Human Needs & Emotions

Prompts and Frictions in the Plottr Desktop Application

CareerFoundry
UX Immersion: Task 1.3
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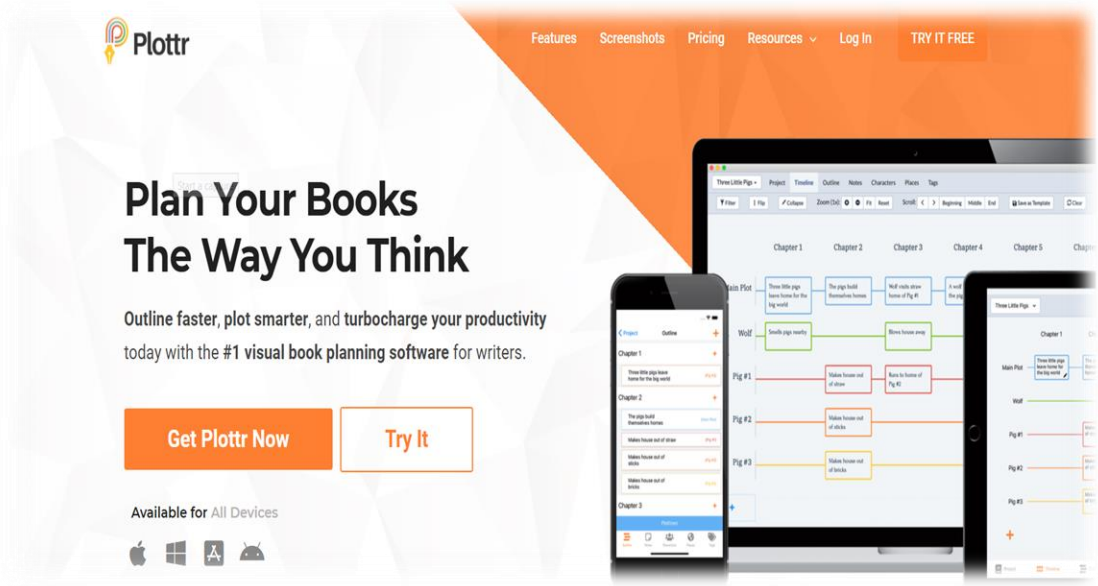
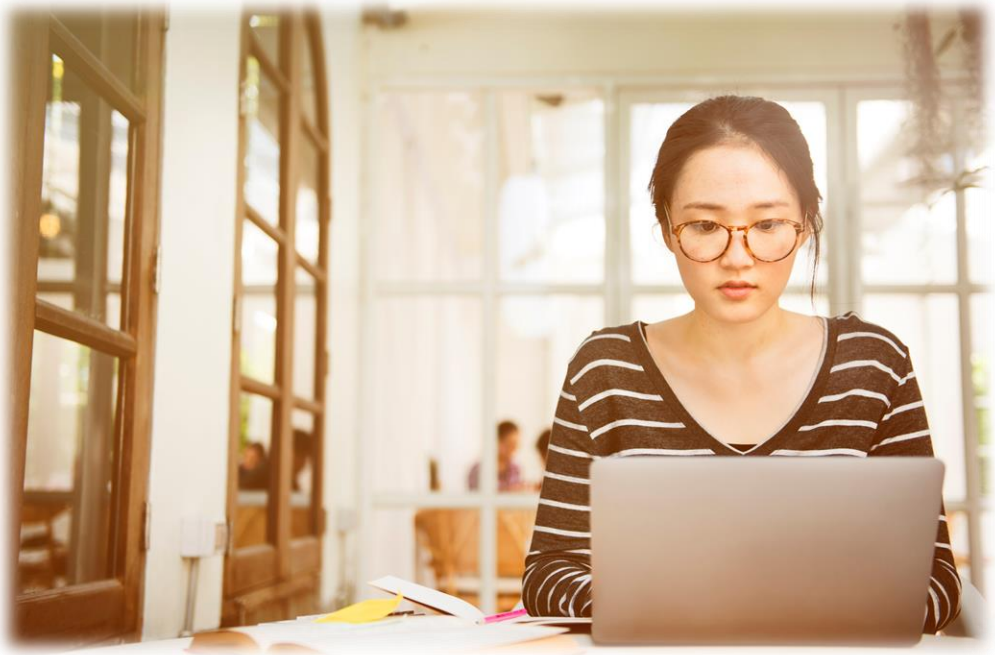
Summary

Plottr

Plottr is a visual book planning desktop application, developed by Fictional Devices LLC, to help writers plot their books. With Plottr, writers can visualize plot points, create a story bible, and make detailed notes on characters and locations. Plottr is designed with a drag and drop visual plot timeline and plot cards for entering scene and chapter details.



