Human Computer Interaction

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# Practical Assignment 1: Evaluation of Interfaces

## Object or situation on a day-to-day basis that has a bad interaction

Road sign are crucial way of keeping traffic in organised way. When one starts to get their driving licence they need to learn by heart all the signs before even touching the wheel. Most of them are unique and straightforward but there is one thing about them that always drives me crazy – tiny text below them (example: <https://sitebuilderreport.imgix.net/images/files/000/000/143/original/parking.jpg?1436377291>).

Especially in the cities those kind of sign are very common. They usually refer to prohibition signs, and says that it applies only in certain hours or it does not applies to certain car types. It is very hard to read them quickly, even if one has really good vision, so we almost always end up applying to what the sign says even though we didn’t have to.

Of course when you live in that city and drive there frequently you will learn it, but it’s not the point of road sign or any interaction object. It should be always viewable form great distance and clear even if you are in that place for the very first time.

## A bad interface accessible through a computing device

In this paragraph I would like to refer to general idea of things that happen without our will or knowledge – pop-ups and auto-play content.

Usually when we surf on the internet we expect static sites with mostly text and images, just sometimes ‘decorated’ with animations and gifs. What really breaks this expectations is sound. It’s something we expect only form certain sites like YouTube or SoundCloud, but not from news sites for example. Then, instead of enjoying reading the article we try to find the audio source or we just abandon the website whatsoever.

The same rule applies to pop-up windows. We open the page and immediately we’re asked if we agree to cookies. Usually there is not much choice so we agree and after another few seconds they ask if we what to get notifications form their side, even though we’re here for the first time. We disagree and when finally we think they’re done, they ask for survey of some sort. Not even mentioning tons of pop-up ads all over the place.

Personally this makes me so angry that I just abandon such pages and look for the same piece of news somewhere else. Every interface should display expected content at first and any additional, less relevant information somewhere on the side, so that it does not interrupt user experience.

## A good interface accessible through a computing device

The computer mouse was invented by Douglas Engelbart in 1964 and it didn’t get much attention for the next coupe of years. It was the Apple that in 1983 took that concept and reintroduced it to the world with one of the first personal computer – Apple Lisa. Since then computer mouse only improved, but more like evolution, not revolution.

Nowadays its hard to imagine this simple piece of technology improve even more. To my surprise Apple did it once again and introduced very unique and different view on the computer mouse, this time more focused on software than on hardware. Few days ago they released update 13.4 for their iPad products and introduced full mouse and trackpad support (before it was only partial).

Instead of typical cursor as we all know on the screen one can see semi-transparent grey ball that interacts with UI elements changing its shape and behaviour accordingly. For example, hoovering on the button makes the cursor disappear, but highlights the button itself. If highlighted button has a neighbour button, moving cursor switches this highlight to different one with the direction of mouse movement (demo GIF: <https://sixcolors.com/images/content/2019/ipad-cursor.gif>). Another example is text editing. Hoovering on it makes cursor change into straight vertical line that is more precise than a ball making text editing more pleasant (demo GIF: <https://sixcolors.com/images/content/2019/ipad-cursor2.gif>).

It still need more attention form developers of application to use its features but it introduces new concept of using old mouse and makes touch-based interface work well with mouse input, what previously was really tough to achieve.