1. The 8 Golden rules of human computer interaction, presented by Corey Crooks.
2. In this presentation, we will talk about the 8 golden rules of heuristics design and reform as detailed in the course textbook. These can be integral to understanding your users and their patterns. Knowing this can help a designer anticipate user problems and tendencies to optimize the experience around it.
3. The first golden rule details consistency in design. This ensures the designer uses similar terms, design, colours, and layouts to help a user quickly understand the navigation methods you explore in your software. Exceptions to this should only happen when a design element would harshly impact the user experiences—uniform design should remain to keep your program consistent and minimize user confusion.
4. The popular game launching service Steam by Valve shows this consistency in action. A similar font and colour is used for hyperlinks and buttons while a notably different font is used for general information. This remains consistent through the Steam store, library, community, and multi-tab design elements.
5. The second golden rule is Universal Usability. This ensures that design in your software takes disabilities and needs into account as well. This is particularly important for users with these impairments that may need to find unintended workarounds to use your software, or may simply be unable to use it at all.
6. Steam demonstrates Universal Usability in a number of aspects, but also falls short in some. For instance, Contrast is used within the program effectively to ensure the reader isn’t struggling to make out a word from the background wherever they may be reading. Customization features are present that gives the user a notable amount of control over how exactly they want the service to feel. These customization features, however, are not fully robust, and definitely could have features added to ensure a heightened platform of usability such as font size, font family, weight, and positioning. Additionally, many UI elements found in the program are very small, and require careful precision to hit consistently especially at high resolutions like 4K.
7. The third golden rule is Informative Feedback. This rule encompasses feedback to give the user a sense of action within their navigation. This feedback could be modest like a hyperlink changing colour, or it could be substantial such as an animation playing on click. These changes should be geared toward helping the user understand that they have preformed an action, and that it has registered.
8. Informative feedback is used sparingly in Steam. For instance, users may be able to gather more information about a game’s tile on hover. Additionally, hover actions are used throughout steam even as simply as a hyperlink changing to a blue-white on hover. The library of steam helps players with informative feedback in that buttons react on user hover/click to give a satisfying response, scrolling through your library will expand tabs you’re interested in, and so on. Click events, however, could be utilized to a greater effect. Hyperlinks do not change a colour when you visit them, leaving the user unsure of whether a page is new or not, feedback on click to game tiles also could be used to help the user understand their click has registered before loading into a new page.
9. The fourth golden rule surrounds confirmative dialogue. This rule sees that text-readouts are present to inform the user what action they have taken, and what consequences it may have.
10. Steam uses confirmative Dialogue rather well. Purchasing items gives feedback on what happened, why, and lists readouts of information like date and time surrounding the event. Steam also has a very robust support system when you know how to use it. Steam support mixes both automated messages and agents to help the user understand exactly where their claim stands at any particular moment in time. This process, however, could be improved. The confusion surrounding how to initiate a support ticket is frustrating to work with. You are unable to use the main client in order to submit things like refunds, and instead must be forced into the web application. A well-detailed explanation of this on purchase would help mitigate confusion.
11. The fifth rule we’re looking at is Preventing Errors. These ensure the user knows what not to do in any given situation as well as making sure invalid selections cannot be chosen. User input must also be validated to ensure they don’t submit “garbage data” like sentences in a date prompt.
12. Steam has made a relatively robust error prevention mechanic in simply just the way it’s laid out. For example, Steam ensures minimal actions are displayed on screen while keeping those actions strictly relevant to the user. Moreover, valve will notify a user if they are attempting to buy a duplicate purchase, as well as outright blocking any duplicate DLC purchases on your account. This could be frustrating if you are planning on buying something you already own as a gift for a friend, or if you are planning on upgrading a game license for more in-game content, but it does minimize duplicate errors.
13. The sixth rule surrounds Reverse Actions. Ensuring a user may undo actions that they submitted by mistake or out of negative heuristic generation is an important feature to consider. Anxiety, stress, and frustration can build up in a user should they be unsure of how to reverse an action they do not want on their profile or software. This is why it is important to walk the user through exactly how to undo actions in case they submit something ill-advised.
14. Steam supports undo-actions such as a back button for navigation, and a refund policy for purchases. The back button functions as expected from a web-based program and can easily take you back to a page you’ve accidentally clicked off of, or would like to otherwise revisit. Refunds are present, but are somewhat of a hassle to actually work through. As mentioned previously, you must navigate through a web browser instead of using the client you bought your games on, and the process to do that is not particularly well documented in the client itself. Refunds, however, do detail well why exactly your ticked has failed, or succeeded. This is important to help the user understand what can and cannot be returned in the future, so that they may be vigilant about new purchases going forward.
15. The seventh golden rule Ensures User Control. The user must feel that they are in control of the software at every turn of navigation despite their skill range. Advanced users must have tools to demonstrate their proficiencies and enhance navigation efficiency while the interface itself must allow for newer and advanced users alike to learn and customize their experience to help them navigate faster.
16. Steam utilizes this rule in that it offers a wide suite of features to help users navigate quickly, although some features are left to be desired. Quick selections are available in steam to help the user narrow down their library and add titles to categories to quickly find their desired game. The browser-based design allows for quick switching of client-to-web functionality to ensure the user can pick up their progress on another device easily by copying a URL. Unfortunately, though, Steam fails to give users advanced control over how exactly Steam is laid out, and must use a layout specified by Valve despite whether or not the user could shift tabs and elements around to make it more efficient.
17. The 8th golden rule is to Reduce Human Memory Requirements. This makes sure that all information that you need is on the screens that you need them. This includes duplicating information across screens to make sure the user doesn’t have to remember long strings of text just to accomplish an objective. This method is geared towards reducing overall frustration by incorporating a heightened sense of convenience. This can also help lengthy forms be more compact for ease of use.
18. Steam tries to reduce human memory requirements in a number of ways. Relevant information is indeed repeated on multiple screens. Information relating to a product features displays on the store page, and multiple steps of the purchasing windows to ensure the information is exactly where the customer needs it. The advanced users may find that certain information such as Steam ID’s need to be looked up in order to accomplish their in-client goals, leaving an area for Steam to improve on.