User Story



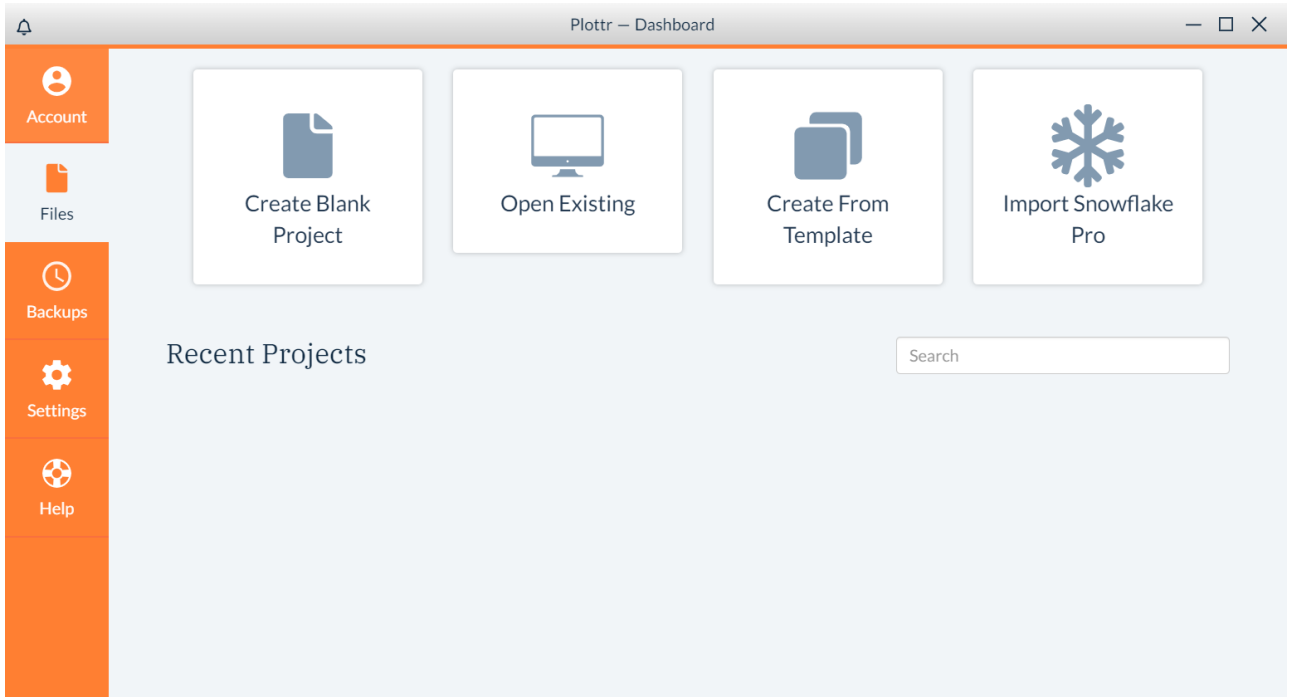
As a writer, I want software to help me visually develop plots for my novels so I can more easily see the connections between story, characters, and locations.

Prompt 1: Choose Plot Workflow

Plottr is designed so that a user can quickly select the point of entry for their plot workflow.

There are four clear options:
1. Create Blank Project
2. Open Existing Project
3. Create From Template
4. Import Snowflake Pro

