Timeliner Usability Testing Summary
April 1, 2003
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Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant #</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Music Background?</th>
<th>Used Variations?</th>
<th>Theory software use?</th>
<th>Theory software title</th>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant #</th>
<th>Music Background Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Music Education - 1st year; some high school music</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>B.A. in Piano Performance; M.A. in Musicology (in progress)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>B.M. in Guitar Performance</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Bachelor's in Piano Performance; Musicology Master's in progress No degree; private piano lessons; played violin for 11 yrs in orchestras; some college courses in music history and theory.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>BA in music composition and history.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Played classical music in a variety of settings and worked as a freelance performer.</td>
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Observations

Participant 1.

I.
Grabbing timepoint markers to adjust bubble boundaries.
Clicking on bubble time markers to listen for phrasing.
No movement of timeline window or any “larger” actions.
Using “Add” button to add timepoints.

“Would you be expecting students to label each individual phrase?”

II.
Trying to Delete with “Delete” button, but not working because the bubble is not selected.
Right-clicked on bubble and selected Delete from those options.
Label dialogue box is half-obscured.

BUG-Scrubber stopped moving even though piece is playing.

Right-clicked to set label on bigger group of bubbles then did both individual bubbles.
Selected all bubbles by clicking first bubble, “Shift”, and then selecting last bubble.
Instead of choosing “Square Bubbles” from Edit Properties, set Timeline height to “1”. This resulted in
squashed bubbles that were unreadable.

III.
Wrong song came up because he opened timeliner from File menu instead of right-clicking on track.
Adding bubbles on the fly, rather than listening through first.
Added label for Chorus 1 but it couldn’t be read because of default bubble size.
Confused by “Change color” vs. “Set Level Color”.
Did not add an annotation.

Debrief.
Pretty easy to use
Problems deleting timepoints, then the scrubber stopped moving.
Best-I liked how it played the whole time, how you could move the time points, click on bubbles and hear
it, adjust on the fly.
Least-it didn’t remember the colors
Additional Feature-A button that lets you just adjust timepoints so that timepoints can be moved w/out
accidentally clicking bubbles.
Easiest-Add timepoints in while music is playing
Hardest-Trying to get to timepoint

Participant 2

I.
It’s not always clear that the timeline point is selected.
Change color is neat.
Would be nice to be able to drag the bubbles off the timeline.
It doesn’t look like a timeline at first.
Relate the time part in the control area to the timeliner window

II.
Timepoint dragged and dropped off timeline.
Some issues with selecting and changing colors-color selection window takes up too much space?
Double-click works to add a label to a bubble
III.
Tried to name the timeliner and it didn’t work; had to right-click and start new from track.
“Oh no, it went back to the beginning.” [hit Stop instead of Pause]
“That’s handy.” [re: Edit Properties window right-hand side]
Double-clicked to add a timepoint.
Start over here – dragged timepoint all the way back to the beginning (DI: Button for “Back to Beginning”
“Can I turn that off?” [getting annoyed by it playing over and over again]
“Why can’t I add a timepoint?” (2x)
Dragged timepoint off timeline
Right-clicked bgrrnd and changed color
“Agh-I need to add a timepoint. Ok, now I can.” [when “Add” button became enabled.] Right-click to delete doesn’t work, so she dragged timepoint off and it took her bubble with it!
“No, I want to delete this. I didn’t want it to do that.” [a timepoint]
“There’s no undo!”
Double-click a bubble to play and you get the Add Label button

Debrief.
Sequence – didn’t know. Would play through first and then do timepoints.

Would be neat if you could have the lyrics up there.
Easiest-Playback controls – I would have liked to have the playback controls in a floating palette.
Difficult – Timepoints. If I had a bubble selected I couldn’t add a timepoint. Trying to d-c to get it to play, but got “Add Label” box instead.
Feature – export the timeline as a .gif or .jpg
Best – The concept is really cool – can you do it with scores? I liked that you could organize it so much.
“I wonder if people will know what “Fit to Window” means?”
“I was expecting some bigger markers” (e.g. measure numbers)
“I would have brought up the score and watched it.”
“Wish there was a quicker way to add a timepoint, like space bar”
Features –
Have 2 timelines side by side?
If the timelines would be draggable
Add Label – Just have add label appear inside bubble (e.g. text area) rather than a separate dialog box.
Playback controls closer to the timeline.
If the markings could be transferred to a score at the end? With or without seeing score at all.
I would have my score with me and use it while marking timepoints.
Something that’s an easier target to hit – a circle or a color indication [re: scrubber]

