CSCU9N5 - Design Two

Similar to last design practical, today's practical aims to illustrate some of the principles from the design lectures, using Paint and GIMP as examples. As last time, take some time between sessions to become more familiar with the tools so we can focus on discussion in class.

Make sure we record your attendance.

Design Analysis and Discussion: Assorted Shneiderman Principles

You will be asked to work in groups for this exercise. Last time you considered the first Shneiderman design principle of recognising diversity (know thy user). This week, you'll look at the other two with respect to Paint and GIMP:

1) Recognise Diversity

2) Follow the Eight Golden Rules
   1. Strive for consistency
   2. Provide shortcuts
   3. Give informative feedback
   4. Design dialogues to yield closure
   5. Error handling
   6. Easy reversal of actions (Undo)
   7. Internal locus of control
   8. Reduce memory load

3) Prevent Errors

Here is a specific task to carry out in both Paint and GIMP to help you think about the interface. You also have the knowledge you gained last week when making a logo.

Image Task: Little Ball Icons

Like this: 

These are nice for customised bullet points, e.g. on a list on a web page. And they're easy! Use the **Sphere Designer** option in **Filters:Render**. Something like 40 by 40 pixels is about right, but you can zoom the image for editing.

Given what you learned above, can you figure out how to add a drop shadow? (Hint: draw another sphere, shifted down and over, and blurred, on another layer.)

Design Task One: The second principle.

Find examples in the Paint and GIMP interfaces which illustrate the golden rules. Get as many as you can, considering both positive examples and negative examples (i.e. ones which show that the rule has been broken). Split your group up to delegate tools and principles to different people.

To find examples for each principle you might have to go through the process of editing an image. Look for alternative ways of doing things. *Think* about what you are doing as you do it. Talk out loud to explain to the others in your group what you're doing. Explore the interface. Think about its consistency with other applications.

Design Task Two: the third principle.

How does Paint or GIMP prevent errors?

We'll discuss both of these in the lab, to share examples.

If you're really stuck ...

Considering the task from last time, suppose you decide that blue is a boring colour for a logo, and purple is a much more sophisticated colour. How can we change the colour of the background? Let's say you need to match it with an existing purple logo made by someone else. How can you be sure to get exactly the shade you want? Does either package help you to get the right colour easily? What if you know the hexadecimal code for the colour?

What if you want to change the style of the text? Is that easy? Does either package exploit knowledge you are likely to have of other tools (most obviously MS Word) which allow similar tasks? Does that extend to other icons being used in the interface? Paint cans and brushes and pens seem relevant, but do you know what an eyedropper looks like, or what it does? Does that help you figure out the interface? What about a bandage? How is that relevant in an image processing package? Or the little hand?