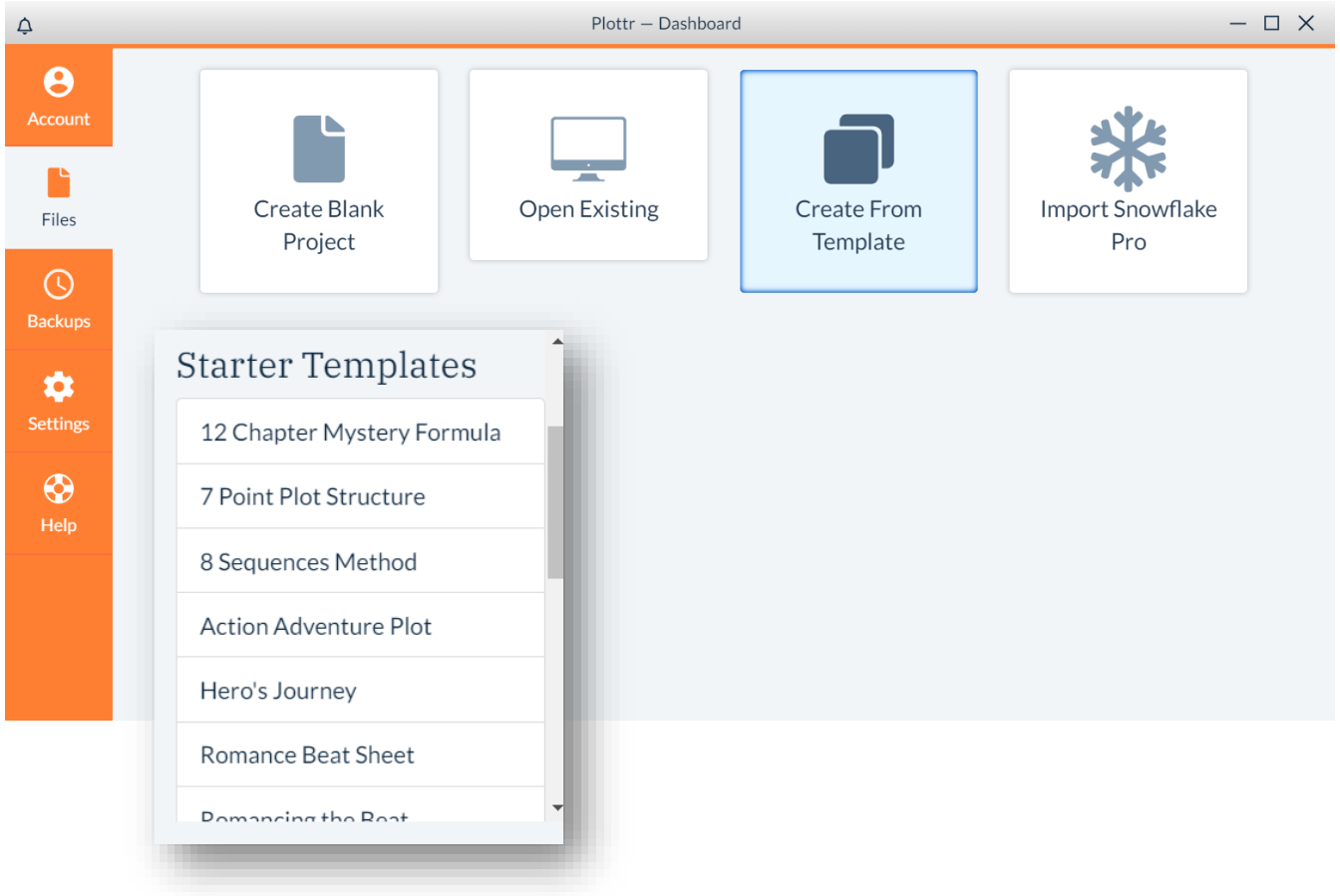
The Plottr desktop software is interactive with simple point and click functionality to make selections.



