

The Interaction

Question 1

A mistake can be defined as an error in the thinking process (failure to acknowledge the mental models), whilst the slip is an error in the execution. The designer acknowledges the right mental model but fails to build the interface.

I can identify 2 slips in the interface design. The first slip would be the fact that pressing the 'Cancel' button would bring the user to the main menu rather than the previous screen.

The other slip would be the fact that the user has to choose a 'Train time' before he can see the travelling path. This would make sense in a case where the travelling path would change according to the time, however this is not very often and does not make much sense.

Question 2

The simplest interface style is the command-line interface (cli). This type of interface is still used in a lot of applications specially targeted for Software Developers. This type of interface tends to be very fast (performance wise) since it does not require much processing power (to display items) nor does it have complex commands. However, it is not advised to novice users as the interface itself can be intimidating.

For novice users the advised interface style would be the WIMP. The user is used to this type of interface since it is present in every computer (being it Windows, Mac or Linux with any desktop environment). The type of task suggested could be done through a graphical application like PGAdmin.

Question 3

- File - new, open file, open copy of file, save, save as, print, print preview, preferences, close file, quit;
- Edit - delete, undo, cut, paste, copy, clear, repaginate, edit, repeat;
- View - page setup, view page, view index, glossary, see table of contents, show alternative document.
- Insert - add footnote, add page break, insert graphic, insert index entry;
- Format - character style, format paragraph, layout document, position on page, plain text, bold text, italic text, change font, decrease point size, increase point size;
- Tools - find words, change word, go to, go back, and check spelling, word-count, renumber pages;
- Mail - open email, send mail;

- Help - help.

Some items might be miss-classified because they can fit into more than one heading and it greatly depends on the context. Nonetheless it would not be practical to place each item in all the headings they can belong.

This headings placement is very useful when guiding "newbie" users because more experienced users know not only the tasks the software can do as well as the shortcuts.

Question 4

a)

The average number of items per heading is approximately 6 ($49/8$), which is a good average per 8 headings. It is neither too much items per heading (which would lead to very few headings) nor very few items per heading (which would lead to the opposite). Both alternative scenarios are bad since we have a lot of sparsity and no real grouping (at least with an intuitive relation) being made.

b)

I would choose the 8 headings as they will the items will be separated in more specific categories and, from my experience, it is much easier to look at the menus horizontally, specially because the computer monitors are much larger horizontally than vertically.