Assignment 1: Good and bad examples of interface design

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Good User Interface Example – IKEA Assembly Instructions

The main goal of IKEA's assembly instructions is to help customers build their furniture correctly and safely.
Because IKEA sells its products all over the world, the instructions are designed so that anyone can understand them, no matter what language they speak. Instead of long written explanations, IKEA uses simple pictures and symbols to guide the user step by step.

Good Aspects

- No text, only visuals:
  The instructions use drawings instead of text, which makes them easy to understand for everyone, even without knowing English or Swedish.
- Step-by-step design:
  Each page shows only one small task at a time. This helps users focus on what to do next.
- Clear symbols:
  Arrows, check marks, and crosses show what to do or what to avoid. The little IKEA "helper figure" gives hints, like when two people are needed for heavy parts.
- Consistency:
  Every IKEA manual looks and feels the same. Once you've built one piece of furniture, you already understand the system. If you once build an IKEA item, the next ones will be much easier.
- Prevents mistakes:
  By showing the correct and wrong ways to assemble a part, the instructions help users avoid errors before they happen.

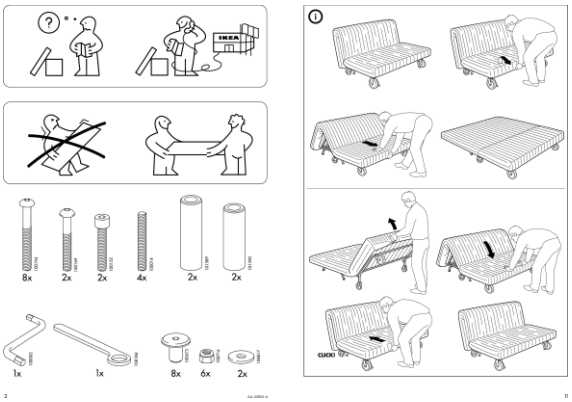
Why It Is Good

- It is universal, so people from different countries can all use the same manual.
- It reduces confusion because there is no need to read long text or translations.
- It saves time, so users can quickly see what to do next.
- It supports visual learners who understand pictures faster than words.
- It fits IKEA's business idea of simple, affordable, and do-it-yourself furniture.

Suggestions for Improvement

Even though the IKEA manuals are very good, they could still be improved a little:

- Add QR codes that link to short videos showing the assembly steps.
- Label the parts and screws with numbers or letters that match the pictures.
- Make the drawings larger and clearer in complex steps.
- Offer a digital version that allows zooming in for better visibility.



Bad User Interface Example – Complicated TV Remote Control

The goal of a TV remote control is to help users easily control their television, e.g. to turn it on or off, change the volume, switch channels, and navigate menus.
A good remote should make these basic actions quick, clear, and effortless, even for people who are not very technical.

<u>Bad Aspects</u>

- Too many buttons:
  Many remotes have 40–60 buttons, including functions most users never need (like “AV Mode,” “Picture in Picture,” or “Teletext”).
- Unclear labels:
  Buttons often have small text or confusing abbreviations that are hard to read, especially for older users.
- Poor layout:
  Important buttons (like Power, Volume, or Input) are mixed with many others that look the same.

- No logical grouping:
  Buttons are not arranged by purpose (sound, picture, apps, etc.), so users must search every time.
- Lack of feedback:
  Pressing a button often gives no clear sign that the command was received, which can lead users to press multiple times and cause frustration.

Why It Is Bad

- It overloads the user with too much information and too many choices.
- It increases cognitive effort, so users must think and search.
- It slows down interaction, especially for simple tasks like changing the volume.
- It creates frustration for elderly or occasional users who only want basic controls.

In short, the design focuses on quantity over clarity, which makes the interface confusing and tiring to use.

Why It Was Designed That Way

- TV manufacturers often try to include every possible function on one remote to make it compatible with different models and devices.
- Marketing teams believe that more buttons suggest more features and therefore more "value" for the customer.
- Engineers design remotes to match the technical system, not the user's real needs.

So, it's a technically complete, but user-unfriendly design.

Suggestions for Improvement

- Simplify the layout:
  Keep only the most-used buttons (Power, Volume, Channel, Input, Menu, Back).
- Use clear icons, colors and different sizes:
  Make important buttons larger and easy to recognize by shape or color.
- Group related buttons:
  For example: sound controls together, navigation buttons together.
- Add haptic or visual feedback:
  A small light, sound, or vibration could confirm that a button press worked.
- Offer a "smart" or minimalist remote:
  Many modern TVs (like Apple TV or newer Samsung models) use remotes with only 6–10 buttons. They are much simpler, elegant, and intuitive.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