Anabel Assante

GUI vs Command-Line Interface

On your computer there are computer platforms which allow you to access different interfaces. Two of these interfaces are called the Graphical User Interface and the Command-Line Interface. These two interfaces serve the same purpose in allowing you to create, move, access, edit, and etc folders and files. While serving identical purposes these interfaces have different ways of interacting with said folders/files and the user.

Graphical User Interface or GUI for short is a more straight forward interface when it comes to interacting with folders and files. Folders will have an icon with their name either next to it or underneath it depending on what system you are using. This allows you to click on the icon to access the desired folder. Files will also have an icon with their name, navigating them simply requires the press of a mouse button as well. In order to edit files through the GUI, you will need to open the application such as a TextEdit file. This interface makes it easier for those possibly visually impaired and/or those who want to utilize tools for files which are provided by the program itself. It is a very commonly used interface and very straight forward. While serving the same purposes as a Command-Line Interface, GUI is very different.

The Command-Line Interface is more technical and less visual/straight forward than the Graphical User Interface. It allows you to interact with files and folders through commands on a different interface without icons. These commands are pretty simple and tend to range from one letter to three. This interface is a bit more difficult as the names aren’t always present and you can sometimes find yourself accessing the wrong file/folder or being unable to find what you are looking for. Luckily there are commands to bring you back to square one. In the Command-Line Interface you are interacting with files, on mac, through the Terminal app. You are directly editing these files in the terminal app and without the tools you would get on the actual application such as TextEdit. However, the Command-Line Interface is more organized because everything has its place.

After working with both interfaces, I would say I prefer the GUI over the Command-Line Interface. While the Command-Line Interface has better organization than the GUI when looking for files, I struggle with it personally. As someone who is visually impaired and struggles with short term memory such as file names, the small window and iconless interactions with the Command-Line Interface are not the easiest. The GUI is very straight forward and I find it easier on my eyes and memory. I do appreciate having experience with both and found it fun to work through the Command-Line Interface. If I had a better memory for all the commands in the Command-Line Interface then perhaps I would pick it over the GUI, but for ease sake I will stick with the GUI for now.