**HEURISTIC EVALUATION VIDEO SCRIPT (RELEASE 0)**

**Your mission**, should you choose to accept it:

Compare a software, documentation, or hardware product to a list of design principles.

Too easy, right? (tone)

**One way to view the problem** is like a check list. You might say to yourself,

“I have a design…

it is comprised of design features.

My job is to examine each of these design features…

and judge whether it is in keeping with each of my 10-14 design principles.

**What might that look like? Well… let’s see:**

My gadget has a **field for data entry**…

Is it in keeping with the principle of consistency?

I think so… Check (tone)

Is it in keeping with the principle of system visibility?

I think so… Check (tone)

Is it in keeping with principle of match between system and world?

I think so… Check (tone)

And in this fashion judge **field for data entry** (tone) against each of the remaining principles before moving onto the next design feature.

My gadget has a **radio button**…

Is it in keeping with the principle of consistency?

I think so… Check (tone)

Is it in keeping with the principle of system visibility?

I think so… Check (tone)

Is it in keeping with principle of match between system and world?

I think so… Check (tone)

**There are two really big problems associated with this mindset**.

First, defining a feature is a is **not as straight-forward as it may seem** at first glance.

Should a **field for data** **entry** be considered a feature?

Or perhaps it would be more appropriate to consider the field for data entry AND the context in which it appears?

What about the font in the field?

What about the way the cursor lines up with the text as the field is entered?

Second, even if we can settle how features are defined, the **number of comparisons** could get astronomically high.

If there are 100 features and 14 heuristics, completing an evaluation would require 1400 judgments.

**What’s the alternative?**

The approach just described is one that puts the design principles UP FRONT (tone).

That is, the evaluator LOOKS (tone) for violations because violations are known causes of poor usability.

The alternate approach simply flips this script.

It puts usability UP FRONT.

That is, the evaluator looks for usability (tone) issues…

and then attributes them to a violations of design principle.

As you’ll see, this approach is more manageable.

And it is well aligned with the method’s intent for the evaluator to walkthrough (tone) use of the product through the eyes of a typical end user.

**What might that look like? Well… let’s see:**

I am evaluating my gadget.

I notice that when I click on a field and begin entering text it is inserted in front of the default value for the field.

PAUSE (tone) Hmm…

When I feel friction, I have probably encountered a usability issue.

How do I know?

Think about how usability is defined.

Efficiency, effectiveness, and satisfaction.

Right off the bat, I can tell you that I am annoyed.

This is awesome – **I am putting myself in the user’s shoes**.

I am considering the user’s context.

I am considering the user’s workload.

I am considering the user’s attitude.

And if I am annoyed while conducting this evaluation,

the user with all their demands will surely be also.

**Satisfaction** – negative emotional response.

**Efficiency** – I am wasting time expending additional effort correcting for unintended consequences of my actions. I have to move the cursor, click in the field again, and backspace to delete the unintended text.

**Effectiveness** – If I am not careful, I might leave unintended text behind.

Okay, it’s clear, right? We have an issue here.

Now we need an attribution so that the design can be made better.

Here’s the good news – we have already done the heavy lifting.

Maybe 10, 20, 100 design features were examined without friction.

Who knows how many, right? (Tone)

Now…

Now, especially when learning the ropes, take the time to review and weigh each principle.

The good news is – this can even be accomplished with a cheat sheet.

It’s fair! (tone)

What are the candidates?

As you go through your list, one or two should stand out.

Bingo!

**Consistency and standards.**

In this case, it is important to note that user interactions do not occur in a vacuum.

Based on the sum all their experiences with other similar products, users have established expectations about the way things typically work.

For this reason, designers have to be mindful of internal consistencies AND external consistencies.

Ready to give it try?

Just remember

usability up front

Put yourself in the user’s shoes

Notice the friction

**And that’s all there is to it. Like I said at the onset – too easy!**