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**Cognitive Walkthroughs**

**Walkthrough 1:**

Task: See the front door (street view) of 10 Downing Street, London, UK. Start from www.google.com/maps

Optimal Action Sequence:

1. Enter “10 Downing Street, London, UK” into the search field

* There is a search field is marked “Search Google Maps” in greyed out text accompanying a magnifying glass symbol. It’s also located at the top left of the screen, where people will look first. It is very apparent to enter the address here.
* For the reasons described above, the step is visible and clearly labeled so that users will know that the correct action is available.
* The label “Search Google Maps” indicates that this is a clear indication that the step has been accomplished, so users will associate the action with the effect.
* Centering on and marking the desired location is informative feedback that shows quick and logical progress towards seeing the building’s front door. The user will see that progress is being made toward the task.

1. Drag the Street View Character Icon to the location marked on the map

* Users will know that to go from the far overhead view of a map to a view of the front door, they will need to move the view closer. The immediate instinct is to zoom in, which usually moves the camera closer, but the camera does not zoom directly to street view. After searching for a button or icon, the user will soon mouse over the Street View icon, and see a label pop up that says “see street view images.” Though this suggests a gallery more than it does a click and drag camera, the phrase “street view” affords itself to the goal of viewing the front door as seen from the street.
* The Icon is small, located in the far right corner in the last place a user may look on the screen, and unlabeled unless the cursor is over it. Further an entire menu with many options appears on the left, distracting from the button. Only its shape affords itself to a person standing at a location, but there’s no indication to drag the figure to where you want to see a street view of. It is not largely noticeable to the user that the correct action is available.
* When the user figures out that dragging the character is correct to do, it affords itself that dropping it in the desired location will place the user in that location. This forms an association between the action and the effect.
* When the task is completed, the camera zooms fast to a real world image of a building. This feedback clearly indicates progress toward seeing the front door of the building.

1. Drag the mouse to reorient the camera into view of the front door

* If the camera isn’t directly situated on the door, the user will want to move it and know that some sort of motion and clicking is necessary to reaching the goal.
* A first person view of a large environment, much like a bird’s eye view of a map, affords itself to being clicked and dragged. This action is clearly available.
* Clicking and dragging is associated with moving an object on a static screen, which visually appears to move the camera of viewpoint. The association with the action and effect should already be there.
* Seeing the camera move in the direction the mouse is moved until the desired view is achieved is appropriate feedback indicating progress toward the task.

Concerns:

My only concern is that a first time user will not immediately realize the presence of the Street View function, or how to use it.

**Walkthrough 2:**

Task: Share a file with a friend using File Dropper starting from www.filedropper.com.

Optimal Action Sequence:

1. Click on the “Upload File” button

* The user will understand the need to upload the file in order to share it with their friend thanks to the steps listed on the screen that describe exactly that.
* The upload button looks like a button, but is placed between what looks like an arrow button on its right and a text box on its left. It looks as if you can enter text, say the path in your computer to the file, into the box and press either the arrow or the upload button. These things, in fact, do nothing, which is entirely unintuitive. The interface affords the wrong thing before the user realizes the correct action.
* The button contains the verb “upload,” affording the association between pressing the button and its effect.
* The button opens a file browser, which is appropriate feedback indicating that the next step is to select the specific file to upload.

1. Browse and select a file

* Assuming the user knows how to use the file browser, the user will know that selecting the file is a step towards uploading and sharing it.
* The user already knows which action is correct.
* The user already the association between the action and the effect.
* After selecting the file, a progress bar appears plainly in the screen, which is appropriate feedback of progress toward completion of the task.

1. Wait for the progress bar

* The presence of the large obvious progress bar indicates that waiting for it to finish is necessary, and the user will understand that.
* Progress bars afford themselves to waiting for completion, and there are no distracting buttons that would detract from this, so users will clearly know to wait.
* The user’s previous experience with progress bars should have already ingrained in them the association between waiting for a progress bar and the effect of the action they just completed.
* Yes. It is a progress bar. Its nearing completion indicates progress.

1. Copy and paste the link into a communication medium with your friend

* There are instructions above a text box containing the link to the file, which lets the user understand that this step is necessary.
* The text box affords selection for copying into the clipboard, and there are also instructions, so this step is clearly available.
* The user should already be familiar with the concept of copy and paste, as well as whatever medium they communicate with their friends on, so the association between action and effect should already be there.
* The users having the link they can give to their friend is feedback enough toward the goal.

