**ONLINE ACTIVITY 7: Creating User Model**

**Objective**

1. Design a user model in User Centered System Design(UCSD)
2. Evaluate interactive systems using Nielsen’s Heuristics

**Materials**

* Personal computer
* MS Word

**Background**

Atakan(2006), To understand UCSD, you first need to understand the people who will use the systems. One way to do is through the concept of user modeling. A user model is a psychologically valid way of depicting the people who will use the systems, and whose needs and preferences will be considered when designing those systems.

**Procedure**

1. Look for two existing websites and do the following:
2. Identify possible expected users of the said websites
3. Evaluate the designs of the two websites according to Nielsen’s Heuristics. Justify

Table 1: Evaluation Criteria (Based on the 10 heuristics of design evaluation) for website 1.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **WEBSITE NAME: Steam** | | | | | |
| **URL: https://store.steampowered.com** | | | | | |
| **Area of Evaluation** | **5** | **4** | **3** | **2** | **1** |
| 1. **Visibility of System Status**  * - The system design provides appropriate feedback like message prompts in response to user actions. * The message prompts are clear, visible and understandable. | x |  |  |  |  |
| x |  |  |  |  |
| **Evaluation**  **The store interface is rigidly designed after years of refinement** | | | | | |
| 1. **Match between the system and the real world**   - Used words, phrases and concepts according to users’ language rather than system oriented words and computer jargons. | x |  |  |  |  |
| **Evaluation**  **Steam uses language native to its audience of gamers** | | | | | |
| 1. **User control and freedom**   - The system design provides ways of allowing users to easily “get in” and “get out” if they find themselves in unfamiliar parts of the system. | x |  |  |  |  |
| **Evaluation**  **Steam operations are usually designed with open source and user control in mind** | | | | | |
| 1. **Consistency and Standards**  * - The colors, text, labels, buttons and other elements in the design are uniform from start to finish**.**   - Text and icons are not too small or too big.  **-** Menus and other features of the system are arranged and positioned in a consistent way. (For ex. If your website has navigation buttons on the top under the page title on one page, the users will automatically look there for the same features on other pages. | x |  |  |  |  |
| x |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Evaluation**  **The steam aesthetic is applied very consistently across the whole website** | | | | | |
| 1. **Error Prevention**   - The system design provides an automatic detection of errors and preventing them to occur in the first place.  - Idiot proofing mechanisms are applied | x |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Evaluation**  **As the leading storefront for games, Steam rarely has any errors pop up** | | | | | |
| **F. Help users recognize, diagnose and recover from errors**  **-** Error messages and the terms used are recognizable, familiar and understandable for the users. | x |  |  |  |  |
| **Evaluation**  **The Steam support page is well documented** | | | | | |
| **G. Recognition rather than recall**  **-** Objects, icons, actions and options are visible for the user.  - Objects are labeled well with text and icons that can immediately be spotted by the user and matched with what they want to do. | x |  |  |  |  |
| **Evaluation**  **Steam labelling is very concise and readable** | | | | | |
| **H. Flexibility and efficiency of use**  - The system design provides easy to navigate menus.  - the system does not make wasteful time of system resources. | x |  |  |  |  |
| **Evaluation**  **Steam was designed for daily use of gamers and holds up very well** | | | | | |
| 1. **Aesthetic and minimalist design**   **-**Graphics and animations used are not difficult to look at and does not clutter (mess) up the screen.  - Information provided is relevant and needed for the system design. | x |  |  |  |  |
| **Evaluation**  **The minimal dark blue design is done very well** | | | | | |
| 1. **Help and Documentation**   **-**the system design provides information that can be easily searched and provides help in a set of concrete steps that can easily be followed. | x |  |  |  |  |
| **Evaluation**  **The support page is thoroughly documented with almost all possible concerns.** | | | | | |
| **SUGGESTION FOR IMPROVEMENTS** | | | | | |
| **None, hard to improve on a monopolistic storefront.** | | | | | |

Table 2: Evaluation Criteria (Based on the 10 heuristics of design evaluation) for website 2.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **WEBSITE NAME: Reddit** | | | | | |
| **URL: reddit.com** | | | | | |
| **Area of Evaluation** | **5** | **4** | **3** | **2** | **1** |
| 1. **Visibility of System Status**  * - The system design provides appropriate feedback like message prompts in response to user actions. * The message prompts are clear, visible and understandable. | x |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Evaluation**  **The Reddit redesign lead to greater simplification of all feedback messages for user understanding** | | | | | |
| 1. **Match between the system and the real world**   - Used words, phrases and concepts according to users’ language rather than system oriented words and computer jargons. | x |  |  |  |  |
| **Evaluation**  **As a social media website, Reddit uses jargon familiar to the average layperson** | | | | | |
| 1. **User control and freedom**   - The system design provides ways of allowing users to easily “get in” and “get out” if they find themselves in unfamiliar parts of the system. | x |  |  |  |  |
| **Evaluation**  **This part is very easy to do on any part of the website.** | | | | | |
| 1. **Consistency and Standards**  * - The colors, text, labels, buttons and other elements in the design are uniform from start to finish**.**   - Text and icons are not too small or too big.  **-** Menus and other features of the system are arranged and positioned in a consistent way. (For ex. If your website has navigation buttons on the top under the page title on one page, the users will automatically look there for the same features on other pages. | x |  |  |  |  |
| x |  |  |  |  |
| x |  |  |  |  |
| **Evaluation**  **The Reddit redesign has thoroughly permeated every facet of the website, to the displeasure of some oldheads.** | | | | | |
| 1. **Error Prevention**   - The system design provides an automatic detection of errors and preventing them to occur in the first place.  - Idiot proofing mechanisms are applied | x |  |  |  |  |
| x |  |  |  |  |
| **Evaluation**  **With its focus on shifting to a social media platform, Reddit has exceedingly foolproofed itself.** | | | | | |
| **F. Help users recognize, diagnose and recover from errors**  **-** Error messages and the terms used are recognizable, familiar and understandable for the users. |  |  | x |  |  |
| **Evaluation**  **Often times when Reddit servers are down, the error provides no helpwhatsoever** | | | | | |
| **G. Recognition rather than recall**  **-** Objects, icons, actions and options are visible for the user.  - Objects are labeled well with text and icons that can immediately be spotted by the user and matched with what they want to do. | x |  |  |  |  |
| **Evaluation**  **All Reddit icons are very recognisable** | | | | | |
| **H. Flexibility and efficiency of use**  - The system design provides easy to navigate menus.  - the system does not make wasteful time of system resources. | x |  |  |  |  |
| **Evaluation**  **The minimalistic design makes this possible** | | | | | |
| 1. **Aesthetic and minimalist design**   **-**Graphics and animations used are not difficult to look at and does not clutter (mess) up the screen.  - Information provided is relevant and needed for the system design. |  | x |  |  |  |
| **Evaluation**  **The design is very in line with modern social media minimalist design** | | | | | |
| 1. **Help and Documentation**   **-**the system design provides information that can be easily searched and provides help in a set of concrete steps that can easily be followed. |  |  |  | x |  |
| **Evaluation**  **The support page for server errors is very lackluster** | | | | | |
| **SUGGESTION FOR IMPROVEMENTS** | | | | | |
| **The website uses far too much space for form over funciton.** | | | | | |