Contextual Inquiry

Due: Tuesday, October 20, 2008

Overview
In this assignment you will use the **contextual inquiry** methodology to learn more about the work practices of your target customers. The interview data will help you to later perform a **task analysis** of your idea.

Requirements
1. Interview at least three target customers (no CSE 440 classmates) using contextual inquiry.

2. Analyze new and existing tasks. Describe three tasks in moderate detail that participants will perform with your application. There should be one each of **easy**, **moderate**, and **difficult** tasks. Compare and contrast your tasks with any existing tasks. Remember tasks do not say how to carry out the activity.

3. Brainstorm and draw a few *rough* sketches of a few important screens your application will need.

Deliverables
You will submit two copies of a printed essay of *no more than* five pages of text in class (12 pt. Times font or equivalent – images are encouraged and free, thus not counting in the page limit).

Your submission must be in PDF format.

When finished, upload it to the catalyst drop box here:

https://catalysttools.washington.edu/collectit/dropbox/summary/jaf1978/7152

Your essay should follow the outline below and will be graded using the writing guidelines on the next page.

1. Title of project (come up with something short and catchy to capture the key idea)

2. Each team member's name and role.

3. Problem and solution overview (short, 1 paragraph)

4. Contextual inquiry customers (3/4 page)

5. Contextual inquiry results (1 and 1/4 pages)

6. Analysis of new and existing tasks (2 pages)

   Three tasks your application will support (one each of easy, moderate, difficult)

7. Additional sketches of important screens (not part of page limit)

Writing Guidelines

Overall writing quality (10 pts)

Make sure that your writing is easy to read. First and foremost this means making sure your writing is clear and concise. This also means using bolded section headings, liberally adding whitespace, and including images in the body of the write-up with appropriate figure numbers and captions. Refer to the figures (e.g., "(see Figure 2)") in the body of your text. Check your essay for grammar errors.

Title (5 pts)

We will grade you on the creativity and marketability of the title you come up with.

Problem and solution overview (10 pts)

This overview should be a concise statement of the problem you are tackling and a brief synopsis of your proposed solution.

Contextual inquiry participants (20 pts)

Describe the rationale behind your choice of target contextual inquiry participants. For each of the three (or more) participants, give some details of their background, the environment where you observed their work, and your role as the "apprentice."

Contextual inquiry results (30 pts)

Identify high level tasks and themes that the participants shared in common in their practices. Then, note anything unique about each interview and comment on the rationale behind these events.

New and existing tasks (20 pts)

Next, you need to describe and analyze the new and existing tasks. These should be real world tasks that have details (*e.g.* programming a Tivo to watch the Simpson's on Tuesday). These tasks should *not* have any specific relation to the exact interface sketches that you brainstorm next.

Sketches (10 pts)

Sketch-out 3 or 4 different ideas for what this interface might look like. These should be done on paper and rough (and then scanned in). The details do not yet matter and you can do these quickly. We just want to get you to start thinking visually about how you might solve this problem.