Prompt 2: Select Template

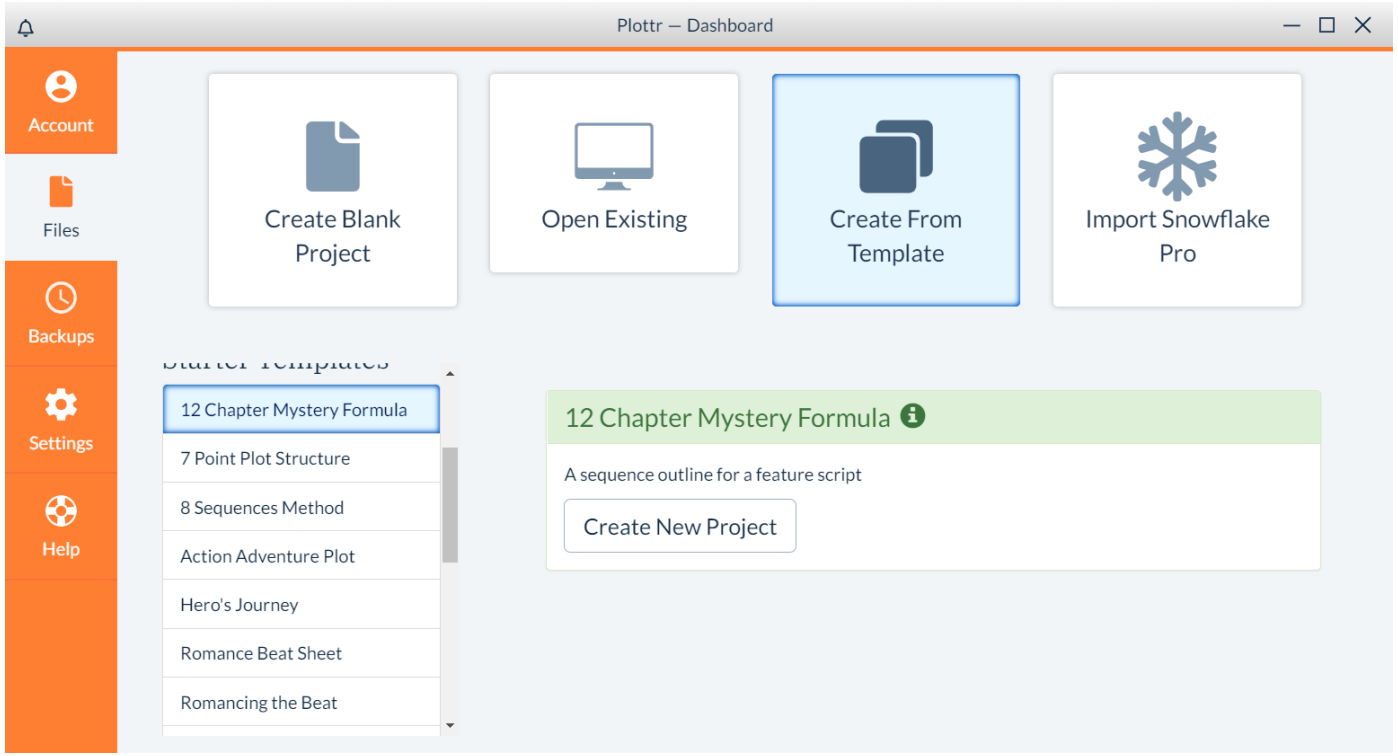
One of the most powerful and popular features are the Starter Templates. These allow writers to quickly begin plotting their own story with proven plots, either from general story structures or genre-specific story structures.

An intuitive scrolling list is provided where the user clicks to select a template.



