Tasks

Discussion Section 3

Tasks Description

- Describes user’s goal, in user’s terms
  - Avoid terms from interface or computer.
  - Unsure if term is from technology or user’s domain?
    - Pick a new term that is unambiguously from user’s domain

- User is the subject of sentence(s) describing the task
  - Computer / interface should not be the subject
    - If the computer / interface is the subject, you are describing design, not the user’s task

Examples:
- No: “User wants to send an email in Outlook.”
- Yes: “Person wants to send a message to a friend in another state.”
- No: “The interface needs to enable access to files about…”
- Yes: “Person needs to be able to view and modify documents about…”
Tasks Description

- The verb of the sentence describing the task is some form of “want” or “need.”
- Examples:
  - No: “User schedules meetings.”
  - Yes: “Person needs to schedule meetings.”

Tasks Description

- A task is never a set of directions – it is a description of the outcome a user wants to produce.
- Example:
  - No: “User wants to send a message by creating a new email, typing the message, & sending it.”
  - Yes: “Person wants to send a message.”

Task?

- Task: Person wants to get milk from the cow
- Didn’t mention machine
- Didn’t say how: squeeze utters, use machine, etc.
Task: Person wants to get edible meat off the turkey
Didn’t mention the knife or how person got the meat off

Tasks: Project Example
Project: teach elderly people how to keep in touch with family members using technology
What are some tasks to analyze for this project?
Note: you’ll use Contextual Inquiry to find the tasks for your project

Tasks: Project Example
Project: teach elderly people how to keep in touch with family members using technology
Tasks:
  Elderly people want to send messages to family members.
Tasks: Project Example

Project: teach elderly people how to keep in touch with family members using technology

Tasks:
- Elderly people want to send messages to family members.
- Elderly want to get responses from family members.
- Elderly want to keep messages from family safe for long periods of time.
- Elderly want to get & look at pictures from family.

Tasks: Project Example

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Tasks: Project Example

How do I determine these tasks?
- Contextual Inquiry (a fancy type of interview)

So I know these tasks — how does this help me build an interface?
- Contextual Inquiry also helps you see how they currently
  - send messages
  - get responses
  - keep messages safe
  - get & look at pictures
- Use this info to understand
  - how they think about the tasks
  - what might make sense to them on a UI (words, order of task steps, visuals, etc.)