: 1
- Strongly Agree: 7

It's frustrating to work with people in collaborative editing software environments because people don't understand how the system works.



Mean: 3.7

Standard Deviation: 1.5

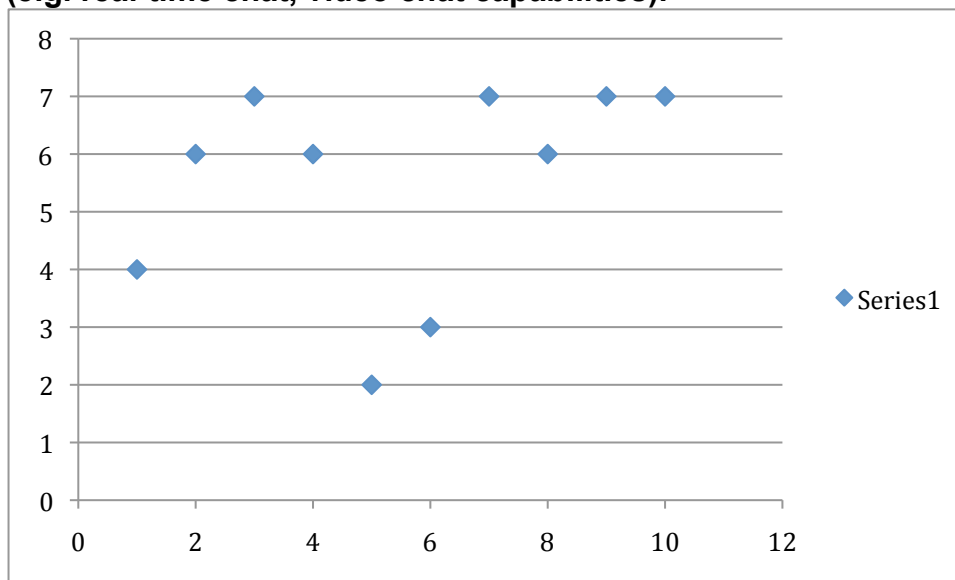
Scale:

- Strongly Disagree: 1
- Strongly Agree: 7

The fourth question, which asked if there should be social components to the software, is a bit misleading. While the survey results suggest users want these, in the written explanations of how they worked the near-universal statement was that teams used existing social functions (e.g. instant message chats) outside of the collaborative editing software. Instead: the social functions our respondents want is *specific* to the functions of the product.

Users were mainly interested in having real-time collaboration with a small group of self-identified peers; however, the communication functions they wanted were less applications such as chat (they have those functions elsewhere) and more applications that enabled a quick-and-easy visualization of what kinds of changes had been made (and by whom) since their last visit (provenance).

It's important the Collaborative Editing Software includes social functions (e.g. real-time chat, video chat capabilities).



Mean: 5.5

Standard Deviation: 1.8

Scale:

- Strongly Disagree: 1
- Strongly Agree: 7

Organization, in other words, was of a greater priority than replicating other real-time communication functions.

The users also wanted a seamless integration with Microsoft Word (and one

might assume that they would want a seamless integration with whatever program outside the editing environment that is most common). The idea of creating in one space and then being forced to re-create that environment after it was downloaded in another space was a source of great frustration.

Positive reactions from the written survey:

1. Create and edit documents amongst a work group
2. Real-time view of editing helps reduce redundancy
3. The asynchronous nature functions like a directed email
4. The basic workflow: brainstorm, accepting ideas + dividing up tasks, final edits

Negative reactions from the written survey:

1. Chat/social functions outside
2. There is very little chat; there are phone calls (ED: maybe we add a video chat function into this system)
3. One big issue: identifying what has been changed and what hasn't from the last visit of a specific individual

Frustrations from the written survey:

1. In CES systems, there needs to be a good organization for the documents created; search is nice, organization reduces stress
2. The CES needs to integrate seamlessly with Word; if you constantly have to make edit changes from your edit document

Ideal functions from the written survey:

1. A better notification system to tell what has been changed and who has changed it
2. Organization for files
3. Compatible with MS Word (Ed Note: this is functionally not possible)
4. A video plug-in
5. A Google Wave-like notification stream so you can see what has been changed