

CS130(0) - Everyday UI

Release date: September 6, 2018

Due date: September 20, 2018 at 12:00PM (noon)

This requires writing 4 separate posts over 4 different days, so please start early!

Overview

Have you ever been frustrated by Monopoly's low memorability because you constantly have to look at the rulebook just to start the game? Have you ever tried to pull a door you were supposed to push? Has it ever taken you a ridiculously long time to locate a link on a website that should have been right under your nose? We often blame ourselves for mistakes that may have been the fault of poorly designed user interfaces.

Task

For this assignment, **you will critique four interfaces that you have interacted with that could be designed better**. You can critique inanimate objects, websites, electronic devices, or anything you encounter, but **they should be focused on interface design problems**, as opposed to engineering faults (e.g. a sink with a broken faucet) or business problems (e.g. the price is too high). An easy way to start is to think about the interfaces you encounter as you go about your day. If an interface elicits a negative reaction, think about why that might be.

For each interface, write a critique that:

1. **Explains why and how you know** which characteristics of the interface are good or bad.
2. **Elaborates on why certain design choices were made** based on research, and critically analyzes these choices, especially about how they relate to existing design patterns or similar styles.
3. **Evaluates the constraints** that might have played a role in the design, such as implementation cost, brand image, intended audience, historical context, size, time and effort constraints, and scalability. Try to think like the designer behind the interface. Why might they have made the design choices they did?
4. **Assesses the interface through usability principles** like learnability, memorability, efficiency, and affordances. Do not simply critique the visual design and aesthetics of an interface (such as colors, fonts, etc).
5. **Includes screenshots, drawings, videos, or photos** of the interface you critiqued in your critiques.
6. **Proposes some design suggestions** to improve the interface. Do not do an in-depth redesign, but instead focus on a few problematic elements in your critiques. **Create a**

diagram/drawing of the interface with your proposed changes and be sure to annotate and explain your design choices.

If you have trouble coming up with interfaces to critique or need help, we encourage you to come to office hours to talk about ideas with a TA.

Write and post **4 critiques (one critique for each interface)** on [Medium](#), an online publishing platform (*max 800 words per post, and note that this is an exception to the typical guideline of 2 pages of text per assignment*). **Each critique MUST be posted on a different day - this means 4 posts MUST be made on 4 DIFFERENT days.** After you have posted a critique, **submit the link to the Medium article for that critique in the form [here](#).** Please submit a link as soon as a critique is written - do not wait until all of your critiques are written.

After you have written one or more of your critiques, look at other students' Medium posts on the [list of critique links](#) and **write comments on 8 posts on Medium** (max 100 words per comment) that add to the discussion of the interface being critiqued. You can comment on a Medium post by adding your comment under "Responses" at the very bottom of a post's page.

Take risks with your comments to further the discussion, rather than repeating sentiments. You can add a new opinion, challenge the poster on why the interface isn't as bad as they think, or suggest new ways to fix the critiqued interface. Comments that are irrelevant or simply echo other comments will receive partial or even no credit. Try to respond to posts that haven't received as many comments yet, or comment on posts regarding interfaces you're familiar with.

This means that you should post and comment as early as possible!

Handing In

Submit a PDF to Gradescope that includes 4 links to your 4 Medium posts, and 8 links to classmates' Medium posts that you commented on.

All 4 links to your critiques must be submitted through the [form](#) in order to receive full credit.

Summary

- Create 4 posts **on 4 different days** critiquing interfaces of your choosing on Medium (max 800 words per post). The posts should include all the information outlined in the "Task" section.
- Submit links to your 4 critiques on Medium through the [form](#) so other students can comment.
- Comment on 8 fellow classmates' critiques (max 100 words per post).
- Submit a PDF with links to your 4 critiques and 8 comments on Gradescope.

Grading and Requirements (22 points)

Students should submit a PDF file of links to their published posts which should include an analysis of interface from a designer's perspective, identifying potentially problematic interface elements with sensory/observational evidence and suggestions for improvement.

- **12 pts** (3 pts per post) — Critiques
 - 1 Pt — Identification of interface flaw(s) with supporting visual documentation, posted on a different day than other posts
 - 1 Pt — Relevant analysis of interface that explains the design choices and evaluates its shortcomings
 - 1 Pt — Suggesting a solution(s) with diagram(s) showing proposed solutions
- **8 pts** (1 pt per comment) — Commenting on others' posts
 - 1 Pt — Comment added a new insight to the conversation
- **2 pts** — Style points
 - Check out the [style guide](#) for more details! Note that the two page text limit is ignored for this assignment.