CMSI 370-01
Interaction Design
Fall 2013

Assignment 0926 Feedback

As stated in the assignment, outcomes *1c* and *2b* max out at **|** for this assignment, because the class had not yet covered the full range of relevant concepts at this point in the semester.

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1a — Your heuristic evaluation shows a good understanding of how mental models are formed and mapped between developers and users. Most of your discussions were accompanied by helpful illustrations, except for the calculator section. Ideally you should have the same quality of analysis and supporting evidence across the board. (**|**)

1b — For the chosen metrics of learnability, efficiency, and satisfaction, your work demonstrates an initial understanding of their meanings but not a complete one. The tests conducted actually conflate both elements of learnability ("figuring things out") and efficiency ("how long it took"). Fortunately, you show that you are aware of this issue, and are also aware of how the user population's particular characteristics may have skewed the results. Ideally, though, these potential issues could have been caught in the planning phase, and some tweaks to the study could have addressed this better (e.g., interpreting times as efficiency for experts but learnability for novices). (**|**)

1c — Your ability to analyze the study and its results is apparent in your work, but it focuses mainly on mental models (already credited in *1a*) and not any interaction design guidelines, principles, or theories discussed in class. Consistency gets a very brief mention regarding WiFi, but nothing else is stated. In a way, your reasoning is sound but your basis is lacking. You should connect your analysis more explicitly to these concepts to show that you are schooled in them, and not merely using common sense. (**/**)

2a — You have successfully conducted and documented a real-world usability study. In doing so you noticed some issues with your study's design, and for the context of this assignment the awareness is sufficient (wouldn't you love to redo it though?). You document the results sufficiently, at the narrative, numeric, and visual levels (yay graphs). Some correlation with mental models also takes place.

One thing that is missing is a prioritization that determines an overall "winner" based on metrics. Yes, on a per-metric basis, there are clear leaders, but what is your judgment *overall*? Making this call requires prioritization, which allows you to make a choice when one system does well with one metric but not as well with another. Explicitly making this choice is important, despite a diversity of factors, because, "out in the field," that is what you will have to do—out of multiple design options, you will choose to develop *one*. That requires the ability to navigate differences in performance plus a clear prioritization when certain factors are "tied." This specific study may not lead to a very realistic "final decision," but it's still worthwhile to go through the exercise. (**|**)

2b — You draw effective conclusions from your data when you did so, but as already mentioned, the course material is underused. Further, there was a distracting disconnect in the flow of your paper, where you start jumping to conclusions in the "Usability Metrics" section before presenting the objective data. Still, the weakest point here is the lack of basis in interaction design guidelines, principles, and theories. (**/**)

4d — Your work shows good use of the resources at hand with an ability to figure things out on your own (e.g., LaTeX). (**+**)

4e — You committed and pushed successfully, with appropriate frequency. Your commit messages can be more descriptive though—sometimes they were redundant (e.g., "initial commit") while other times they didn't really provide additional information (e.g., "Revisions to Tex file"). Make sure that your messages help put together a narrative of sorts, on how your work evolved over time. (**|**)

4f — Submitted on time. (**+**)