Chapter 1 – Usability of Interactive Systems

Usability Goals and Measures

Successful Designers:

* Go beyond vague notions of “user friendliness”, “intuitive”, and “natural” doing more than simply making checklists of subjective guidelines
* Have a thor­ough understanding of the diverse community of users and the tasks that must be accomplished
* Study evidence-based guidelines and pursue the research literature when necessary

Great Designers:

* Are deeply committed to enhancing the user experience, which strengthens their resolve when they face difficult choices, time pressures, and tight budgets
* Are aware of the importance of eliciting emotional responses, attracting attention with animations, and playfully surprising users

Goals for Requirements Analysis:

1. Ascertain the user’s nees
   1. Determine what tasks and subtasks must be carried out
      1. Include tasks which are only performed occasionally
      2. Common tasks are easy to identify
   2. Functionality must match need or else users will reject or underutilize the product
2. Ensure reliability
   * Actions must function as specified
   * Database data displayed must reflect the actual database
   * Appease the user's sense of mistrust
   * The system should be available as often as possible
   * The system must not introduce errors
   * Ensure the user's privacy and data security by protecting against unwarranted access, destruction of data, and malicious tampering
3. Promote standardization, integration, consistency, and portability
   1. *Standardization*: use pre-existing industry standards where they exist to aid learning and avoid errors (e.g. the W3C and ISO standards)
   2. *Integration*: the product should be able to run across different software tools and packages (e.g. Unix)
   3. *Consistency*:
      1. compatibility across different product versions
      2. compatibility with related paper and other non-computer based systems
      3. use common action sequences, terms, units, colors, etc. within the program
   4. *Portability*: allow for the user to convert data across multiple software and hardware environments