

## HMI ASSIGNMENT - 6

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Explain the following with respect to icons:

(i) Types (ii) Characteristics (iii) Usability (iv) Choosing

Icons are an essential part of many user interfaces, visually expressing objects, actions and ideas. When done correctly, they communicate the core idea and intent of a product or action, and they bring a lot of nice benefits to user interfaces, such as saving and enhancing aesthetic appeal.

(i) Types of icons

- System icons  
displayed along left edge of screen. Created automatically by windows during its installation.  
Example: My Computer, Recycle Bin.

- Shortcut icons

these are icons with small arrows in lower left corner, provides easy access to some objects on our system. It only contains information about location and not the object itself.

- Program folder and Document icons

Non-system icons, they represent actual objects.

If we delete such an icon we are deleting the object itself, from the hard disk.

## (ii) Characteristics of Icons

### - Clarity

Icons should be understandable to the user in a single glance. They should be designed and drawn clearly and relative to the context or object you are trying to represent.

### - Consistency

The style, the color scheme you choose to design icons should be consistent throughout the interface. It should resonate with the other elements of the interface.

### - Scalability

The icons you design should be scalable for smaller to larger screens. If not appropriately scaled, when the user views the same website on a smaller screen, icons appear pixelated as well as distorted.

## (iii) Usability

In addition to conveying brand personality through color and style, icons must first and foremost communicate meaning in a graphical user interface. Icons are, by definition, a visual representation of an object, action, or idea. If that object, action or idea is not immediately clear to users, the icons is reduced to mere eye candy - confusing, frustrating, eye candy.



#### (iv) Choosing

Like anything else when it comes to your website, careful thought is required to determine the use and need for each component.

Whilst sprinkling your pages with decorative icons may give your site a unique feel, it's rarely a wisest of choices.

First and foremost, your icons need to be easily and instantly recognizable.

At times, it can become easy to be enchanted by a particular beautiful icon set -

despite the fact that the icons available may not be suited to your intended messages.

Other times, it can be tempting to try to be particularly original or clever in your icon choices.