

CMSI 370-01
INTERACTION DESIGN
Fall 2013

Assignment 1105 Feedback

Andrew T. Sullivan

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1a — Your paper shows some understanding of how interaction design relates to mental models, but admittedly does not address this explicitly. This comes from the way you talk about Pfeiffer's metrics and how they affect usability. Generally sensible and understandable, but missing out on fully demonstrating understanding because it doesn't use our established vocabulary and terminology. (I)

1b — Your coverage of the usability metrics in this paper is definitely of sufficient breadth. What is in question is a deeper understanding of what these metrics mean and what is behind their validity. With the sole exception of cognitive load vs. learnability, the paper seems to generally accept Pfeiffer's flavor of these metrics without question, when in fact there are points that are worth calling out, like the change in measurement unit for efficiency from a flat-out time measure to a "1-to-10" score. I think there is room here to be more critical and questioning of the Pfeiffer approach; the assignment is about "evaluating the evaluator" after all. (I)

1c — A major gap in the work is the lack of explicit mention of interaction design guidelines, principles, theories, and other concepts seen in class so far. Involving these ideas would have, I think, held up a more insightful mirror on the quality of Pfeiffer's evaluation. It would also have given you a more solid foundation for critical analysis of the activity. (I)

2a — Your paper is a "study of a study," which is perfectly fine. Missing here, though, is additional background from the literature that would have served as a nice arsenal for evaluating the quality of the Pfeiffer work. Without this background, the Pfeiffer report sort of stands alone and it becomes hard to refute the conclusions that this report draws out. (I)

2b — Your final conclusion (a little trickier to pick out than expected because you don't have explicit sections and there seems to be a stray paragraph at the end of the writeup) is based solely on usability metrics, which can be appropriate but in this case is not quite successful because there are still some valid questions that can be asked about their approach. Adding other concepts to the mix might have focused those questions better. (I)

4d — Your lack of additional references outside of the Pfeiffer report itself is definitely a weakness, as has been pointed out in the other outcomes. Without other information, it is very difficult to challenge what is otherwise a polished, professional document—and, as already stated, there definitely are valid areas to be challenged, outside of the cognitive-load-vs.-learnability question that you do point out. (I)

4e — Your commit count is a little less than what would be appropriate for work of this scale, and the commits all took place within less than 48 hours. This is not the timetable that is envisioned for an assignment like this. Try to spread the work out a little better. In addition, your commit messages can certainly be more descriptive—virtually every message was just some variation on "adding more." Added what? And was it all just adding? Ideally there is a proofread cycle somewhere in there. (I)

4f — Paper submitted on time, but responses to questions from Dr. Hellige's talk were not submitted. (I)

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Updated feedback based on commits up to 12/12/2013; only re-reviewed outcomes are shown:

1a — You've added a paragraph on how interaction design relates to mental models, but that's pretty much it for the remainder of your revision. I need to see this thinking throughout the analysis. (|)

1b — You integrated my comments on metrics into your revision, but again did not add much else. If you're just repeating what I said, but not building upon it with your own thoughts, your understanding is still unclear. The Fung reference was a good addition, and I wish you had more of those. If all of the revisions had come from you without prompting, I would feel justified in increasing this proficiency. However, with almost all of the commentary being directly derived from my comments, the case just still isn't strong enough for an increase. Sorry. (|)

1c — Unfortunately, your revision continues to lack sufficient explicit mention of interaction design guidelines, principles, theories, and other concepts seen in class. (/)

2a — Aside from the Fung citation, you don't delve any further into the literature than you did in your initial submission. You actually had some low-hanging fruit in the form of the ISO and Nielsen mentions, but you did not follow up on those. For example, you could have stated these in more detail in the introduction, to serve as a basis for comparison. You didn't even see fit to add references to them at the end. So again there is some improvement but not enough to warrant a higher proficiency. (|)

2b — Your conclusion is much easier to spot thanks to the sectioning (so now that stray text comes out as clearly being intended as the abstract—which means it should have been moved to the top!), and is better modulated by the information that I provided regarding how Pfeiffer's metrics differ from the accepted ones in the field, as expressed by Jakob Nielsen. It still lacks broader support from additional concepts, but at least the conclusion is better grounded in course material. (|)

4d — You added one reference to your list, and missed an opportunity for two more easy adds (ISO 9241 and Jakob Nielsen's *Usability Engineering*). Marginally better, but not by a lot. The increase in proficiency here is more of an acknowledgment that you put in a little more effort at shoring up your supporting information. (|)

4e — Your commit messages and frequency during the revision phase are more like it, with better descriptiveness and finer granularity. Though considering that you made almost all of those changes within 1 hour, the commit frequency feels somewhat forced now, just to satisfy this outcome. Still, with version control, better to err on too much than too little. (+)

4f — Responses to questions from Dr. Hellige's talk remain unsubmitted. (/)