Assignment Overview

In this assignment you will be presented with three user interfaces to critique. Your critique should consist of an evaluation of at least three notable good and/or bad features of the interface using concepts you have learned in this course. To review, these consist of key design principles introduced in Don Norman's Design of Everyday Things and relevant properties of human cognition. These include:

- Conceptual Models;
- Gulf of Execution;
- Gulf of Evaluation;
- Visibility;
- Feedback;
- Mappings;
- Constraints;
- Properties of short-term and long-term memory;
- How people focus on and attend to information;
- The nature of errors and mistakes that people tend to make.

Preparation Part 1: Properties of a Good Critique

- At least three features of the interface are mentioned.
- The mentioned features are "notable"... that is, they are likely to be immediately encountered and noticed by users, and users will encounter them frequently in normal use of the system..
- The critique explicitly uses design principles from the course. It must use at least two different design principles. For full credit, use at least three different principles.
- The critique is well-organized. Typically it is effective to organize it as a list with a bullet point for each design principle that is applied, and sub-points for the various design features each principle applies to.
- Appropriate length: not too long or too short. A critique should give enough detail to demonstrate that you have put thought into your analysis and to enable a reader to understand it. But it should not contain unnecessary details or use a lot of words to make

a simple point. The model critiques we wrote for this assignment are between 150 and 250 words long.

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Example 1 https://www.coursera.org/learn/ui-design/resources/KOpgB

Visibility. The design principle of visibility is noticeable and follows the criteria that was given in the lectures. Some of these factors include:

1) Specifically, options that are more likely to be used by users like “copy” and “delete” have large icons.
2) Small “images” to denote each various file type. This is specifically beneficial for users who are in a hurry or might accidently select the wrong file type by accident. Since there is a visual representation, the user is much less likely to make a mistake.
3) A good color selection for icons and programs. While this will be a little biased for users familiar with file managing programs (or word editing software), the delete icon is red which implies a permanent or risky action can occur if the user is not careful. Google Drive has it’s own icon, and the small icons have check marks to show the file is not being processed or corrupted (this also goes to feedback).

Feedback. The UI here has been honed after many years of user feedback and design principles. Specific examples include:

1) Hovering over various file types displays a small amount of information for the specifics related to that file.
2) Dragging an image shows a small “thumbnail” like preview, which allows users to be able to, at least partially, know what the image being moved looks like.
3) Confirmation data: When the file or image is being added to a folder, it displays a “processing” or “loading” indication on the target folder, along with a minor “notification” in the form of a check mark when the process is completed. There was also a notification to allow the user to know that the result of their actions may impact others who also use share-type programs.

Memory support. The UI here displays various information to assist the user. Specifically:

1) Each folder, filename and file type has a unique name. This name usually has an appropriate association or reference when created, but the user can change the name based on their needs.
2) Dates: Each file has the date and time it was created to allow users to gauge if the file selection is the right choice. These can also be sorted (Feedback) based on various criteria to help the user sort or find files they are looking for.

3) Unique naming: When a copy or duplicate is made, the UI notifies the user by adding “copy” to the name whenever it is placed within the same folder. This is usually beneficially for the user. One thing to mention here, is it can be annoying if you copy within a folder and have to delete the “copy” portion of the name later for submission criteria or personal aesthetic decisions. (I personally hate when the word copy is in a file… do you?)

Example 2

Visibility. The design principle of visibility is noticeable and follows the criteria that was given in the lectures. Some of these factors include:

1) The app clearly lets the user know exactly where they are. This example, they are clearly on the Classic Rock Deep Cuts radio station. The icons for more used links are larger, making them easier to click on and identify (an important aspect learned in lectures)
2) Each artist has their own screenshot or album cover. This can also be useful for users who are less familiar with a particular band but can “remember” what the band members or album cover looked like. In the 1990’s, it was common for a friend to have a CD or cassette that had distinguishable and memorable artwork, but the band name was not listed on the cover. This allows nostalgic users to find what they are looking for instead of a situation that might make it impossible. They are less likely to make a mistake.
3) A good color selection and design for icons. The UI reflects common standardization of icons, as many users who could be unfamiliar with the app could quickly (and likely unconsciously) know what the “play” button is or what the “thumbs up” button represents. As discussed before, the best UI is the one the user does not even need to think about.

Feedback. The UI here has been honed after many years of user feedback and design principles. Specific examples include:

1) The song being displayed shows an approximate location based on the time. This is beneficial for users who wish to know the total time of a song, or the approximate location of their favorite guitar solo.
2) The icons allow the user to know specifically which song has been selected and how they can display more information (i.e. the station playlist) by clicking the tabs.

Memory support. The UI here conforms to the user’s preferences.

1) Using the “like” and “dislike” options, users can have song play more often or not at all. There is nothing worse than having a song the user dislikes play itself for the hundredth

time, as the user will then dedicate all thoughts and energy to stopping the song with nothing short of closing the app completely.
2) List of songs that have been played. This could be more noticeable, but the app does allow the user to recall which songs have been played and in which order. It also allows the user to know what song will play next in a noticeable manner, so they do not need to dedicate this information to short term memory (another design principle for the course).

Example 3

Visibility. The design principle of visibility really stands out and is a key component to the UI for Netflix. Some of these factors include:

1) The app makes everything very clear on finding what the user wants to locate. It is very easy to know what the user is looking at for any given time.
2) Each show and movie has its own image associated with it. Once highlighted (a feature of feedback too) you can see the selected scenes that will likely cause the user to be interested in the show or recall their favorite parts. This makes watching the show more desireable and a good component of UI.
3) A good color selection and design for icons. Slightly unique compared to other apps, but it is still intuitive and appealing. In fact, a personal finding is many successful apps start by having their features explicitly named until the app gains the status of a benchmark. Then users know from memory what the button will do.

Feedback. The UI here includes many eye catching notifications that can appeal to technology users as well as beginners. Specific examples include:

1) The video being displayed on screen shows a “progress bar” to allow users to skip directly to where they left off (this is also memory). This is beneficial for users who wish to know the time remaining of a video.
2) The app has a suggested playlist that is developed by an algorithm to determine what the user may like. This can suggest videos the user may have never found independently.

Memory support. The UI here conforms to the user’s preferences.

1) The app allows for users to know not only what episode they are on but also where they left off on any particular episode. This is great for when people do not remember what they have watched on a previous day, which could have been weeks before (though binge watching is common).
2) The app allows for multiple profiles, so each user can specify or have selections available to them based on their preferences and history.