Tutorial and Laboratory 1

Tutorial

Heuristic Evaluation Exercise

Today you will evaluate: http:// ________________________________

Support workflow
Ensure that it allows users to complete their tasks in way that they are accustomed to

Be consistent
In terms of visual design, navigation, terminology, behaviour

Provide clear navigation and orientation
Make it easy and obvious how to get from one place to another in the site; make it obvious where you are in the site

Give users control
Make sure that users are driving the interaction, not the computer
Increase learnability
Assist users in becoming productive with the system (e.g., provide help, useful hints, etc.)

Provide effective feedback
Provide meaningful messages and timely feedback

Reduce memory load
Don’t require humans to remember things – provide instructions, provide information where and when users need it, support functions such as copy and paste.

Optimise visual clarity
Ensure that the pages are laid out in a way that makes it easily readable, aesthetically pleasing, and appropriate for the organisation delivering the information
Interviewing and Observing Users: Contacts and Appointments

**Aim**
In this laboratory you will prepare interview questions and interview your partner about their habits of managing contacts and appointment information. In the second part you will carry out an observation exercise.

**Background Reading**
Preece (2002), Interaction Design, specifically Section 12.3.1 and Chapter 12 or Nielsen (1993), "Usability Engineering", Thinking Aloud (Section 6.8, p195-200)
Preece (2002) Interaction Design, Section 7.6.1

**Objectives**
This laboratory is designed for you to observe somebody else interacting with a user interface. You will develop a practical understanding of the think aloud protocol and how it is used in usability testing. You will also conduct preliminary interviews with each other to find out more about how they use contacts and appointment information.

**Interview Questions**
You will be working in pairs for this exercise. One person will prepare interview questions about managing personal or business contacts the other person will prepare questions about appointments.

Prepare a set of interview questions that you would ask an interviewee about:
1) how do you manage your personal or business contact information?
2) how do you store and manage your appointments and calendar information?

Think about the types of questions to ask (open or closed) and come up with at least 10 questions.

**Conducting the Interview**
With your partner, conduct the interview asking your set of questions. In your design diary keep notes about the questions.

**Observing Users**
You will take turns to observe each other interacting with an assigned application. One person will be the facilitator the other will be the subject. The facilitator will observe the subject using the application, noting in their design diary user interactions and the time of observation. If you don’t have a watch that displays minutes and seconds, you may want to enable the seconds display on the menu bar clock.
The subject will be encouraged to **think aloud** during the exercise to help the facilitator understand why the subject is making certain choices.

The facilitator should be prepared to observe and record the user actions with a watch, record and time what was observed in their design diary (eg. 1:30 Opened Help; 2:15 did not understand the terminology, etc). The think aloud protocol will be used (see Preece 12.3.1 or Nielsen, p.195) and the facilitator should encourage the user to keep verbalizing **throughout** the task.

Swap roles after 10 minutes.

Note that the facilitator is not supposed to show the user what to do. They provide the subject with the task and then observe what they do. As a facilitator, do not be critical of the subject’s actions or question as it is the software system that is under test, not your subject.

The subject should act as if they are a typical user interacting with the site. As the subject, **DO NOT** attempt to conduct a heuristic evaluation of the site.

**Contacts Activity**
You have recently returned from a business conference and are keen to keep in touch with a couple of contacts you met. You have several business cards that you wanted keep in your contact details. Please add the given business cards into your contact details application

**Now swap roles. The NEW FACILITATOR will take notes.**

**Appointments Activity**
It is going to be a busy session so it is probably a good idea to enter in some times into the calendar for HCI. Try and separate your Uni appointments from your personal commitments. Enter the time of the lecture and the time of your tutorial. Remember that the lecture runs weekly and the tutorials run fortnightly during the session.

**Discussion**
Consider:

*What are the advantages and disadvantages of the think aloud protocol?*
*In a real situation, what else needs to be carried out as part of a usability test?*
*How easy/difficult is it recording the information?*
*In general what are the main problems observed for each application?*