

6.813/6.831 • User Interface Design and Implementation

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science

Spring Semester, 2011

HW2: Heuristic Evaluation

Due Session 26

In this individual assignment, you will do heuristic evaluation on a computer prototype developed by your classmates.

You should look at the web page for the project you were assigned, which will give you instructions for running the prototype and background information about the project. This is not an anonymous evaluation, so feel free to contact the project group directly if you need more information than their web page provides.

As soon as you receive your prototype assignment, try to download and run the prototype. You don't have to do your heuristic evaluation right away, but poke around a bit and make sure the prototype appears to work for you.

Follow the heuristic evaluation procedure we discussed in class to evaluate the interface carefully. Make a numbered list of usability problems and successes you find. For each problem or positive comment, you should:

- describe the problem or positive feature, using screenshots;
- identify the relevant usability heuristics (from Nielsen's Ten Usability Heuristics, or any other guidelines we've discussed in class);
- estimate its severity (for problems, use cosmetic, minor, major, or catastrophic; for positive comments, just say good).

You aren't required to recommend solutions for the problems, but any ideas you have would no doubt be appreciated.

Be thorough. You should have at least 15 useful comments (positive or negative) about the interface that you evaluate.

Write your report in a readable style. The usability of your report to its recipients will matter in your grade. In particular, don't bury the problems you found in reams of free-flowing prose. Where possible, include screenshots to illustrate the problems you found. In general, make your report easy to read and understand.

What To Hand In

Your report must be submitted in PDF format, not plain text or Microsoft Word. If your word processor can't generate PDF, there is free software for printing documents out to PDF.

Your report will be graded by the teaching staff, and will also be forwarded (without our grading feedback) to the group whose project you evaluated.

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