

Unit 5 Reflection

I found this unit tremendously interesting because the reading material focused on human-centred design and user experience, something close to my heart, both professionally and as a user of information systems. I learned about Bruce Tognazzini's ("Tog") principles of interaction design; this was the first time I encountered anything "Tog" beyond a warmth rating on duvets. I consider the top four principles aesthetics, discoverability, consistency, and simplicity, with simplicity and discoverability trumping all others (Tognazzini, 2014). I believe simplicity and discoverability are top priorities when designing great experiences using information systems—desktop, mobile or web-based—. For example, if searching for information or completing tasks is not apparent, then a deep frustration sets in and often results in wanting to send the machine to obsolete technology heaven. Together with Tog, I learned of Fitt's law pertaining to touch targets. Here too, is evidence of failings in products requiring touch input: either the buttons are too hard to press, inadequately spaced, or incorrectly sized. Unfortunately, (as a software developer), I am painfully aware of how often Tognazzini's principles are far removed in modern-day development frameworks because everything is abstracted beyond measure, with elaborate setups and complex API designs. These frustrations explain the proliferation of new frameworks promising "new" features or "improved" functionality.

In terms of user experience, I found the "halo" concept interesting (Minge & Thüring, 2018). It describes users' perceptions that evolve while using information systems. Their work briefly describes the various components of user experience (CUE) that show how aesthetics impact users' perceptions of a product's usability. They consider how a person's characteristics influence their judgements of a system. From a psychological perspective, it may be valid that our human characteristics influence our expectations (beautiful people have beautiful things and beautiful things are beautifully functional). However, I am not entirely convinced by this thought because it implies less attractive people have lower usability expectations from products. Fortunately, Minge and Thüring go on to state that "the hedonic halo effect loses its impact when people get used to the look and feel of a system."

What I found interesting is are various questions a project manager should ask, such as what project deadlines are and who are the major stakeholders of a project. I think senior-level developers and team members should also ask these questions to focus on fulfilling project requirements within the triple constraints of cost, time, and scope. In this way, professional team members provide a *supporting* role to project managers.

Lastly, our team continued team discussions for this unit's summary project document. We spent several hours discussing Gherkin statements, behaviour driven development, user stories, approach to development given the team resources and project plan.

References

- Minge, M. & Thüring, M. (2018). Hedonic and pragmatic halo effects at early stages of user experience. *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*, 109:13-25.
- Tognazzini, T. (2014). First Principles of Interaction Design (Revised & Expanded). Available from <https://asktog.com/atc/principles-of-interaction-design/> [Accessed 20 April 2022]