Clint Connors

08/24/2020

MART 120

**GUI vs. CLI**

The Graphical User and Command Line Interfaces are very similar in their basic functions and abilities. Both are based on a system of hierarchy, with smaller files being stored in bigger depositories. These files and depositories are fairly easy to manipulate, no matter which interface you choose. The process of creating, deleting, moving, or copying these items is just a command or two away. To use either interface, one must be familiar with its patterns and language, which take some getting used to. With practice, however, one will discover that GUI and CLI are powerful, efficient ways to navigate a computer.

Although neither interface is overly complicated, I found GUI easier to comprehend. Not only have I used it for most of my life, but it relies on the mouse and not the keyboard to function. If one doesn’t remember keyboard shortcuts, he or she can simply navigate through the depositories and files with a few swipes and clicks. Each item on the computer is named after a real-life, easy-to-remember object, like a folder, a document, and so forth, and they’re all marked with distinguishing thumbnails. Plus, commands like “Copy,” “Delete,” and “New” are listed as full words with a right mouse click, making them accessible and understandable to even the least tech-savvy individual. In other words, GUI allows users to learn how to navigate their computers with little to no instruction.

Before this class, I knew next to nothing about CLI, and it took me more time to fully understand than GUI. Unlike its graphical counterpart, the Command Line Interface has no thumbnails, no mouse option, and no fully-spelled out commands. Users must fully rely on their keyboards and learn the abbreviations for each “spell” (“Move” is “mv,” “Make Directory’ is “mkdir,” etc.). Gone is the casual term “folder,” meaning one has to get used to the more technical name “directory.” All of these minor complications, paired with a screen full of code, can make CLI less user-friendly than GUI and a bit intimidating.

Still, that doesn’t make one interface better than the other. Both are extremely invaluable tools and come with some kind of learning curve, even if those two curves are arguably not equal. Nevertheless, I’m thrilled to discover more about both forms of navigation and use them to explore my creative passions.