Showing system messages

✅ Ready for implementation

Goals

Magnolia informs the user, if an action he started caused an error or requires him to read a warning or other textual message. It is especially important that error messages of long running actions aren't missed. If the users has left his desk, he should either see all messages when he returns or find a notification informing him that he should consult the message log, since new *important* messages have arrived during his absence.

All messages should be non-technical and easy to understand. It shall be easy to copy&paste them if he intends to contact product support. For the same reason, it must be easy to send the entire message log to support over a secure channel.

Concept

System messages differ from e.g. validation messages in a number of ways. First, they report important system status changes. As such, they have to be displayed more prominently, but should also be used scarcely. Second, the context of a system message is usually gone once it's being shown. As an example, a process running a longer time might fail *eventually*, or a regular background cleanup job has discovered an oddity, which requires a warning to be displayed to the user. The message thus shows up in any context. By contrast, a validation message can still be visually related to the field, which caused the problem, when it is displayed.

We do define four types of system messages: error, warning, informational and status messages.

Error messages have to be explicitly acknowledged by closing the message box. They should appear - **bang** - right into your face and have to interrupt you with whatever you're doing now. Use errors as sparingly as possible.

Warning messages and **informational messages** don't show up in the center but at one of the borders of the central view area. They show up and may be dismissed, but they don't have to - they automatically disappear after a short delay. The *difference between warning and informational message* is that warning messages show up more colorful to get your attention and also light up a system messages icon indicating new messages (see #Dealing with multiple messages below).

Status messages are potentially displayed more often, since they notify the user of changes related to a typical work flow: new work items have appeared in the inbox, a user you've waited for has logged in, new content was published by someone else, a user has written you an internal message. Since they're more obtrusive, the visual appearance of status messages must be a lot more decent: they show up in a corner of the screen only, should be small and almost unnoticeable and disappear quickly. **It must be possible to turn of status messages**.

Dealing with multiple messages

If a user is not at her desk or if multiple messages appear at once, an error message or warning message might go unnoticed. The rule is that only the last message of a particular type stays. As an example, think of an activation error on a screen and another message coming in notifying the user that the public instance has gone down due to an error - since the second message covers the first, the first is dismissed and might go unnoticed.

So even for error messages, only the last message will always be visible - all the others are auto-dismissed. In order to avoid that warnings and errors are missed, not dismissed messages cause the **system messages icon to light up**. The color of this icon shall indicate the highest level of message waiting to be confirmed and a badge shall show the total number of errors and warnings which need to be read.

Messages list

The list of system messages is accessible from the notifications section of the meta menu. A click on the corresponding item opens the list, which shows **all messages of type error, warning and informational** - status messages do not show up on any list.

Error messages still have to be confirmed either one at a time by checking them off in the list or by using a convenient button at the top confirming all messages. Warning messages are considered read if the message list has been opened.
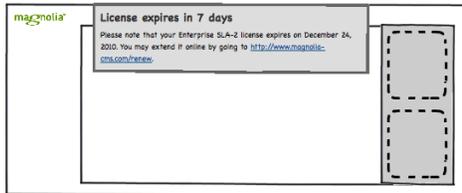
Mockups

System messages

Error messages
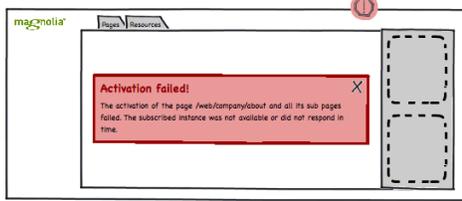
Error messages:
- appear in the middle of a content area so they are most likely visible
- have to be dismissed by clicking into the box or closing it
- the latest message stays, the others are auto-dismissed
- light up the system messages icon in the notifications section of the meta using the red color
- are added to the messages log
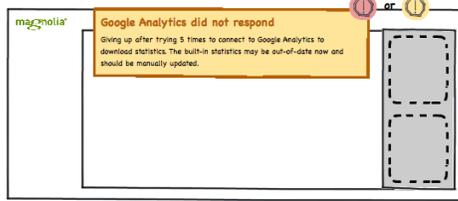- the icon remains lit up if messages have only been auto-dismissed

Warning messages

Warning messages:
- appear at the top
- may be dismissed by clicking into the box or are auto-dismissed after a 5 sec delay
- the latest message stays, the others are auto-dismissed
- light up the system messages icon in yellow, unless there are some auto-dismissed errors, in which case the icon remains red
- are added to the messages log
- the icon remains lit up if messages have only been auto-dismissed