Participant 3

I.
“So this is just for a certain piece, so we can loop over certain sections over and over?”
It should stop but it didn’t
“Oh, it won’t let me add an annotation. I am confused. But I can add a label, so lets try that.”
“Create excerpt. I wonder what that does. Hmmm”
“These are always grayed out.” [re: the Bubbles options]
“So I have annotations for each bubble”
“How do I create an excerpt?”
“Reset – that just destroys all my bubbles”
[It’s hard to tell which bubble is selected because it does it by color]
Playback buttons are funny. The track forward and backward don’t appear to do anything? Does the go to end go to the last bubble?

II.
Sequence – listen first, no label/timepoints, listen again, add timepoints
“It was a little tough to decide where the phrases ended there.”
“Can I select more than 1? Yes. OK.”
“Oh, I can’t see my label. I suppose I need to zoom in.”
Used Change Color button and also r-c to change color.
r-c to add an annotation, “but first I have to View Annotations”
d-c and it brought up “Add Label” box. “So I can’t select it...hmmmm”
“I’m afraid if I delete it it will delete the subgroupings also.”

III.
Can you select 2 or more bubbles and then r-c to group?

Debrief.
It was neat! We just listened to LP records basically, and everything was analog.
I think it would help to have the score.

Difficult-
I wasn’t always sure when it would go back to the beginning.
I wanted to use the “Ungroup” instead of “Delete” in case
I didn’t realize you could actually adjust these things [the timepoints!]
Adding annotations was tricky because I had to always press “View Annotations”. I was expecting it to
just drop down. Annotations are far-removed, but there is a pop-up. User suggested a sticky note
concept.

Easiest –
Timeline with pointer is a metaphor that is intuitive.
Menu/items are familiar.
Bookmarks like a browser.

Like least – Too many options for colors; HSB, RGB tabs – don’t need that much precision.
Liked the square shape – it should be the default
Zoom to Selection/Fit to Window combo – Zoom In/Out would make more sense
“I don’t think there’s an Undo feature.”

Participant 4

I.
Clicking buttons but nothing happening b/c the timeline bubble is not selected
Reset – “I thought it would start the song over – didn’t do what I thought it would do.”
Participant is a musicology student so not sure he would use this.
D-c to add timepoints
Clicked “Add Annotation” and it did nothing.
Clicked “Zoom to Selection”....“Whoa! So you can make many bubbles within a bubble.”
“How do I un-zoom? Fit to window?”
It would be easier with a score in front of you.
“Add. Add what? I don’t understand what the annotation is.”
Kept trying to add a timepoint but it didn’t work.
“What I’d like to do is add an annotation right under the bubble.”

II.
Same issue with starting new timeline and wrong piece playing. [DI: Need some indication of piece
playing within the timeline window.]
“Stop the music so I can think.”
“I’m going to attempt to click and drag. That looks like it would work – no.” [re: grouping bubbles]
“Well, I’d like to click on Group, but it’s not an option. So I’ll click on a bubble and it’s still not an option.”
“Maybe I’ll zoom and then it will let me group.”
“I wish that group option was available for me.”
“Maybe I’ll highlight a bunch of them – no.”
INTERVENE – “I never would have gotten that [select/shift]
Chose red, dark blue, yellow and purple. “This is looking, ah, very psychedelic”
When he saw that a bubble phrase point was incorrect, he stopped the music and then moved the
timepoint to the place he thought was correct.
To listen to bubble 2, moved the timepoint to the beginning of the bubble rather than just clicking on the
bubble.
Moved “Set Bubble Label” box upwards b/c it appears in the timeline.

III.
The scrubber stopped moving – BUG. I had to intervene and restart the timeline.
Tried to click on timepoint to hear music but it didn’t work.
Pressed stop and went back to beginning repeatedly
The lyrics would be helpful
“Yeah, it’s pretty annoying how if you press stop, it goes back to the beginning, even if you don’t want that.”
“I want to add an annotation while it’s playing, but I can’t”
“I wish there was a way to stop it and not have it go all the way back.”
He’d like to add a ‘prime’ symbol to the A (in the label) but doesn’t know how.
[DI: Use keyboards to move horizontally through bubbles on timeline]
Trying to select colors, but not sure if colors are the same shade. [DI: Need fewer colors or most recently
used in the entire timeline session]
“I don’t remember how to do bubbles together…I’m just gonna get aggravated.”
“Can I go back, like on Microsoft Word?”

