A mid-semester test for CITS3201 will be held on
Monday 2nd April 2012 at 1pm in the
Webb Lecture Theatre

TEST FORMAT & VENUE

The paper will contain FIVE short answer questions. You should answer all questions.

There are 10 marks in total for the paper, each question will be marked out of 2.

The paper is worth 10% of the overall mark for HCI.

You will have 30 MINUTES to complete the test. There is no separate reading period.

Bring a pen (or two!) to write with. Paragraph answers will be written directly on to the test paper.

MATERIAL TO BE EXAMINED & HOW TO STUDY FOR THE TEST

The test will be based on material in HCI lectures up until 28 March (inclusive), covering interaction, users, collaboration, affect and interfaces (Chapter 1-6 of your textbook).

When studying for the test, you should review the objectives and key points of each lecture. Test questions (and examination questions) are designed to test whether you have achieved the objectives and understood the key points. Also review the core reading listed for each lecture, as well as the lecture notes, and browse the suggested further reading.

Attempt the 5 sample questions below under test conditions (30 minutes, no books). Each answer should be a short paragraph. Then mark your answers by consulting your text book, lecture notes and other references. Sample answers are provided further on. Think about how you could improve your answer. You can also study by inventing and answering your own questions for other material covered in HCI and using the questions at the end of relevant text book chapters.
SAMPLE TEST QUESTIONS

1. Consider the two design principles "visibility" and "constraints". For each of the two, explain the principle and describe an example of it being used in a good design.

2. List 6 ways in which an interface designer can assist the user to manage their attention.

3. Give one-sentence explanations of each of the following: bulletin boards, buddy lists, blogs, wikis, Flikr, MySpace and LinkedIn.

4. By referring to your own experience with some online shopping sites, evaluate the persuasive impact of a virtual agent.

5. In your opinion should anthropomorphism of robotic interfaces be encouraged or not? Give reasons.

Mark Reynolds

HCI Co-ordinator

March 2012
1. Consider the two design principles "visibility" and "constraints". For each of the two, explain the principle and describe an example of it being used in a good design.

Visibility: the more visible functions are the more likely users will know what to do next. Eg, using a visible button on a GUI to stop a program as opposed to expecting the user to know to press "Esc" or "Ctrl-C".

Constraints: restrict the actions of a user to only those actions which make sense as that stage. Eg, grey out options on a drop down menu if they are not permitted at that time.

2. List 6 ways in which an interface designer can assist the user to manage their attention.

Make information stand out when it is needed by using 1) animations, 2) colour, 3) underlining, ..
Using 4) spacing or 5) borders to separate different pieces of information.
6) Avoid clutter.

3. Give one-sentence explanations of each of the following: bulletin boards, buddy lists, blogs, wikis, Flikr, MySpace and LinkedIn.

bulletin board: a web-based bulletin board displays messages (or postings) to allow information to be relayed
buddy list: a window that shows all your buddies (friends, family, coworkers, and others) who are signed on to a web-based communications service
blog: a website showing the regular postings of an individual in date/time order
wiki: a collaborative website whose content can be edited by anyone with access to it
Flikr: a web-based photo sharing service
MySpace: a large web-based social network
LinkedIn: a large web-based business network
4. By referring to your own experience with some online shopping sites, evaluate the persuasive impact of a virtual agent.

In labs I compared the IKEA(UK) shopping site which has a virtual assistant (to answer queries) to the Amazon.com website which does not have a virtual assistant but which does have help and search facilities and does make recommendations on purchases. The IKEA assistant was believable, interesting and fun but did not help me with my queries any more than the the standard facilities on the Amazon site did. Possibly the novelty and good design(and implementation) of the assistant made me favourably disposed to the IKEA site and therefore to making a purchase there. However, the way that the Amazon recommendation software made sensible suggestions to me would have had the same effect.

5. In your opinion should anthropomorphism of robotic interfaces be encouraged or not? Give reasons.

I think it is sensible for some robots. For some purposes, such as companionship and entertainment it helps the purpose of the robot if they act or look like humans. This does not seem dishonest or immoral if the user is aware of the situation. For other purposes, such as industrial, exploration, rescue or even many domestic tasks a human-like interface is not needed and is likely to be inefficient or hard to use.
REFERENCES

If you would like more help with the questions, see lecture notes and text book. Or post a query on help3201.

Mark Reynolds

HCI Co-ordinator

March 2011