

SWE 632 Project Screen Design Notes Spring 2011

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**SWE 632
User Interface Design and Development**

Summary

- Overall a **good job**
 - A few fundamental mistakes
 - Too many screens, irrelevant info, confusing terminology
- You must look at your own design with the same critical eye you have been using with the evaluations
 - Don't just **DO**, you need to **THINK**
- This milestone was about design not the implementation
 - You should apply the suggestions to the final project
- If you have trouble reading my comments, please ask
- Remember what I said on day one of class:

Don't use the term

“user friendly”

Project Issues

- How will books be entered into the system ?
 - How much information is needed ? ISBN ?
- If two users enter duplicate books with slight differences, how will that be resolved?
 - “Introduction to Software Testing”, “Intro to Software Test” ?
 - “Schniedermann”, “Shneiderman” ?
- How to handle offensive comments ?
- How to handle books that can fit into multiple genres ?
- I don’t think many users will get ISBNs correct
- How will user accounts be managed ?
- Not sure how much users care about the publisher

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Usability Suggestions and Comments

- Selecting is less error prone than typing
- Radio buttons are faster and less error prone than dropdowns
- Can login be integrated with the main screen ?
 - Can registration be integrated with login ?
- Filter vs Search
 - Search starts with nothing and often results in nothing
 - Filtering starts with everything and usually results in something
 - <http://ui-patterns.com/patterns/TableFilter>
 - <http://ui-patterns.com/patterns/LiveFilter>
- Do not map each feature to a separate screen, combine
 - Navigation within information, not among multiple windows

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Usability Suggestions and Comments (2)

- Users expect to be logged in automatically after creating an account
- Lots of unnecessary and awkward navigation
- A few “screen happy” designs
 - Fewer screens means less navigation
- Search by author or title ... radio buttons? Or let the search figure it out ?
 - Example : <http://cs.gmu.edu:8080/offutt/servlet/quotes.quoteserve>
- Make rules clear before validating and telling users they violated a rule

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Navigation (from week 6)

- Navigation is moving around a UI
- Navigation is never about the users goals
- Navigation is always excise
- Four types of navigation
 1. Among multiple windows and screens
 2. Navigation among panes or frames in a window
 3. Navigation among tools and menus
 4. Navigation within information (scrolling, zooming, ...)

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Avoid Barriers

- A password is protection, but also a barrier
 - Letting users have partial access without creating an account is good marketing
- A menu reminds users what they can do, but is also a barrier to information
- Mostly blank screens always look like barriers
 - Always give users information – a blank screen with a small menu is a waste of screen real estate
- Example of probable / possible becoming a barrier:

Language

English

Other

probable

possible

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English and Writing Notes

- In English, we usually add an s to make a noun plural, and an apostrophe ('s) to show ownership
 - ~~Actor's of the system~~
 - Actors of the system
 - ~~The URL's are entered ...~~
 - The URLs are entered ...
- Use the correct, precise word
 - English is a wonderfully precise language
 - Do not use X when you mean Y
 - Do not use a generic word (actor) when you have a specific word in mind (user)

A lot of IT people do this.

We look poorly educated

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English and Writing Notes

- ~~Users(Actors)~~
- ~~Graphical User Interfaces(GUIs)~~
- Users (Actors)
- Graphical User Interfaces (GUIs)

**Always space before left parentheses,
except in mathematical functions [F(x)]**

- In Java, this style [`while(X<0)`] is harder to read, but style is personal preference
 - It detracts from maintainability but is still correct
- In English it's wrong
- Don't let programming habits morph into writing mistakes

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English and Writing Notes

- My user will learn their skills



This is grammatically wrong !!

- Don't break grammar to avoid the sexist pronoun
 - This turns an annoyance into a problem
- 99 times out of a 100, you can make it plural
 - “My users will learn their skills”
 - If not, there probably is a real person (singular) who has a gender
 - At least “his or her” is grammatically correct

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English and Writing Notes

- “utilize” vs. “use”

Means “to use effectively”

Don’t add extra syllables to sound fancy

- Standard American English style is to fully justify paragraphs
 - Yes, Word has a bug ...

English and Writing Notes

- Capitalize proper nouns
 - ~~Do not capitalize Important Words~~
 - Do not capitalize important words

**We expect better writing from graduate students.
(no matter what your first language was)**