
CSC309 Individual Project Proposal:

HelpWanted.js

Neeco Fabian

About the Library

HelpWanted.js is a JavaScript library to conveniently create website tours and instruction tutorials. Developers can create instructions which *HelpWanted.js* wraps into a series of modals. In Centered mode, instructions are fixed to the centre of the screen. Users can navigate through the steps by pressing the arrow buttons, while page indicators show their progress. Developers can also choose if the background is blurred or darkened to let users focus on the instructions. Second, in Guided mode, developers can use *HelpWanted.js* to create a sequence of annotations that emphasize specific parts of their websites. Modals can be pinned to desired page elements and appear one by one so users can step through the tour (by pressing the arrows or clicking outside the modal) and learn about the highlighted element. DOM manipulation includes the addition of the modal components such as the instruction page, annotations, navigation arrows, page indicators, close button, and blur/dark mask for the page background. The DOM is further altered [in different locations] as the modal is changed and moved for the next instruction. Lastly, the standout feature of *HelpWanted.js* is Discovery mode, which rethinks what Help buttons do, as they typically lead to an FAQ page or a dictionary of terms. In Discovery mode, the web page is darkened, except for elements with a pinned annotation. Users can then visually explore the page by hovering over an element, which reveals the developer's annotation. A simple example is if a user is unsure of what an element does. Rather than traversing a list of definitions in a help page, the help button can turn on Discovery mode so the user can simply point to the element and read its descriptive annotation. Developers can choose between the three modes, and tweak background masking, animations, and appearance (colour, border radius).

Figure 1: Centered mode. This modal would be in the center of the screen.



Figure 2: Guided mode on a mock web page. Note that only one step is shown to the user at a time.

