**What is the difference between internal and external consistency?**

Consistency according to dictionary.com is “steadfast adherence to the same principles, course, form…” In terms of design it’s similar, you need consistency so that audiences understand the process: “Principle of consistency systems are more usable and learnable when similar parts are expressed in similar ways,” (Lidwell, Holden, & Butler, 2010).

Universal Principles of Design explains that having consistency allows people to use their prior understanding with websites, and subjects. Consistency enables users to concentrate on the task at hand. The extract explains that there are four kinds of consistency: aesthetic, functional, internal and external.

Internal consistency is described as the relationship between other elements within a design. External consistency is defined as consistency with other components in different settings,(Lidwell, Holden, & Butler, 2010).

Although consistency seems logical, to some people it seems silly and problematic, ‘The problem with thinking in terms of consistency is that those thoughts focus purely on the design and the user can get lost. “Is what I’m designing consistent with other things we’ve designed (or others have designed)?”… the designers who spend more time thinking about the users are the ones that end up with more usable designs ’

External consistency “refers to the consistency with other elements in the environment” (Lidwell, Holden, & Butler, 2010); the example given is emergency alarms are consistent across different control system rooms. Emergency alarms is a good example of external consistency because  where else is it important to be consistent? Having a continuous meanings of similar buttons here in a WA emergency control room that also is consistent over east, makes it easier.