Concerns:

My major concern has to do with the interface the user first sees, which looks like a text box but is utterly useless in exactly that sense. There is useless space that harms the usability of the website. Also, after seeing the progress bar complete the page quickly returns to the front page until a moment later when the link page loads. This may confuse the user, causing them to wonder what happened momentarily.

**Walkthrough 3:**

Task: Find the office and phone number of the Dean of the School of Engineering at SCU starting at www.scu.edu

Optimal Action Sequence:

1. Scroll down all the way and click “people directory.”

* The user will know to find a directory when searching for the contact information of someone.
* The user has to scroll all the way down past pretty buttons that say “Faculty and Staff” and “Contact Us.” No, the user will not know that this, the shortest path, is available, and will most likely have to hope for a button that has the word “directory” on it.
* Given the user understands the definition of “directory,” the user will have the association between pressing the button and the effect of going to a directory.
* A directory labeled “University Phonebook” in large letters appears at the next page when the button is pressed, which is feedback enough that the user is one step closer to finding a person.

1. Use the search at the top right to enter “Dean of engineering.”

* Arriving at the front page of a phonebook, the user will understand the need to search through it in order to find who they are looking for.
* The search bar is a text box labeled “Search Phonebook” in greyed out letters, which adds to its affordance, but its location near the top right of the screen detracts from it, especially because there is a long distracting list of categories the user can click through to take the long way to finding the Dean. It is moderately clearly visible, though clearly labeled, for the user to know this action is available.
* The label “Search Phonebook” indicates the association between typing into the text box and pressing enter, and the effect which is searching the phonebook.
* The result of the user’s actions is a list of peoples’ names and titles, indicating progress toward finding the Dean’s contact info.

1. Click the top result labeled “Dean.”

* At this point the user is at a screen that lists out peoples’ names and titles. Selecting the one they searched for is apparent as a subtask.
* The Dean’s name, title, and some contact information are surrounded by a box that looks like a button, which affords itself to being clicked.
* Clicking on a button marked with the Dean’s name lends itself to leading to more information about him. The user will have the association between selecting the entry in the directory and reaching more information about the entry.
* Clicking the entry leads to the page containing the Dean’s office and phone number. This indicates successful completion of the task.

Concerns:

The shortest path is not readily available and those beautiful, distracting buttons lead to pages that have more distracting and sometimes unrelated info. I think the People Directory/ University Phonebook and its related buttons are too hidden to the user.

**Walkthrough 4:**

Task: Watch the video “Never Gonna Hit Those Notes” on YouTube starting at www.youtube.com and having full knowledge of the video’s title.

Optimal Action Sequence:

1. Enter the video title into the search bar and then press search/enter.

* The task of searching for a video lends itself to using a search function, so the user will understand that this subtask is necessary.
* The search bar is a long rectangular text box accompanied by a magnifying glass symbol button at the top of the screen. It is correctly labeled to let the user notice that this action is available.
* The appearance of the search bar provides the user with the association between the action and the effect
* The action leads the user to a list of possible videos that the user is looking for, which offers feedback that their search turned up fruitful and they are closer to accomplishing the task.

1. Find and click the video labeled “Never Gonna Hit Those Notes.”

* Given a list of possibilities based on the user’s search, the user will understand it is necessary to select one of them to see if it is the correct one.
* The video thumbnail and title, and the rectangular area around it, cause the mouse cursor to form the Hover Icon, affording the area can be clicked. The clear label and thumbnail, as well as its proximity at the top, indicate that it is the correct area to click on.
* The user has an association between clicking and selecting, and since the possibility occurs when hovering over this selection, the user forms an association between clicking the video and selecting it for viewing.
* YouTube has an auto-play feature. When the user clicks the video, it will automatically play for them, giving the user appropriate feedback on the completion of the task.

**Walkthrough 5:**

Task: Post an arbitrary status on Facebook starting from www.facebook.com having already logged in.

Optimal Action Sequence:

1. Type arbitrary status into the text box atop the screen and press post/enter.

* The textbox and the area surrounding indicate many clues that this general area has at least something to do with posting a status. The user will understand this subtask is needed.
* The textbox is of good size, is located at the top of the screen, and surrounded by words saying “Update Status” and “Post.” It also has greyed out text that asks questions like “How are you?” or “What’s on your mind?” It easily affords itself to being an available action.
* From the definition of the word post and the functionality of a textbox, the user will form an association between this action and the effect of submitting what may inevitably become another annoying Facebook post.
* When the action is complete, the text window transformatively moves down into the stream of posts, indicating that the user has successfully posted a Facebook status and added it to the endless stream of minutia.