

IAT 432—Team Assignment 5 (5%)

Evaluating the Aesthetics of Representation and Interaction Using Interface Criticism

READINGS

Bertelsen & Pold, *Criticism as an approach to interface aesthetics*, NordiCHI '04, ACM press (2004), 23-27 [posted on course web site]

The Goal

The goal of this assignment is to use the interface criticism method to evaluate aesthetic aspects of representation and interaction in order to propose improvements to the interface design of a digital artifact with consideration given to its context of use. This is an analytical evaluation method since you are analyzing the interface using a set of criteria, rather than testing with users.

The Artifact

You and your team can choose any digital artifact you want to evaluate in this assignment. This can be a prototype that one of your team members has developed at SIAT or an existing product (e.g., i-phone, web site, art installation). The one requirement is that at least one team member must have observed others using this artifact in its natural usage context (i.e., in the field) before you choose it.

The Evaluation Method

This is an analytical method. You and your team members will be evaluating the artifact you chose using a set of criteria to analyze the aesthetic aspects of representation and interaction related to your chosen artifact. Through the interface criticism analytic process you should increase your understanding of the basic use qualities to expect from the interface. You should focus on understanding the types of representations in the interface, the support interaction in changing contexts of use and identifying any inconsistencies between the design and use context.

You should use the Aesthetic evaluation criteria outlined in the Bertelsen & Pold paper (see readings above) and discussed in class. Follow the guidelines in the Procedure and Interface Criticism Guide sections of the article. The criteria to use are:

1. Stylistic References
2. Standards
3. Materiality, Immediacy/Hypermediacy
4. Remediation
5. Hybridity
6. Representation
7. Challenges to Users' Expectations
8. Development Potentials

Make sure you are familiar with the criteria before you begin. If at least three members of your team have not observed your artifact in use, your team should then either observe users with the artifact, interview users of the artifact or conduct a mini think aloud session of users using the artifact at the next stage of the process. This stage is critical in order to avoid an overly subjective interpretation of the artifact based on only your own experience with it. After you have observed your

artifact in use, you may want to discuss your observations with your teammates. Next, each team member should review the criteria and think about the artifact on their own. For each criterion, apply the questions given in lecture and/or suggestions in the paper. Create a set of notes for each criterion.

Once each individual has reviewed the set of criteria, meet as a group to analyze, discuss and work towards consensus (although consensus is not required). You should try to identify ways and means to improve the interface, and thus the user experience, as you apply these criteria in your analysis of the aesthetic aspects of the interface. Try to summarize any useful information came from your analysis and then apply this in redesign suggestions and illustrations.

The Deliverables

Report

Include a title page with the course, assignment # and title, instructor's name, TA's name, your team member's names and student IDs and due date. Also use headers and footers. Use 12 or 10 point font either times roman, arial or verdana.

Your total report length not including the title page should be 7 to 10 pages single spaced and contain the following sections.

Executive Summary

Method (overview)

Summary of Analysis – list by criterion. Summarize important points from your individual and group analysis.

Suggestions for Improvement – list by improvement or interface area. Use annotated screen shots to illustrate your points. Back up your suggestions for improvement with reference to analytical results.

Method Question: What do you think the strengths and weaknesses are of this evaluation method compared to the analytical heuristic evaluation method?