Recognition and Recall in UX Design
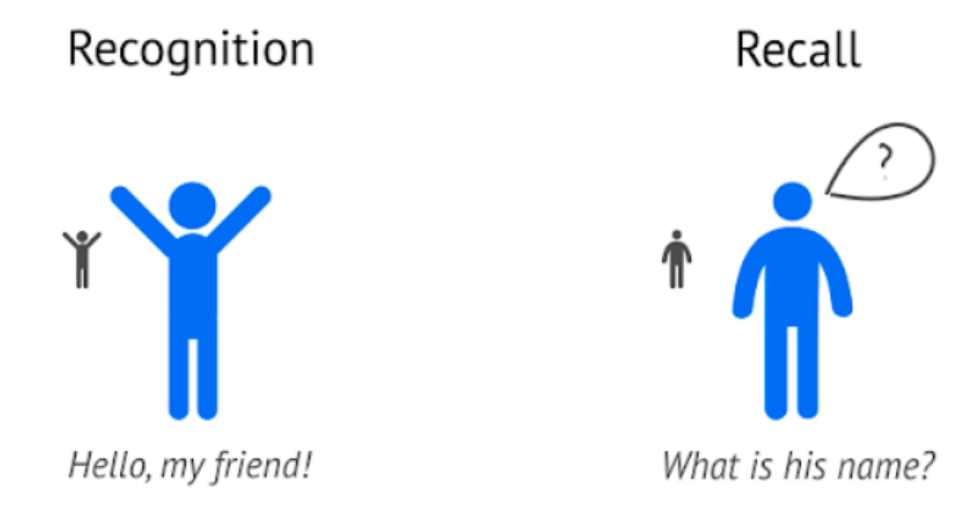
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Introduction

- **Recognition:** Our ability to "recognize" an event or piece of information as being familiar
  - Example: recognizing a familiar person in street.
- **Recall:** The retrieval of related details from memory.
  - Example: Coming up with the name of the familiar person in street (More difficult!)
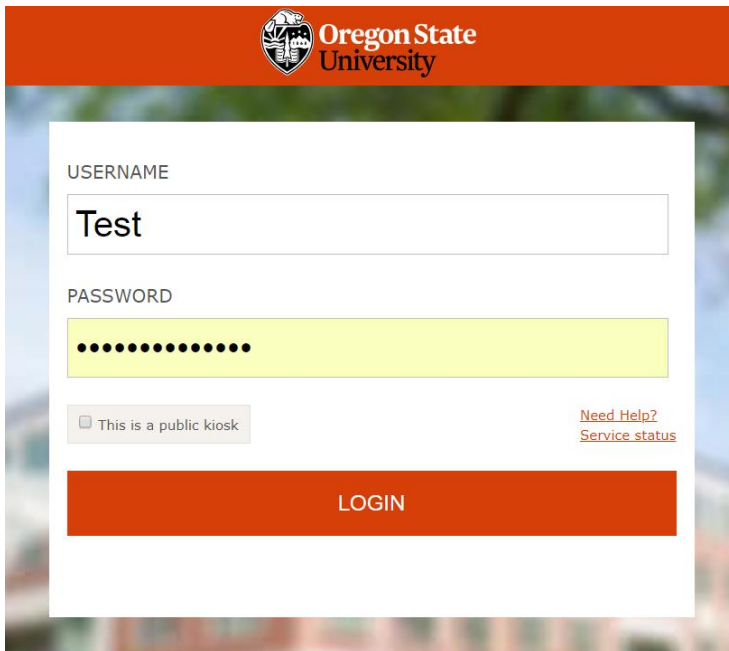
Recognition vs. Recall

