Heuristic Evaluation of Prototypes (Individual)

Due: Thursday, April 11, 2013

Goals

The goal of this assignment is to learn how to perform a heuristic evaluation of a ***real*** user interface design.

Overview

You have been hired as a consultant to another group in the class. They are building a new user interface for their course project, but they would like some outside assistance in finding some problems with their prototype interface.

Evaluation

You will perform a heuristic evaluation (individually) of their user interface using only the materials they turned in for their last project report ("Interactive Prototype" write-up & working demo). Using their tasks, scenarios, interface design, screen shots, and interactive prototype you will apply Nielsen's heuristics to the user interface. You should be able to get all of this information from their web page. Read their report first and then examine their prototype (i.e., run it). Your evaluation will use both the information in the written report and the prototype.

Please use the second set of heuristics from our lecture slides on heuristic evaluation (also described in Nielsen's chapter) and the numbering scheme from our lecture slides (e.g., 2-1, 2-2, etc.). You will produce a report showing the problems in the interface.

Report

Your report will list each of the problems found in the following format:

problem# [heuristic violated]
description of problem and reasoning why you think this violates the heuristic

For example:

1. [H2-4 Consistency & Standards]
   The interface used the string "Save" on the first screen for saving the user's file, but used the string "Write file" on the second screen. Users may be confused by this different terminology for the same function.

2. [H2-3 User Control & Freedom]
   The interface brings the user into a set of preference screens when they select "New User", but doesn't allow the user out of the dialog until they fill out all four screens. There is no way to cancel from any of the screens if a user came into the first screen by accident.

Your report will also **summarize the number of violations found in each of the ten heuristic categories** (make a table) and give the **total number of violations in the entire interface**.

Finally, your report should **close with some overall recommendations** you have for improving the user interface given what you read of their description.

Deliverable

You will upload your write-up (Word Processing document and PDF) to your personal studio web page by the due date. Make sure to email yourself a copy of the source file or bring it on a memory stick/laptop as you will be using this again with your group next (bring a printout also). Please give your file a name that identifies you (e.g., john-doe-HE-prototype.doc). Your write-up should follow this outline with separate sections for the top-level items:

1. Problem (one sentence description of the UI you are evaluating)
2. Violations found (i.e. the list)
3. Summary of violations
4. Recommendations

Grading

You will be graded on how complete your HE is in terms of coverage of the presented user interface design, clarity of your violation descriptions, and quality of your recommendations.

You should concentrate on the interface the group has designed, not only on what has been implemented. Reports that continually focus on features that are missing, but will clearly be added will be marked down (e.g., "there should be help on this screen… and this screen…" – if it is a globally missing feature you can report it once). Please focus on ***evaluating what they have designed so far***.