

PROJECT SCOPING GUIDELINES

Re-designing a day-to-day app

In this project, you will re-design a UI of a day-to-day, frequently-used application/service in a way that enhances a particular aspect of its usability. One way to think about it is to take your commonly-used app, e.g. WhatsApp (for smartphone) or YouTube (for desktop), and reflect on any major annoyances or other interaction that makes the UI difficult or unsuitable for use; then go through the lecture slides, notes and cards to identify what UI concept/principle or any other issue raised during the first half of the course could be used to re-frame the interaction for the app/service and resolve the problem.

Key to scoping for this project (and subsequently the success of the project) is to identify the UI concept/principle/issue and persistently focus on it. Here are some guidelines:

- (1) Go through the UI concepts/principles/issues addressed throughout the lectures and match with your experiences of using a particular application/service that can be applied to.
- (2) Discuss in what ways the identified concept could be applied:
 - Check if there are other systems that use such concept in their UIs (literature review)
 - Brainstorm other design strategies that could further support the chosen concept
 - Apply it to the chosen domain area (application/service) by iteration of sketching exercises

Make sure the goal of the project is not simply and generally “improve the usability” of an application/service: the project must have a specific focus or theme, and it has to be expressed in the terminologies from UI concepts/principles.

Discuss how the chosen application/service might be prototyped (in what programming language? What prototyping tool? etc.) and how the concept/principle you are incorporating could be evaluated by user-testing. Implementation and user-testing are secondary issues in terms of project scoping, but you need to demonstrate your awareness of them in the mid-term report and presentation.

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Here is a possible structure of the mid-term report and presentation:

Title

Be sure that the title mentions the keywords (the UI concept/principle chosen, the application/service area, and the interaction platform). E.g. “Maximising the visibility of website structure and status on a next-generation web browser UI”

Introduction/background

State the main focus/theme of the project, why it was chosen and why it is important.

Target user issues

Clearly identify the target users, their characteristics, how it might change after use over time, and any implications to your project.

Preliminary literature review

This section does not need to be comprehensive but use the examples/samples that were reviewed thus far, relating to the UI concept. This needs to be comprehensive in the end-term report.

Preliminary re-design samples

Include any initial sketches used in brainstorming the scope of the project. The evolution of re-design sketches will form a major part in the end-term report.

Planning

Mention the planned time-schedule, teamwork (role of each member, how different tasks will be coordinated. c.f.: UI design should be done by all members, to be shared and discussed, as it will be graded individually), planned implementation and usability evaluation

Impact

State your vision on how the project could change/improve target users' lives, and whether the design could be applied in other areas than focused in the project.