Fine Arts Perspective in User Interface Design

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ABSTRACT

In this poster, we first aim to explain an interdisciplinary approach and question an idea and attempt. Second, we aim to underline challenges and enablers of such an attempt. This idea can be briefly summarized as "inclusion of learning activities and assessments that are applied in coordination with the Department of Fine Arts might be necessary in terms of developing visual design skills". The target of this approach is improving the courses like 'human computer interaction' or 'user-interface design'.

Categories and Subject Descriptors

D.2.2 [Design Tools and Techniques]: User Interfaces

H.5.2 [User Interfaces]: Screen design (e.g., text, graphics, color)

General Terms

Design, Experimentation, Human Factors.

Keywords

Basic design, user interface design, design process, creative thinking.

1. INTRODUCTION

While designing user interfaces, the elements and principles related to visual perception and aesthetics can also be found in studies of other fields like graphical design and fine arts. In addition to composition and aesthetics, another related issue is the design process that can be discussed from multiple perspectives.

Additionally, in such courses, it is also important to explain the design process. When taking a course related to 'user interface design' for the first time, students may have tendency to jump into trial-and-error way of using visual elements. We also observed that, in such context, students might use 'design' word instead of using 'graphical design', 'visual design' or 'aesthetics'. Misuse of this concept might result in neglecting to design and underestimation of cognitive processes underlying a successful visual design.

Students studying computer programming are not expected to show high artistic performances. However, especially when they are graduated, they are expected to work with professionals from other fields such as 'graphical designers'. In this context, it is obvious that communication within the project-team and understanding the viewpoints of other professionals turns into a challenging issue.

Considering these points, new multidisciplinary learning activities and assessments are proposed to have a positive effect on student learning and motivation.

2. PROPOSED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Depending on these observations, by experimentation, some activities and assessments supported by 'Department of Fine Arts' are included in an HCI course. The aim of these activities were introducing and integrating different viewpoints in terms of visual design and design processes.

Objectives of the activities and the assessment were (1) introducing the basic principles and elements of design (2) applying the selected principles and elements to a selected HCI related topic and (3) understanding the design process from a different and innovative point of view.

As an initial constraint, the time reserved for visual design is generally limited and most of the students were not familiar with fine art. Considering this using 'Collage' and 'Assemblage' (A system of components assembled together for a particular purpose) techniques were decided to be more appropriate and feasible.

Using design elements and principles from the point of fine arts is integrated with the topic of the course through producing a collage on their selected HCI related term. Through this collage activity critical thinking, discussing and simulating the design process is expected from the students.

3. CONCLUSION

Questioning the design process from a very different field and applying the principles through a collage project on the user interface related concepts seem worth considering. The challenges and enablers should be considered in such innovative or experimental approaches.