Lab assignment 1 - Good and Bad design

Good Design

MacOS Spotlight Search


Figure 1 - MacOS Spotlight search with weather results

Interface objective

Spotlight is a system-wide desktop search feature of Apple's macOS Operating System.
It is designed to allow the user to quickly locate a wide variety of items on the computer,
including documents, pictures, music, applications, and System Preferences.

What is good?

There are many reasons why this interface is well designed, I will list some of the points that
make it such a good tool in my use case:

- Easy to access interface (with just one keyboard shortcut CMD + space)
- Easy to dismiss (just click elsewhere or repeat the shortcut to open)
- Small minimalistic design (search tab does not cover my current work)
- Displays accurate and useful results (especially when looking for files, system
  applications or executing other common commands such as unit conversion and
  weather forecast, as displayed above)
- Interface easily adjustable (in types of results, location on the screen etc.)
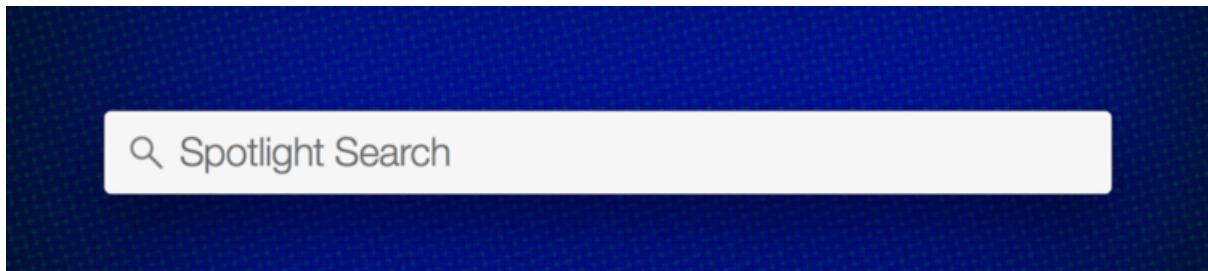
Figure 2 - Spotlight search bar without results (minimalistic)

Why is it good?

Overall this app is well designed because it allows the user to execute many different commands in one unified, intuitive and efficient interface, all of this is accomplished without taking almost any screen real estate and being extremely fast.

Some downsides of this interface are for example that it's shortcut to open is not customizable, and it does not allow for custom commands (like executing a certain bash script easily) or macros (such as opening multiple applications in one sentence).

Bad Design

Kawasaki Ninja250R Instrument Panel

Figure 3 - 2012 Kawasaki Ninja 250R Dashboard

Interface Objective

To display the current status of the motorcycle, it usually consists of three main components:
- **speedometer** – Displays instantaneous speed of the motorcycle
- **odometer** – Displays the engine's RPM/s
- **tachometer** – Total distance the motorcycle has covered
- Other instruments:
    - Fuel gauge – The fuel left in the tank
    - Other components (light indicators, etc.)

What is bad?

The main flaw in this interface is in the fuel gauge. As displayed in the picture above, there is no way of knowing how much fuel the motorcycle has, instead, there is an indicator light that turns on when there is about 5 liters of gas left in the tank.

Why is this bad?

There are many reasons why this is a big downside:
- When a user (motorcycle rider) is doing a long trip, the gas light turns on and there is no gas station nearby (the reserve tank usually holds around 60 -100 km of "gas"). This usually results in the driver asking for roadside assistance.
- Forces the user to remember how much distance they have travelled since they have filled the tank and estimate how much fuel is left.

How to fix

Instead of using a binary indicator (reserve or not reserve) which is not very useful, there should be an indicator of how much fuel there is left in the tank, such as a range of percentages, or an indicator similar to the indicators that come in cars.
Imagine not knowing how much fuel there is left in your car's tank….