

DIS1 Assignment 2

User Observation

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/gerlos/3119891607/>

Due: Thursday, November 10th, 2011, 18:00

Contribution to the course score: 3/100

Group size: 3 – 4

Estimated workload: 6 hours/person

Description

This week you have learned how to answer the first two design questions: *Who are users?* and *What will they do with the system?* Forgetting to consider the first question is the common pitfall that even many professional designers occasionally suffered. Note that in the universal remote control design (lecture 1, 2), the first question is left unanswered. Take a minute now to reflect on how the design process happens usually. Recognize how easy it is to fall into this trap.

We intentionally pushed you into this trap. At the end of this assignment, you will reflect and compare your design before and after considering the users. We hope that you will remember this lesson and be cautious for your future designs.

In this assignment, you will *observe users* for your universal remote control, and you will answer the first two questions by creating personas and storyboards. You may choose your own user group and task with one constraint: **a public place with a shared public screen**. Examples of such place are: a bar, a waiting area in a hospital, a fitness centre, a cafeteria. Notice that although each of these places usually has a single remote control being used by a single moderator, we would urge you to challenge that assumption. Your remote control does not have to be a single object used by a single user.

Task

1. Think about how the design process previously went, when we did not yet ask you to think about the users of your remote control. No written submission needed for this point.
2. Choose *one* place that follow the constraint: **a public place with a shared public screen**.
3. Observe the users in the chosen place. You may use techniques you have learned, e.g. observation frameworks (lecture 2) or photographic observation (lab 2). Bring small notebooks and cameras with you to capture the data for later analysis. Include samples of the material you have collected in your submission.
4. Analyze your observation result to answer the first two questions of design. Summarize your answers by creating persona and storyboard.
 - a. Create **three personas** These personas should be very specific and distinct:
 - i. **Primary user persona** represents the majority of users of your system
 - ii. **Extreme user persona** represents users that use your system much more frequent and in-depth, or users with special physical/mental demand.
 - iii. **Negative persona** represents whom you are not designing for. This persona are people that may be involved in your system, but they are not people who we designing for.

Each persona should fit in one page. Include a photo to represent your persona. See slides from lab 2 for a list of what you may include in a persona. Make your persona concrete such that the reader believes that it is a real person. You can find more tips about persona at http://www.steptwo.com.au/papers/kmc_personas

- b. Create **four storyboards** that shows three scenarios where your personas (defined above) are interacting with your system. Two storyboards must show how the existing system fails to satisfy the user. Another two must show how your system improves the situation.
 - i. Each storyboard comprise of 3–6 boxes of illustration showing each step of the story. (See an example in lecture 3.)
 - ii. The storyboard must be hand drawn. You may scan or take a photograph of the storyboard and type the text in for readability. You do not have to do so if your handwriting is readable.
 - iii. In the same page of the storyboard, you may include a short discussion about the task. (not more than a paragraph in length)
5. Begin redesigning your remote control. Note materials you used for the design in your idea log. No submission needed for this point.
6. Compare your redesigned remote control with the previous versions (the naïve design you did in the first lecture, the principle-based design after the second lecture). Note your thoughts, if any, in your idea log. No submission needed for this point.

Submission: See the (updated) Assignment Submission Guideline for general detail.

- The main file of your submission will comprise 8 – 9 A4 pages:
 - ▶ 1 page concisely discuss your observation and analysis process. You may refer to additional materials in this page.
 - ▶ 3 pages for personas, one for each persona
 - ▶ 4 pages for storyboards, one for each storyboard
 - ▶ (optional) 1 page reflecting on interesting lessons that you have learned and wanted to share with the class. (This will not be graded.)
- Additional material as an evidence supporting your observation and analysis. This can be photos and videos from the observation or during analysis

Please create a submission entry in L2P well before the deadline. See a step-by-step guide in “Assignments and solutions.pdf” in Shared Domain section. From this assignment onward, we will not accept the solution by email.

Next Assignment

You will create low fidelity prototypes from your design and you will test them with the user and will present your final design in the class.

Negative Persona

Here are excerpts from “The Inmates Are Running The Asylum” (1999), a book by Alan Cooper, the father of Visual Basic and a major proponent for user-centered design. You will notice how Ted, a negative persona, is eliminated from the success scenario.

Background

“Our client, Remedy Inc, was revising its flagship product, Action Request System (ARS), and wanted to make it ‘easier to use.’ By developing these three personas (and a few others), we could clearly articulate what the goals of the project really were.

Persona (abbreviated)

“...our project concerned a technical help-desk management system. We defined three people, two of them in-house help-desk technicians. Leo Pierece was a Marketing Assistant in the company’s product division. He used a computer in his daily work and was occasionally a consumer of help-desk services. Alison Harding was a company technician, whose job entailed going from office of office with her aluminum tool case, fixing technical problems for the likes of Leo. Ted van Buren was a help-desk representative, who spent his day answering phone calls from people like Leo, and dispatching Alison to Leo’s office to fix his computer.

Scenario

“Ted as presently the main user of ARS, but he wasn’t our primary persona. Although we would make operating the program easier for Ted, if that was all we accomplished, we would have failed our job. Instead we were making the help-desk system directly accessible to Leo. Formerly, if Leo needed help, he had to telephone Ted, who would dispatch Alison. The full cast of characters articulated very clearly who the players were. This let us communicate to all the engineers that our goal could only be achieved if Leo, the low-tech Marketing wonk, could use the ARS system on his own computer to summon technical help without Ted’s intervention.

Grading Guideline

How well you understand the users and the task?

Criteria	Guiding questions	Check minus	Check	Check plus
1. Genuineness and concreteness of the persona (30%)	Were the personas derived from real observation instead of hypothetical assumptions? Were persona described concrete enough for the design? Were there unstated assumptions?	No evidence showing the connection between the observation and persona. The personas were too abstract and too flexible such that different assumptions have to be made in the design process.	Concrete personas supported by the data from the observation. The behaviors that are related to the design were explained explicitly.	Concrete personas that were described realistically in detail so that the reader can relate to the person and see underlying motivations and value.
2. Genuineness and concreteness of the storyboard (30%)	Were the storyboard convey the task in concretely? Were the success and failure storyboard sells how superior the design will be? Were the scenario in the storyboard realistic and recurring?	The scenarios were unlikely. Not much change in the success story compared to the current situation.	The storyboard described the main task with adequate detail. The comparison between the success and failed story makes the design desirable.	The current storyboards revealed the problems that are not obvious. The improved storyboard showed a novel approach in success scenario. Attempts were put to refine the storyboards with additional observations.
3. Depth of the insights to the users and the tasks (20%)	Were any new insights apart from what can be speculated without any observation discovered? Were the reason behind users's behaviors speculated and tested?	The users and the task were described, but no reason or motivation behind them were discussed.	Motivation behind users' behavior were speculated and discussed.	The speculated motion were put into test by observing and re-observing the users. Other evidence such as interview were used to triangulate the conclusion.
4. Clarity and quality of the presentation (20%)	Was the written description clear and concise? Were the images used convey the personality of the persona? Were the quality of images adequate? Were the appropriate typographical features used?	The description was ambiguous. Photos of the persona were unrealistic. Sketches were not clear. The layouts prevented the assignment from being readable.	Clear and concise description and images were used.	Layouts and typographical detail make the content clear without having to read in the detail.