

4. In-Class Assignment: Heuristic Evaluation

Date Assigned: Friday, March 22, 2013

Date Due: Friday, March 22, 2013

Points: 15pts

0. Review Nielsen's 10 usability heuristics (<http://www.nngroup.com/articles/ten-usability-heuristics/>) and notes on severity evaluation (<http://www.nngroup.com/articles/how-to-rate-the-severity-of-usability-problems/>).
1. Pick one of the following websites / applications to evaluate:
 - a. Moodle: only evaluate this if you are using Moodle for another course. Focus on just one or two aspects, for example the main course screen and maybe one more specific component, such as viewing your grades.
 - b. Craigslist.
 - c. iTunes. The latest version (iTunes 11).
 - d. MTA site for public transit in New York City: <http://www.mta.info/mnr/>
 - e. TransLoc: Transit Visualization app. You will need to install it on your phone. <http://transloc.com>.
2. Spend 25 minutes working alone to apply heuristic evaluation to the app/site. As you work, make a list of each usability problem you find. For each one, record the following:
 - a. Which of Nielsen's 10 Usability Heuristics is violated. If a problem seems like it could belong to one of several categories, don't worry too much about picking the "right" one. Finding the violation is the most important part.
 - b. Argue, in a few sentences, why the heuristic is violated.
 - c. Rate the severity of the violation.
 - d. Take a screenshot of the violation and save it to your computer. Print Screen key or Snipping Tool on Windows; <http://graphicssoft.about.com/od/screencapture/qt/screenshot-ipod-iphone.htm> for iPhone; <http://www.addictivetips.com/mobile/how-to-take-screenshots-of-android-device/> for Android.

Record this information into a Google Document named (HeuristicEvaluation-LastName), including both text and images. Share the document with me (shereen@pacificu.edu).

3. After the 25 minutes, find 2-3 other people who worked on the same interface as you. Spend 30 minutes sharing your evaluations with each other. You do NOT need to compile your individual violations into a single list, but if you want to add things to your list or correct your list during the group discussion, you may do so. The discuss the following questions together:

- a. What were the most severe problems with the app/site? How do these problems fit into Nielsen's heuristic categories? What are some suggestions to fix the UI, and how do you propose changes relate to the heuristic categories?
 - b. Which problems, if any, were made easier to find (or potentially easier to correct) by the list of Nielsen's heuristics? That is, if I had asked you to perform a usability evaluation of the app/site without first discussing heuristics, what might you have overlooked?
 - c. Did you encounter usability problems that seemed to not be included under any of Nielsen's heuristics? If so, what additional heuristics might you propose for this type of application of site?
4. Nominate one person in your group to create a new Google Doc (HeuristicEvalDiscussion-LastName). Then do the following:
 - a. Add the first names of each person in your group.
 - b. Write a short summary of your discussion on each of the four discussion questions above.
 - c. Share the document with me (shereen@pacificu.edu).

I expect it to be possible to finish this assignment during class time and obtain an A grade. Please submit no later than 11:59pm on Friday, March 22, 2013.

Grading

Your work will be graded using the following scale:

- 0: Did not participate, or did not attend class and did not have a valid excuse.
- 1-5: Participated, but minimal effort, portions missing.
- 6-10: Participated, assignment is completed. But some problems: either only superficial discussion, not related to Nielsen's heuristics, or clearly inappropriate application of heuristics.
- 11-15: Participated, assignment is complete, documents include more than just superficial insight, and evaluation and discussion are clearly related to Nielsen's heuristics.