Reflective blog

Week 1

When reading the journal, the one thing that stuck out to me was looking beyond the desktop display. It just been championed as a great successor to teletext and typing commands into the computer to complete actions. To me this seems very primitive and very cumbersome for a user to find what he’s looking for. So, when being able to drag about files on your desktop it was revolutionary, for a short while. People realised that it could become very cluttered very easily when you only have a finite space. People started to look past the desktop. They realised that there were better ways again. For an example a search bar would be the easiest way to find and locate your files and was ushered in ahead. Another way was the internet where people stopped communicating with computers and started to communicate with other people through computers. This has got me thinking of when our next design revelation for HCI in computers is due and what idea will take the world by storm. In my opinion a user interface which is runs in tandem with a mobile is the future. This would make smartphones and computer more of a cooperative system working together for the user.

Week 2

Reading the journal about personas I have gained a better understand as to why they are used by companies. The reason they are used it to get a better understand of the type of people we are aiming the user interface and functional requirements for. This is so you can maintain a perspective of how the user will run through your system. You also use a persona to mould a scenario for the persona in how they would use the system and in what context. Doing this work with the scenario develops the product ideas and describes them well without having to make or test it yet. In my experience of using personas this is spot on. The only thing I wonder now is that so many people use the internet you would need to create millions of personas and scenarios to really capture how all the users will conduct themselves on your system. Doing this is impossible now, but in the future, there could be a way to look at how all people work on a site giving a much more well-rounded idea of the design and how all the uses will interact with the design.

Week 3

Continuing from the last journal about scenarios it now talks and describes user stories in more detail with how they are structured and used through the design. The structure of the story should include a setting, goal, plot and solution. This is to cover the beginning, middle and ending of a user’s interaction. Furthermore, the creativity of the story is very important as this is how you are going to bring the persona and scenario together. You can go to over though however as sometimes the writers can get carried away and lose sight from the main goal. Therefore, consistency and closure must be criteria for the scenario so that the reader will still be able to understand the main points of the scenario. I think this is because readers want to know the resolution to a story or plot point otherwise there is no point adding it in the first place. I wonder If user stories are sometimes not helpful as once though. I think this because the people making the scenarios might not have gone through something that they are making before. So how are they expected to know how someone would feel in that scenario if they haven’t experienced it themselves.

Week 4

This week’s reading is about design rationale, it talked about key points needed like design space, but I will be talking about how it describes the role of the design rationale. The design rationale is used to aid the selection of certain designs for a in depth evaluation of the available designs. The reading explains that t should be an aid for the communication of why something was used. Even for other designers to understand your design better. The design rationale is also a great use for the end user as it tells them how the system should be used. If the user can tailor the interface and I have no rationale they are themselves tackling a design problem, but with no experience of this. If the rationale is given out it allows them to maintain the systems coherence. Think that a design rationale is very important to developers as it gives them a chance to evaluate each decision and not just wait until they are making it. This can lead to a situation where the first choice is just picked. I wonder however if this will become a thing of the past with design templates and pre made functions which are built in becoming popular for website creators.

Week 5

This week’s reading is about usability and accessibility. This is a very important part of design because if there are people that cannot use or are even damaged by your website it is a very serious issue. When reading this article what interested me was the key things that you must consider when making a design. These are visual (colour blindness), mobility (people that are physically impaired), auditory (deafness), light and motion (epilepsy) and learning difficulties. These must be considered otherwise they might not able to access the page. So, as a designer you should consider their factors and how to solve them. For example, you couldn’t have a website with solely auditory commands as someone who cannot hear would not understand the design. This example would need a variety of ways to convey to the user how to navigate the site. What I think is a problem is maybe some technology is becoming too smart and leaving some of these key design principles out. For example, Google glass may not work at all for people that can’t see properly or have an astigmatism. How technology keeps these people include is going to be a big task and hopefully the adhere to it.

Week 6

This week’s reading is about paper prototyping and how this is a effective and low cost way to test a design space without any code. The way this can be done can vary but the type I will be focusing on in the reflection is the Trip Plannin concept. Here we use paper as a physical animation which is close to stop motion to give the effect that the user is on a virtual website. This can help the designer and tester visualise how functions are going to work and can be the next step forward from a story board. There are positives from this, one being that it is very easy to change and try new ideas quickly. This is useful if you are starting out with many ideas and are trying to narrow down. A downside however is the fact that full functionality can never be accomplished, as you cannot make paper pages for everything that needs to be included. Another thing to think about is that you might visualise it on paper, but it may be impossible to pull of the design when you come to development. This can give the designer unreachable expectations and the actual design could fall flat.

Week 7

This week’s reading is about cognitive walkthroughs, what they are and how to conduct them. A cognitive walkthrough is a formal version of a designer imaging how a user will feel and act when they use an interface for the first time. There are 4 main questions which you should ask after every main step, here I will talk about them. They are will the user use this function, is the control for the action visible, is there a strong link between control and action and lastly is the feedback appropriate. These are essential things to ask because they will help the designer realise what is needed and wanted by the user. Furthermore, these questions can help a designer mould their controls and feedback around what resonates well with the tester. This can make for much better user experiences and gives a set of criteria to follow when developing. The only thing I wonder about is that some f the questions are very subjective. One user is completely different to anther and might contradict each other, now how do you find out who is right without having every large test pool. Even cultures could completely skew results so having a definitive set of question might be a detriment to some designers.

Week 8

This week’s reading is about the new revolution which is happening for HCI designers. In one of the earlier blogs we talked about how we are going beyond the desktop and how people were looking forward to better and simplify the user interface on computers. Now we are in the next age where designers are looking to leave labs and include more sample testing with real people in real life scenarios. When reading the article, the point that grabbed me was when a group of designers who had empirical evidence of how work groups will interact with a system were proved wrong. They explained how they thought groups interact with sharable technologies in a “dinning style manner” where they would all come together. However, this did not happen often. They approached it in a “staggered buffet style” only using bits and pieces. As this went against their evidence it proves that designer cannot assume or personify how people will interact with systems especially now where we are moulding with technology every day. I wonder if personas will become something of the past and the fact we can use technology to see how people interact we can get real data of what people use and want in a system.