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CRITIQUE



University of
Washington

CSE 440

JAN 08 - WEEK 1 - THURSDAY

Matt Kay guest lecture!

This Quarter

You will learn how to both give and receive critique

Each skill is important and takes practice

Many sections will consist of group critiques

Each group will present an artifact

Other class members and TA will offer critique

Starting today!

Critique of CI Plan

Why do Critique?

Critique helps us evaluate early, often, and cheaply

Applicable to artifacts of many types

Compare to other expert methods covered later, like heuristic evaluation

You are not your own worst critic!

The room has more collective knowledge than any one of us

It is *very* hard to see past your own decisions (see also: mental models, etc)

See past your infatuation

Why do Critique?

Critique is not just for design

It applies to many artifacts and domains: visual art, writing, design, code (i.e. code review), ...

Over time, you should gather people who can give you high-quality critique in everything you do

You may meet some of those people in this class

What is Critique?

Critique is a method of peer & expert feedback

It is not just a list of complaints

1. **Presenters** sit down with peers/experts (the **critics**)
2. Quickly explain their artifacts (< 2 min)
3. Critics ask questions
4. Presenters respond, also write down everything that is discussed

Critique is not Criticism

Again, it is not just a list of complaints!

Critics offer honest feedback

Presenters should be able to learn what works well and what is problematic about their artifact

Both positive and negative

Presenters should be able to learn what works well and what is problematic about their artifact

It is the presenter's responsibility to sort through feedback and decide what is important

Take notes!

Tips for Presenters

Critique can be hard, especially at first

Try to avoid being defensive

You are not your work: separate yourself

Remember the expertise you bring

Even if “the room” knows more about design, you know more about your problem / artifact (or you should)

Tips for Presenters

Taking advice is not giving up authorship

You still make the final decisions

A half-baked suggestion does not contain all the details of a finished solution

Design your critique

The artifact you show invites different forms of feedback

Indicate what kind of feedback you want verbally, but also in form (this course will guide you heavily here)

Tips for Presenters

Keep an eye out for design rationale

You probably made some decisions without good reasons at the time

Critique can help give a rationalization for past decisions in explaining to others

Exploit failure!

A “failed” artifact (plan, design, ...) should teach you a lot about the design space: what won't work, and *why*

Tips for Critics

There are many strategies for giving critique

Hamburger method

I like, I wish, what if

Socratic method

These provide ways to give critique that help the conversation go smoothly

They may sound silly, but they can give you a question to ask when you don't have one and a way to ask it that doesn't hurt others' feelings

Tips for Critics: Hamburger method

“Bun, meat, bun”

Bun:

Something fluffy and nice

Meat:

The real criticism

Bun:

Something fluffy and nice

Tips for Critics: I like, I wish, what if

I like:

Lead with something nice

I wish:

Some criticism (often leading off what you like)

What if:

An idea to spark further conversation

Better than “I think you should have done ...” or “Why didn’t you ...”: gives the presenter benefit of the doubt if they *did* already think of your idea

Tips for Critics: Socratic method

When all else fails, point to something and ask “why?”

Good when you don't know what to say

Forces presenter to give (or make up) explanations for things, which can help build design rationale

Not fundamentally negative and hard to get defensive about

Summary

Fall *out* of love with the things you build

Let us help you see past the infatuation

Get quick, cheap feedback from experts

Refine ideas

In brainstorming, we were not *criticizing*

In critique, we are not *defending*

You will learn to both give and receive critique

Each are skills that take practice. If you are having difficulty, please come talk to us

Let's do it!

In sets of 2-3 groups

15 minutes per group

1-2 minutes: present your plan

The rest of the time: critique

Remember hamburger method, I like/I wish/what if, Socratic method

Try not to get defensive

Take notes!

Let's critique Assignment 1a submissions

Assignment 1a

Tracks the amount of time allocated to individual activities each day so you can see information about how you spend your days

Assignment 1a

People with GI (Gastro-intestinal) problems need an effective means of recording the food they are eating and how they feel afterwards in order to find trends of which food-types are and are not causing health issues for them.

Assignment 1a

There is a wide audience that consumes caffeine on a daily basis and sometimes at an unhealthy level, this demonstrates a strong need for a way to track caffeine intake and to alert the user when they have reached a certain level of caffeine in their system.

Assignment 1a

Reduce and prevent outbreaks of the cold, flu, and other common contagious diseases in public locations, specifically a large campus such as the UW.

Assignment 1a

Americans generate 4.5 pounds of trash every day, with little realization of this statistic, where our trash really ends up and how it affects the earth and others.

Assignment 1a

People do not get enough exposure to natural sunlight which can lead to Vitamin D deficiencies, negatively impacting their health and their mood.

Assignment 1a

Many young adults and teens are exposed to alcoholic beverages without a very good understanding of their own alcohol tolerance leading them to binge drinking and potential health problems.

Assignment 1a

Getting out into the world is a busy process and often those responsible for raising you get forgotten until you need them, which doesn't seem fair to anyone.

Assignment 1a

Does the music you listen to affect your mood? - if you're in a particular mood, can it be altered by music?

Assignment 1b warnings

- **Common ideas:** dieting, exercise, time management, finances...
 - We want you to stand out!
- **Ideas from last quarter**
- **Once again: problems versus solutions**
 - Tell us who cares? why they care?
- **Problem versus “problem space”**
- *Not in the personal informatics space?*

Assignment 1b - Example (Au14)

The facts

- 60% of human body is water [↗](#)
- People should drink eight 8-ounce glasses of water each day (8×8 rule) [↗](#)
- Up to 75% of Americans suffer from chronic dehydration [↗](#)

The problem

People with busy schedules and preoccupied minds often forget to drink enough water throughout the day, even if they know how important water is for their health and for maintaining proper body function. Some people have tried to manually track their water intake or use alarms to remind themselves to drink water periodically, but these methods are inconvenient and intrusive to daily life. Our challenge is to create a design that promotes hydration for a healthier life and changes people's relationship with drinking water.

Assignment 1b - Example (Au 14)

" 104 million individuals in the US are at risk of hearing loss, heart attacks, and other noise-related health effects. " - National Institute of Health

Problem

- **15%** of Americans between the ages of 20 and 69 experience hearing loss that may have been caused by noise **at work or during leisure activities.**
- Studies on the health consequences of noise have indicated that noise **elevates heart rate, blood pressure, vasoconstriction, and stress hormone levels.**
- Meditation produces **long-lasting changes** in brain activity.
- Areas involved in **attention, working memory, learning, and conscious perception** are improved.

Stretch your thinking

- What do I want to know about myself?
- What do (diverse) others want to know about themselves?
- Goals: long term, short term
- Different walks of life
- Different phases of life
- Health: dimensions, conditions