
Design Assignment 1.1

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My first interview was with a Christian pastor on Sproul, who felt a “generation removed” from technology. His gripe with technology was about the ease of access of morally questionable material on the Internet, preferring these sites be banned. Usually using computers to check email, he likes that they are simple and easy to use.



This IT manager I met at People’s Cafe had many uses for technology at work, but also for his personal communication and music systems. He dislikes how enterprise software are constructed, noting that they opt for data collection over individual user experience. In addition, he mentions the how the city college’s enrollment system separates the class search from the class selection, and resets the “cart” of classes each time another search is made, making it unintuitive. His words of wisdom: “Simpler is better.”



Also met at the People’s Cafe, this software developer uses technology to keep in touch and to discover new concepts and ideas. He feels that iOS does a much better job than Android in terms of user experience and security. Specifically, he places importance in “getting to things quicker,” which he finds slower on Android, but is improving with apps such as Google’s Inbox.



A retired office worker I met at the bus stop, she uses computers primarily for email and searches, calling herself the “best Googler around.” She finds it “hard to undo things” on computers, and prefers the Mac over the PC (Windows) as they are “friendlier and help more.” Also, she wishes that manuals were more descriptive and helpful to the lay-user.



Met at the Downtown Berkeley BART station, this programmer for physics research most often uses technology for her work and photography editing. A Linux power user, her main issue with computers is the virus scanners, which are clunky and crash her computer. Otherwise, she could not think of any other issues she had with technology, other than uncommented code ruining clarity.

I also interviewed a history teacher at the BART station, who requested not to have his photo taken. He uses his computer to make searches, communicate through email and Skype, and buy goods. As a teacher, he also has to work with documents throughout the day, so he had no hesitation in pointing out that the worst user experience he has to deal with is in Windows 8.1. Apparently, when he tries to scroll down his documents and he moves his cursor too much to the side, it pops open the dock and interrupts his flow.

Overall, the people I interviewed tended to think of the computer, and a lesser extent their phones, when I said “technology in everyday use.” Most interviewees focused on communication applications as the main use of their technology, and value ease of use (“getting to things quicker”) and unobtrusive features (the too-eager dock of Windows 8 being an antithesis) as key points to a positive user experience. This seems to hold true regardless of technical experience or know-how. Thus, an application that makes correspondence quicker or easier (e.g. meeting organizer, group file distribution, etc.) would probably have the most impact. Regardless, for non-power users, the best way to improve on a technology seems to be to make it simpler.
