Evaluation Exercise II – Week of February 15th

For this exercise, you will be concerning yourself with the usability of a non-standard interface. Your group will need to find an example of a novel or non-standard interface as we discussed in class. This type of interface can be described in many ways, however for the purposes of this exercise we will define it according to one or more the following criteria: One that does not use the full complement of WIMP components, or one that does not hold to interface design conventions, or one that is not used by a majority of people / used in a specialized environment, or a combination of all of these. For example, the Nest thermostat, a medical device, an automotive diagnostic machine, an oscilloscope, an animation program, or anything that your group feels is a unique interface in the general sense. At least one person in the group should have hands-on experience with the interface.

Describe the thing you have chosen and explain why you feel it is an example of a novel interface. Be sure to provide examples from the interface or device itself to support your claims. You can explain it in terms of functionality, interface design, interaction, or a combination of all of these.

Next, walk through the process of using it for its core function as well as a secondary function of your choosing, describing each step in the chain. Don’t leave out any steps, start at the beginning and include every step through to the completion of the goal.

Indicate its primary method of interaction. Is it touch, stylus, mouse/keyboard, voice, something else or a combination? Give an example of carrying out a single function using the input method described. If there is a secondary input method, and there likely is, describe that as well in the same way.

Considering the non-standard interface or interface elements, are they used effectively? Are they appropriate in the context of the interface and its purpose? Continuing with that, do they have high learnability and memorability, or low? Is there any aspect of the design of the device or the interface that contributes to its overall ease or efficiency of use? Explain and support your response to each.

Evaluate whether there are any components of the interface that \*are\* standard. Does it use any standard iconography, menu design/labels, interaction methods, etc.? Does it use those elements effectively? Describe how they are utilized in the interface to support your conclusion.

Finally, give your overall impressions of the interface you have chosen. Does the group feel, considering the novel nature of the interface, that it is well designed in terms of its usability? If non-standard interface or interaction elements have been used in its design, have they been designed and implemented in a sensible way, in a way that fits with the intended use of the ‘thing?’ Ultimately, do you feel that the design of the interface / device is a success, and give a final, one-sentence review of your device.

The final deliverable should have a title/cover page, and is due Monday, Feb. 22nd, in class.

(Foreshadowing: Friday’s discussion will build on this. Some of you may already have an idea as to what it will be.)