Informational messages

Informational messages:
- appear at the top
- may be dismissed by clicking into the box or are auto-dismissed after a 5 sec delay
- the latest message stays, the others are auto-dismissed
- are added to the messages log
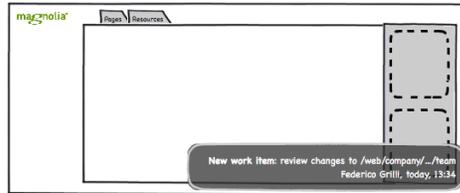- do not light up or change the system messages icon

Status messages

Status messages:
- appear in the bottom right corner
- may be dismissed by clicking into the box or are auto-dismissed after a 2 sec delay
- the latest message stays, the others are auto-dismissed
- are not stored in the messages log
- do not light up or change the system messages icon, but may be notified elsewhere

General remarks
- errors and warnings should only be shown sparingly
- informational messages should be shown **even scarcer**
- status messages may appear more often, but should be very short and unobtrusive
- status messages may be filtered and then do not show
- messages are **not equal to log entries**, but are high-level notifications, which could be equivalent to several low-level log entries
- messages should be very readable and offer an explanation or possible solution
- notifications quickly fade-in and fade-out

System messages in AdminCentral
- appearance and notification

Messages list
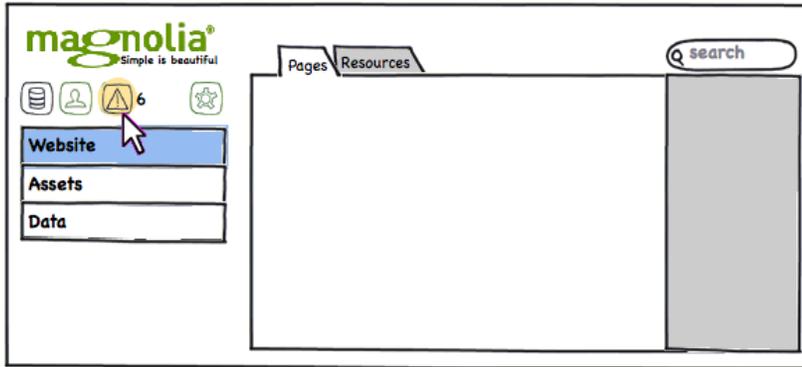
Messages icon

No new msgs in log since you last opened it

6 new msgs in log, at least one warning, which you did not dismiss

6 new msgs in log, at least one error, which you did not dismiss

You've opened the log and explicitly dismissed the error messages. Warning messages don't have to be dismissed.