- The big difference is in the amount of **cues** that can help the memory retrieval:
  - Recall involves fewer cues than recognition therefore harder than recognition
  - Example:
    - "Did Mark Twin wrote The Adventures of Tom Sawyer?" ➔ involves recognition, Why?
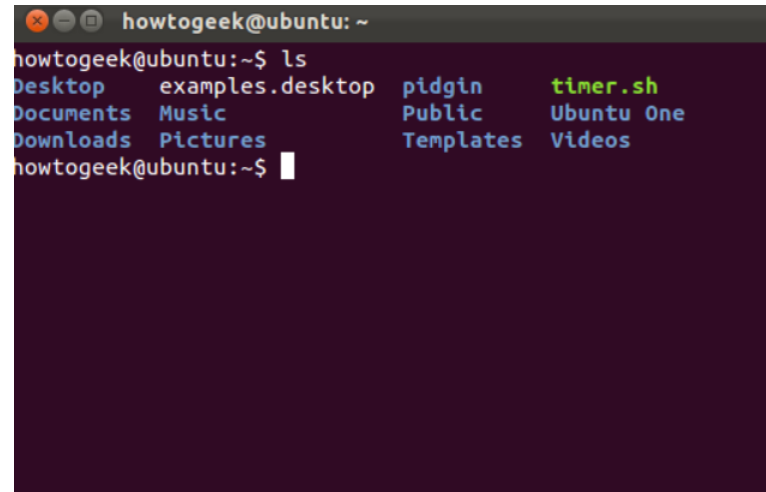   - "Who wrote The Adventures of Tom Sawyer?" ➔ involves recall
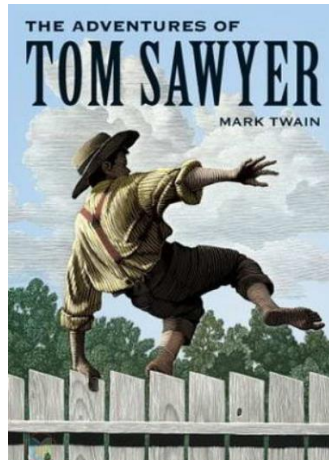
Example of Recall in User Interfaces

- The classic example: Login to a site or app.
  - You have to remember both a username (or email) and a password.
  - You receive very few cues to help you with that memory retrieval
  - Some people make it easier for themselves by:
    - Using the same credentials everywhere! (BAD)
    - Creating a password that is related to a specific site, for example: "myOnidpassword" for your OSU access
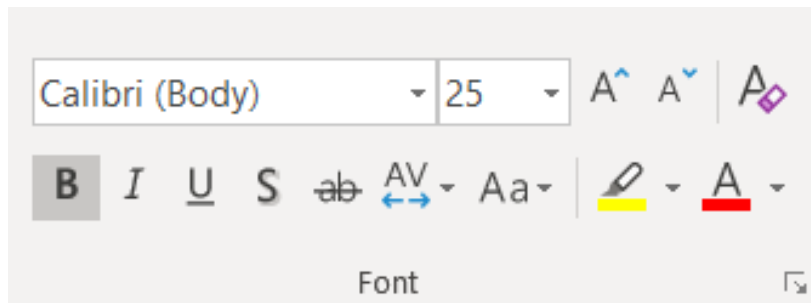- Another example: Command-line interfaces are based on recall

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Example of Recognition in User Interfaces

- The classic example: Menu system
  - System shows you the available commands, and you recognize the one you want
  - To use Bold in word application, just recognize the **B**

Promote Recognition in Your Design!

- Make the content and the interface of your design easy to remember, visible and accessible!

- Visual aids, such as tooltips and context-sensitive details, also help support users in recognizing information.

- Examples:
  - YouTube uses recognition instead of recall by showing users lists of items they recently watched.
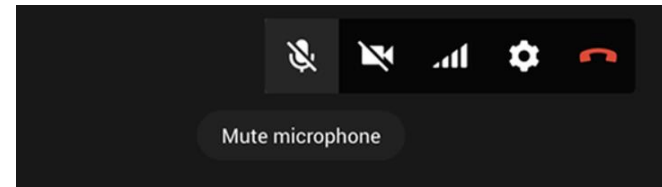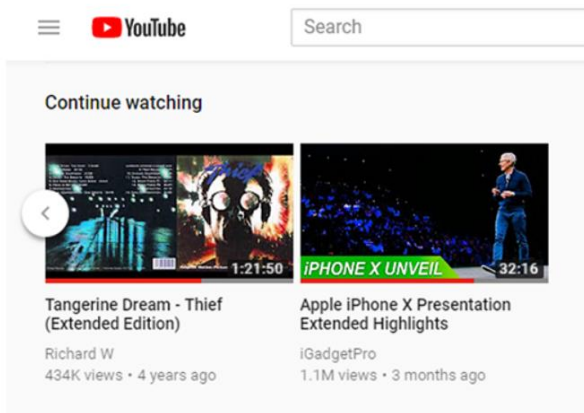
Conclusion

- How easily information can be retrieved from memory depends on:
  - How often some one encountered that information
  - How recently used that information,
  - How much it is related to the current context.
- Richer contexts (like those present when we use recognition rather than recall) make memory retrieval easier.
- Interfaces that promote recognition give users extra help in remembering information
- Don't forget to Promote recognition in You Designs

Resources

For more information take a look at these resource as well:

1. **Web Design and Usability Analysis**
2. **The 15 Rules Every UX Designer Should Know**
3. **The 4 Golden Rules of UI Design**
4. **Memory Recognition and Recall in User Interfaces**