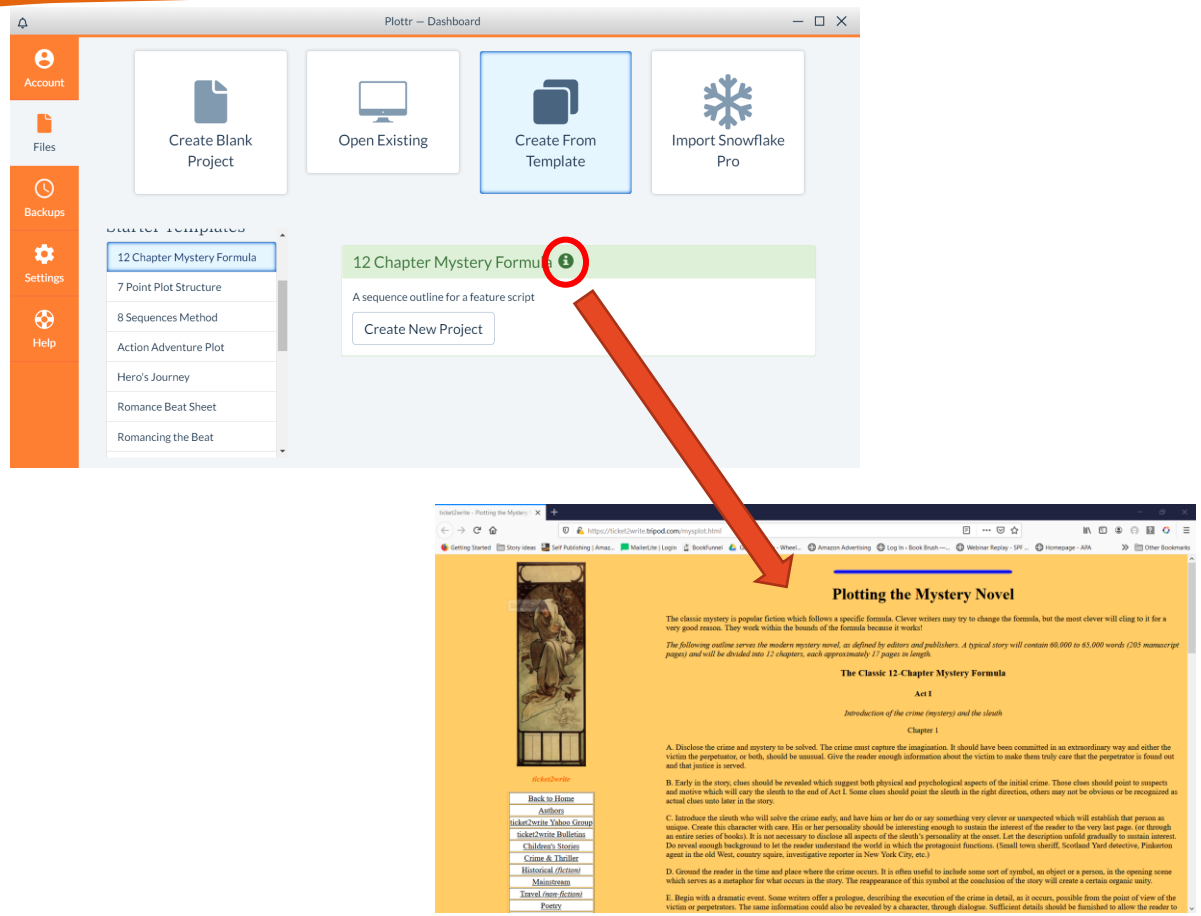
Prompt 3: Create Project From Template

Once a plot template is selected, the user is prompted to click a clear CTA button to “Create New Project.” It is clear on the screen which plot template the user has chosen. If it was not the correct choice, the user can easily scroll through the template list and select a different template.