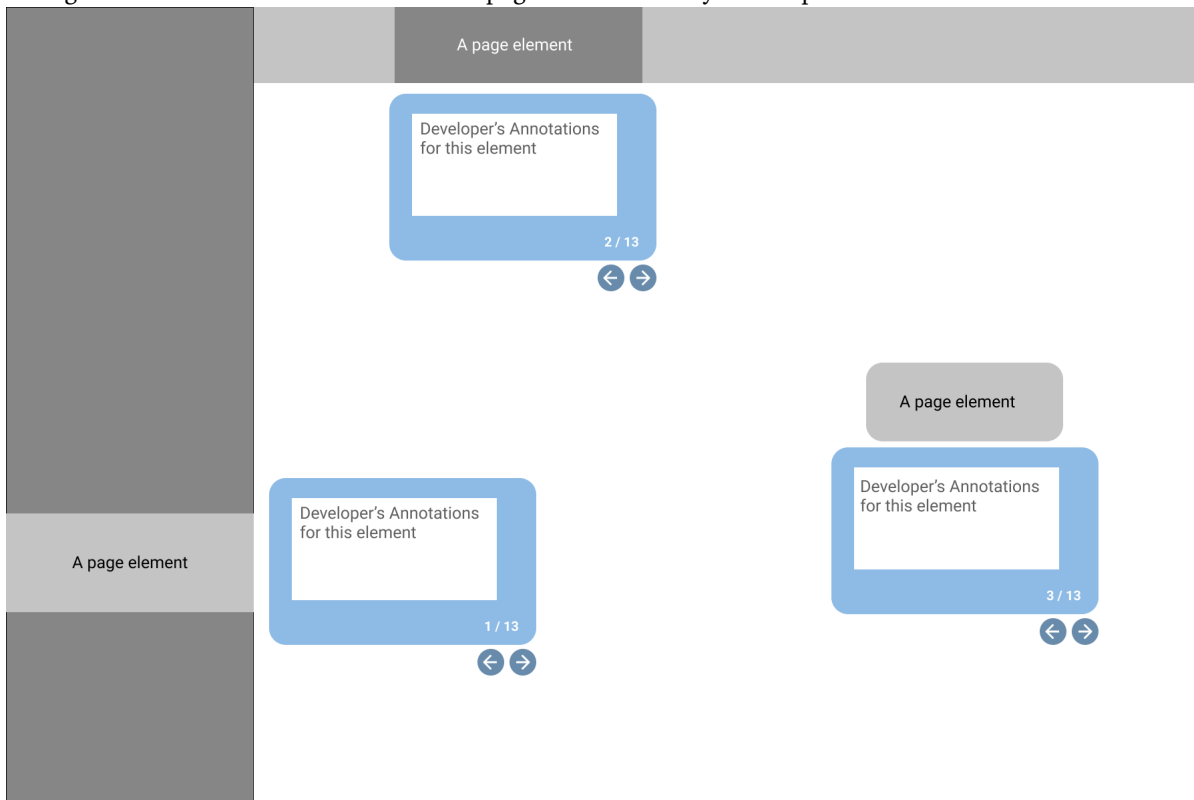
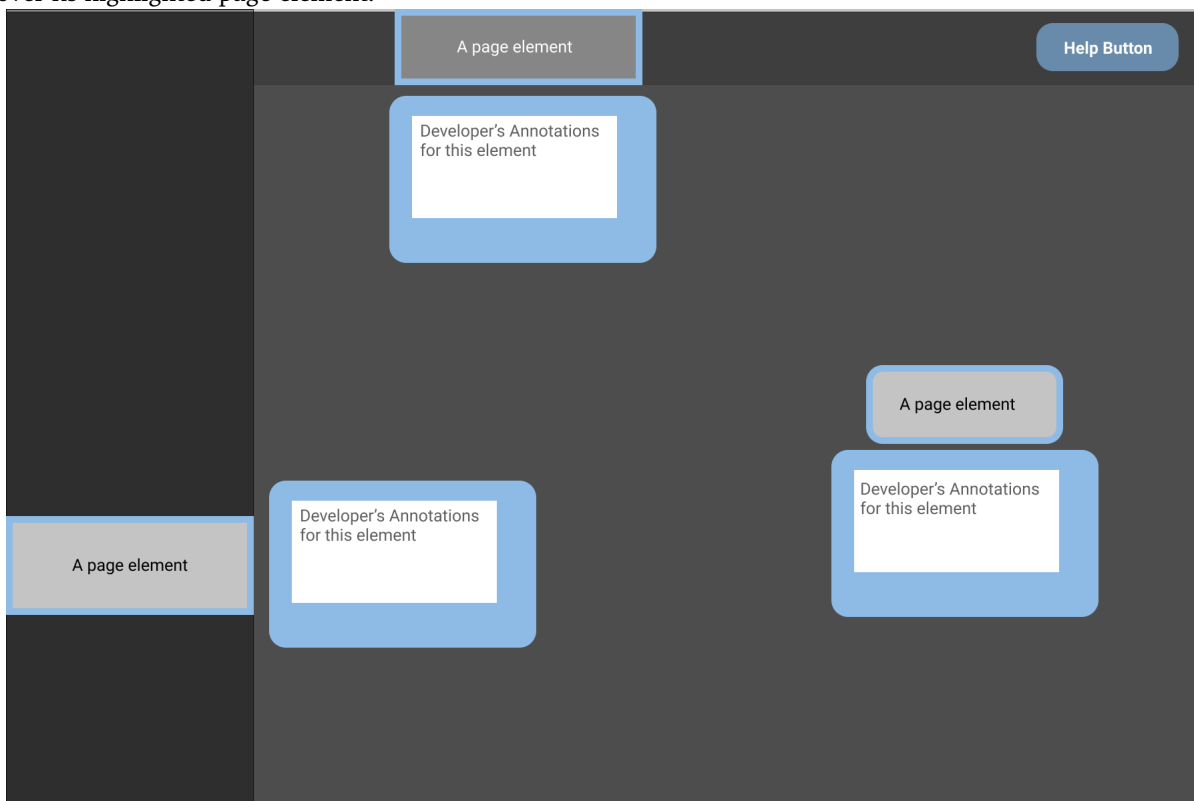


Figure 3: Discovery mode on a mock web page. Note that an annotation is shown only when a user hovers over its highlighted page element.



Use Cases

HelpWanted.js can be applied to any website where users can benefit from additional direction. Firstly, online text editors such as Overleaf.com and Google Docs can use *HelpWanted.js* to show a "What's new" modal in Centered mode to help returning users learn about new features, each in a different page. This is a quick way for developers to display important information in view; to focus their time on the content of the instructions rather than its formatting. Additionally, browser games such as Agar.io and RuneScape can use the library to give first time users a tour of the game. Annotations can sequentially point to elements such as the health bar, score indicators, pause and settings buttons. The developer benefits since UI elements in games are often scattered across the screen, which makes positioning modals tricky. Thirdly, Discovery mode is perfect for adding comments and annotations in online sites' billing processes. For example, sign-up and payment pages in websites like Bell.ca and Scotiabank.com often have financial terms that confuse users. Pointing to an element in Discovery mode to find what it means could prevent user errors, improving their understanding and satisfaction. This also saves the developer from having to include additional distracting explanations in view, as this information can be hidden in Discovery mode and found on-demand with *HelpWanted.js*.