No debrief – time ran out.

Participant 5

I.
Track forward and back buttons not working.
F: What do you think about the initial appearance? P: “It’s nice and simple. Different from anything I’ve
seen.”

II.
Adding timepoints while listening through the first time.
Using “Add…” rather than d-c or r-c on timeline.
Clicking individual bubbles, trying to click “Group”, which is not enabled.
R-c on bubble – change color – Cancel.
“I’m trying to figure out how to group bubbles.”
“I can’t figure out how to group bubbles.”
INTERVENE
He is listening to piece to see if he wants to group a particular set of bubbles together.
Picked a darker yellow color for entire grouped bubble, including both levels. So now you can’t see where
the smaller bubbles are b/c they blend in. [DI: bubble levels division line option ON/OFF]
Attempted to change all bubbles to b&w individually.
Recently used color palette only includes 1 color? Folks select from the small color boxes rather than the
bigger ones on the bottom.

Trying to add annotation:
R-c  
>Add Annotation”  
nothing happens
Clicked “View” and “Hide” several times, then clicks inside bubble.
File, Edit, BM menus
“Edit Properties” from TL menu.
Clicked bubble. “There we go. I’ll type the annotation in there.”
“Since I didn’t see how to annotate an individual bubble, I’ll just add this: 1st Bubble Main Theme”
“I think somehow I messed up the volume.” [he adjusted the volume on the screen and when he put it back to the original level, it was quieter.]

III.
“I’m just gonna listen to it first to get an idea.…”

He is not moving the scrubber at all. Just sits and watches it move while listening to add timepoints. Very passive. Does he realize he can move scrubber?
[DI: Scrubber should indicate it can be grabbed with mouse]

Debrief.
Overall—“I thought it worked well and thought it was pretty easy to learn how to use it.”
Uses Cakewalk at home to convert cassette tapes into CD and you have to have precise points, similar to timeliner.
Difficult – “When I changed the colors, I couldn’t figure out how to make it go back to the default.”
Easy – Most of it was pretty easy.
Least – “There was nothing I didn’t really even like about it.”
Most – “I liked the way you can break the music into sections.”; It was nice to have the option to have flat or round bubbles; color changing.

He did know the scrubber was movable, never used “Zoom”, “Fit to Window” or “Excerpt” buttons.

Participant 6

I.
“I can see that the bubble is now active.”
“I’m surprised at the # of color choices I have! I’m alarmed that there is no Pantone.”
“I was confused by the “Recent” box in the color window. Would want to have all colors used in the timeline thus far…”
“I was looking for a way to loop a bubble…if I wanted to just play that over and over again.”
“This is a handy feature…where I can annotate.”
“They seem to be tied to the bubbles [annotations],” Has mixed feelings about where annotations are positioned.
“A neat thing to do would be to add overlapping bubbles” [re: overlapping parts]
“Nice that I can move the timeliner bubble size.”
Adjusted the volume in the timeliner window and volume was drastically reduced and unable to be returned to original level.

II.
Added name to timeline and hit Return, but it didn’t work. Had to redo it once and it was OK.
Clicked “Add” at the wrong point and immediately looked for an Undo but wasn’t one, so he kept going.
Immediately did select and Shift-click to group bubbles.
Added annotations (instead of labels). Clicked “View Annotations”.
Chose B&W from Timeline menu
Chose Square from Timeline menu
Shift-clicked to select bubbles and got rid of all of them.

III.
Opened up the Annotation window to “be ready for it.”
“Would be nice to be able to work on the bubbles while this is playing.”
Using scrubber to back it up on the timeline.
Add bubbles first — then change appearance. Used track rewind button to get all the way back to the beginning of the timeline.
BUG – Scrubber stopped moving with music.

Debrief.
Overall – “I like it. Reminds me of something I saw a few years ago in a music theory article.” “I like the ability to group stuff – is especially valuable.”
Problem – there’s a little bit of a lag b/t hearing the music and adding the bubble.
Difficult – playback is linked to the bubble. Would like control over whether I’m using the bubble for playback vs. annotation and labels.
Easiest – Clicking a bubble into place. Shift-clicking similar to other applications. Repetition in window “Edit Properties” and other places.
Additional Features – See score at the same time. Having mm#s that link playback to score. Might be useful to see the annotations change as playback continues; seems to be hidden by defaults – seems like I would want to see that.
That explains the “Fit to Window” button. I think that’s something that would be useful [Zoom button].