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Website
Assets
Data

Notes

- messages are indicated by change of the Monitoring work area tab
- list of messages shows new messages first
- error messages have to be confirmed. You may confirm them already when they show up by acknowledging/closing their message dialog.
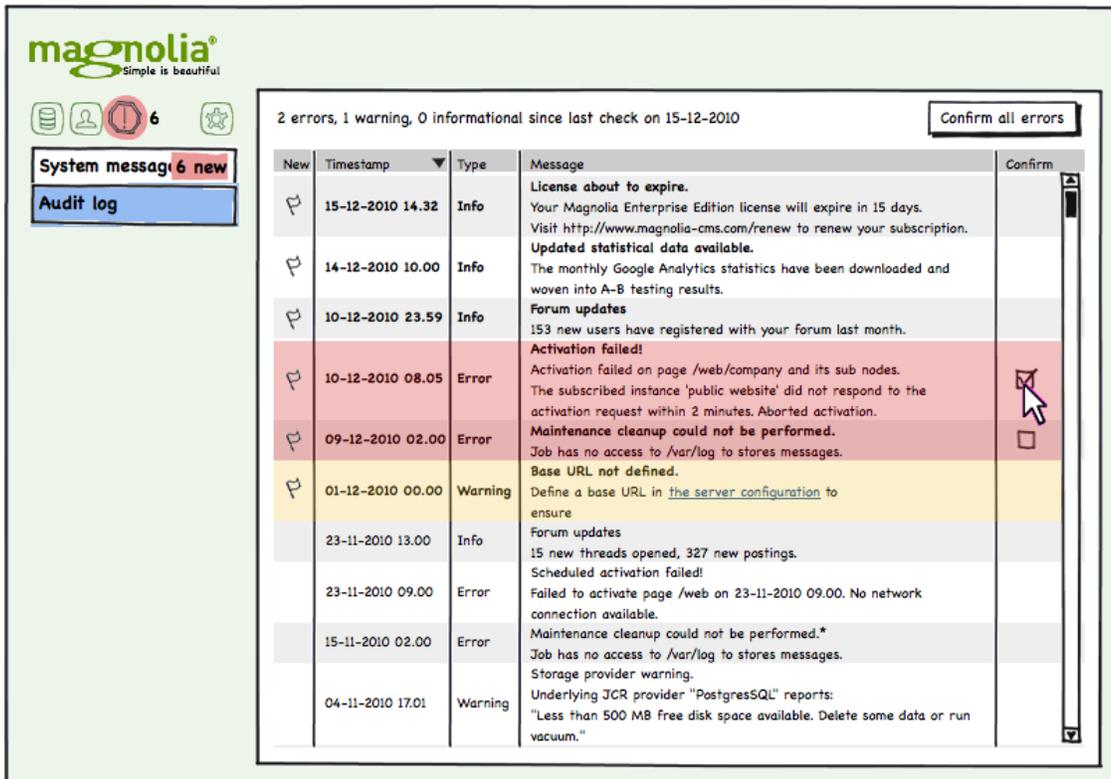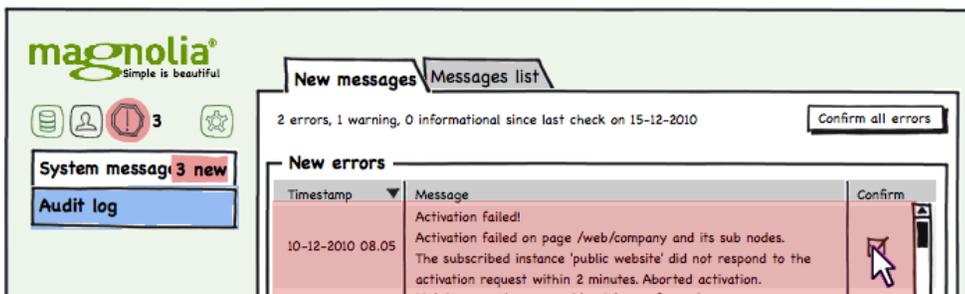- except for error messages, the count of new messages available is cleared if you open the messages list
- informational messages do not show up in these message counts

Messages

- messages icon and actual list

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System messages **6 new**
Audit log

2 errors, 1 warning, 0 informational since last check on 15-12-2010   [Confirm all errors]

New	Timestamp ▼	Type	Message	Confirm
⚑	15-12-2010 14.32	Info	**License about to expire.** Your Magnolia Enterprise Edition license will expire in 15 days. Visit http://www.magnolia-cms.com/renew to renew your subscription.	
⚑	14-12-2010 10.00	Info	**Updated statistical data available.** The monthly Google Analytics statistics have been downloaded and woven into A-B testing results.	
⚑	10-12-2010 23.59	Info	**Forum updates** 153 new users have registered with your forum last month.	
⚑	10-12-2010 08.05	Error	**Activation failed!** Activation failed on page /web/company and its sub nodes. The subscribed instance 'public website' did not respond to the activation request within 2 minutes. Aborted activation.	☑
⚑	09-12-2010 02.00	Error	**Maintenance cleanup could not be performed.** Job has no access to /var/log to stores messages.	☐
⚑	01-12-2010 00.00	Warning	**Base URL not defined.** Define a base URL in the server configuration to ensure	
	23-11-2010 13.00	Info	**Forum updates** 15 new threads opened, 327 new postings.	
	23-11-2010 09.00	Error	**Scheduled activation failed!** Failed to activate page /web on 23-11-2010 09.00. No network connection available.	
	15-11-2010 02.00	Error	**Maintenance cleanup could not be performed.*** Job has no access to /var/log to stores messages.	
	04-11-2010 17.01	Warning	**Storage provider warning.** Underlying JCR provider "PostgreSQL" reports: "Less than 500 MB free disk space available. Delete some data or run vacuum."	

Optional: Overview of new messages

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System messages **3 new**
Audit log

| New messages | Messages list |

2 errors, 1 warning, 0 informational since last check on 15-12-2010   [Confirm all errors]

New errors

Timestamp ▼	Message	Confirm
10-12-2010 08.05	**Activation failed!** Activation failed on page /web/company and its sub nodes. The subscribed instance 'public website' did not respond to the activation request within 2 minutes. Aborted activation. Maintenance cleanup could not be performed	☑

| 09-12-2010 02.00 | Maintenance cleanup could not be performed. Job has no access to /var/log to stores messages. | ☐ | ▼ |

New warnings

Timestamp ▼	Message
01-12-2010 00.00	Base URL not defined. Define a base URL in <u>the server configuration</u> to ensure