

CMSI 370

INTERACTION DESIGN

Fall 2007

Assignment 0920

Time to kick things up a notch: let's now get some practice on seeing how well a particular user interface conforms to some set of interaction design principles.

For Submission

Choose a set of principles from the handouts and/or the textbook(s) and report on how well (or how badly) one of these user interfaces conforms to those principles:

- Amazon
- AIM
- eBay
- Eclipse
- Gaim
- iTunes
- Firefox
- GMail
- Google Earth
- Google Maps
- Google Video
- ManeGate
- MapQuest
- Microsoft Messenger
- Microsoft Office
- NetBeans
- OpenOffice
- Safari
- SourceForge
- Yahoo Mail
- Yahoo Messenger
- YouTube

In the case of a Web site, make sure to try at least two Web browsers to see if there are any browser-specific behaviors — sometimes this makes for a significant difference.

If you would like to tackle a user interface that isn't in this list, ask me about it.

What to Do

1. Choose one of the sets of principles that were mentioned in class: Shneiderman's 8 golden rules, Nielsen's usability heuristics, or Tognazzini's first principles of interaction design.
2. Prepare two or more screenshots, with accompanying explanations or annotations, that illustrate specific instances of that user interface's fulfillment or violation of some principle within your chosen set.
3. Write a one- to three-page "executive summary" explaining how the user interface fulfills or violates the overall set of principles.

Make sure to cover as many of the principles as possible; also, remember that a user interface may fulfill a particular principle in one place but violate it in another. In addition, principles may take different priorities depending on the specific application and target user. The more thorough the analysis and the more striking the examples, the better.

How to Turn It In

Submit your analysis on hardcopy. If some of your screenshots require color to illustrate your point(s), then ask Caskey if you may print those pages on the color printer.