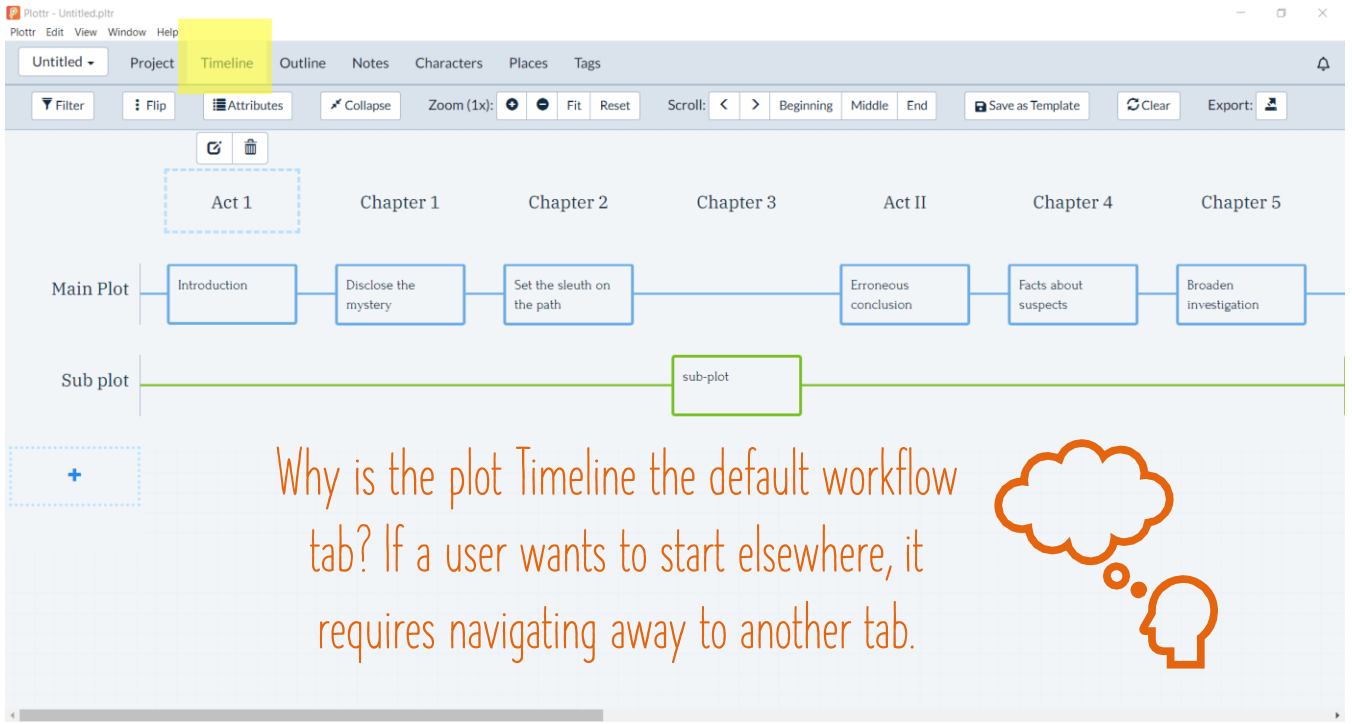
Friction 1: Proficiency

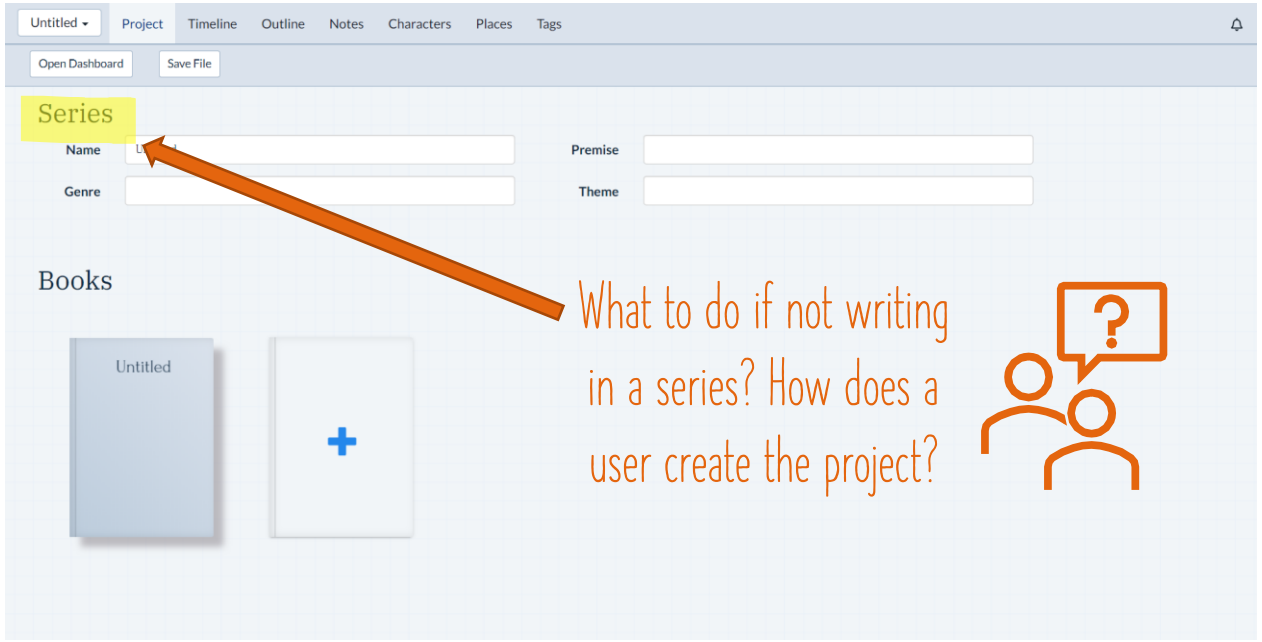
Plottr meets many user needs for experienced writers. Nonetheless, newer writers can experience friction early in the plot workflow. If a user is unsure of which plot template to select (it can be a daunting task for newer writers), Plottr can be confusing. The information icon, while clear enough that's what it is, when clicked, brings the user to an external website with more detail than necessary to learn about the plot template itself. It also requires being connected to the internet while using the desktop app. Not ideal when using a local desktop application, which should not require being connected to the Internet for full functionality.



Friction 2: Usability

Once the user is in the plot template, it automatically opens in the plot Timeline. This is not ideal as the user may not want to start with the plot timeline. Some writers may prefer being in outline mode. Other writers will want to begin by entering their characters. A more efficient user experience would be a home screen with clear options to choose from. Similarly, it would make the most sense to first ask the user to enter basic details about their project (like the title of the book, even if a working title) before beginning work on the actual plot or characters.



Friction 3: Usability

The Plottr Project tab is where a user enters basic information about the project: project name, series name, and adding books in the series. The information requested is clear enough, and the tab works as designed for the purpose of adding series project details. Where the Project tab can create a confusing user experience is for a writer who is not writing in a series (e.g. writing a standalone novel). In that case, it is not clear how to create the project. While you can add one book title, which will become the name of the project by default, and ignore adding series information, that is not clear without trial and error.