today

heuristic evaluation

assignment 1

how is it going? any questions?

Thursday, September 9, 2010
heuristic evaluation

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Jakob Nielsen and Rolf Molich
checklist of issues to consider
good for ease of learning
mildly helpful for efficiency
slightly extended since article

not guaranteed to find everything
more experienced designer finds more
everyone finds different set
guidelines

Simple + natural dialogue

focus attention on next thing to do
flow should follow user's task

don’t distract the user with extraneous items
or put them off to the side if needed
guidelines

Graphic design + color

added since article

maintain consistency

take advantage of information content

provide visual locality

  to provide focus

  to support chunking
guidelines

Less is more
guidelines

Speak the user’s language

terminology
phrasing "you have bought ..." not "we have sold you ..."

consistent model:
deactivate override mode vs
turn on virus checker

metaphor:
paper shredder for trash can implies more security than is real
guidelines

Minimize user’s memory load

tell user bounds
list available options
display/expect few active items
remember data from previous input
guidelines

Consistency

use similar verbal descriptions for similar items
differences should accent real diffs
use similar visual descriptions for similar items
support similar methods for achieving goals
guidelines

Feedback

what did the system do
  don’t leave the user guessing

ensure appropriate response time
indicate that processing is occurring
guidelines

Clearly marked exits

let the users back out whenever possible

return to the last reasonable place
guidelines

Shortcuts

improve the interface for experienced users
  typically hot keys
  sometimes double clicks or drags

still need most obvious method
  even if notably slower
guidelines

Good error messages

let the user know exactly what was wrong
  which data is incorrect
  how is it incorrect
  how can it be fixed
allow easy recovery
guidelines

Prevent errors

avoid modes

provide guidance

eamples on format (especially dates)
guidelines

Help and documentation added since article

few read documentation in advance
provide online help
mini-help pages as well
can be overdone (paperclip)

getting better
still rarely “why not” help
example evaluation

consider bluej java environment
   free academic targeted tool
   mediocre interface

Dialogue
   should provide project button(s) at start up
   cannot create new project when in class file
   closing project quits app
   good: new class is at top after creating project

Speak user's language
   good: overall
evaluation continued

Minimize user's memory load
   no way to find what breakpoints currently set
   does not realize undone changes are not changes

graphical display
   good: use of hashed file for uncompiled
       although unclear what the metaphor is
   very strange line drawing and layout
   not saved and restored
   very small default window size
   strange arrow appeared, unclear what it meant
evaluation continued

Consistency
window based menu inconsistent with platform
insert method provides unusual indenting
unclear what darkened close button means
auto updates code for inherits arrow, not for uses
ok/cancel backwards from conventional

clearly marked exits
everywhere
evaluation continued

Feedback
  good: status at bottom of window

Shortcuts
  cannot drag to move into package
  cannot drag arrows like draw tool

Good error messages
  invalid class name - why
evaluation finished

Prevent errors
should disable compile button where invalid
such as project readme
should disable indent when fully left already
moving package lost extends relationship
good: closing without saving retains changes

Help
mentioned but not seemingly available
good: does include some tool tips
gentleness

no one likes to be told they’re wrong
Ui seems particularly sensitive

be gentle and politic in comments

much more likely to succeed
need to work with designer
not against them
another evaluation

look at web services
  do an evaluation on the fly

feel free to chime in
next class

please bring laptops
  if you have them

we will do evaluations in small groups