

Good Designs and Bad Designs in Our Everyday Lives

Due in one week, at 5:00pm on Wednesday, January 31st, 2007.

Submit both a **paper copy** in-class and an **electronic version** on our class wiki. The paper copy will be returned to you after grading.

Introduction

A good designer usually has a pair of “sharp eyes” that can identify both good designs and clumsy solutions around us. Remember - many so-called “human errors” and “machine misuse” are actually errors in design. A qualified designer should also be able to communicate his/her ideas effectively with other team members via face-to-face meetings, sketches and documents.

In this assignment, you are required to identify *one example of good design* and *one example of bad design* from human-designed everyday objects, and create a document (**two pages maximum totally**) with sketches and photos to explain your findings.

For each example, please describe the purpose of the overall design; describe the *particular aspect* you find good or bad; explain why it's good or bad; if bad, speculate why it might have been designed that way, and suggest a better design; Illustrate your explanations with at least one sketch and one photograph/screen shot (the sketch(s), photograph(s) and screen shot(s) must be created by yourself).

Details

Your examples should be specific. It's very hard to find a design that's completely good or completely bad, so don't try. Instead, focus on a particular feature or aspect of an object that makes your case. Avoid fuzzy words like “intuitive” and “user-friendly”. Find concrete reasons for your judgment.

Feel free to go out into the real world and consider consumer appliances, car dashboards, building entrances, traffic intersections, shower controls, etc. Software applications and websites are also welcome. Make sure that the designs you introduced can be accessed in our everyday lives, not just from TV programs or news reports. So it's a good idea to describe a good design in your car, it's not a good idea to criticize the design of a space shuttle you saw from a newspaper.

Black List: When you choose examples of good and bad designs, you should avoid using examples on the following list. They might be typical good/bad examples in a design/human factors class, but they have been used as examples too many times in the past few years – ATM machines, Digital watches, Logon/New account interface of any websites, Any Apple products, including but not limited to iPod, iPhone, MacOS X, etc; any Microsoft products, including but not limited to Windows 2000/XP/Vista, Word, Internet Explorer, MSN

Messenger, Zune, xbox etc; any google products, including but not limited to google search, gmail, gtalk, gmap etc; any Unix/Linux variants and standard applications/commands included in those OS's, including but not limited to ls, rm, vi, emacs, X-Window etc, anything described on <http://www.baddesigns.com>.

What to Hand In

Submit both a **paper copy** in-class *and* an **electronic version** on our class wiki. The paper version will be returned to you after grading. You may use digital cameras or scanners to digitize your sketches and upload them into the class wiki.

Grading Guidelines

Originality (20%)

Your examples should be original, not popular good/bad design examples in some textbooks or those that have won some design awards already.

Validity (20%)

Make sure your arguments on good design/bad design are valid and well supported. Remember – some seemingly bad designs might be trade-off results on conflicting factors such as manufacturing cost, reliability and safety etc.

Writing (25%)

The writing must clearly present the important facts and be concise.

Creativity and Feasibility (15%)

Make sure your suggested improvements for bad designs are feasible and effective (at least better than the original design). Also remember, creative designs do not always have to be designs including bleeding-edge technologies.

Sketching and Photos (20%)

Your sketches and photos are easy to understand and support your arguments.

Homework 1 Wiki Submission Guideline

Creating a Wiki Page for this assignment

Begin by creating a new wiki page for this assignment. Go to your user page that you created when you made your account. You can get to it by typing the following URL into your browser:

```
http://lbs.cs.berkeley.edu:8080/wiki/index.php/User:FirstName_LastName
```

Replace FirstName and LastName with your real first and last names. This will take you to the page you created for yourself when you created your wiki account. If you have trouble accessing this page, please check that you created your wiki account properly.

Edit your user page to add a link to a new wiki page for this assignment. The wiki syntax should look like this:

```
[[IH01-FirstNameLastName|Homework 1 - FirstName LastName]]
```

Again replace FirstName and LastName with your name. Look at Jingtao Wang's user page for an example. This will generate a link to create your new page. Click on the link and enter the information about your assignment. Be sure to clearly address everything mentioned in the writing guidelines above.

Uploading Images

To upload images to the wiki, first create a link for the image of the form `[[Image:image_name.jpg]]` (replacing image_name.jpg with a unique image name for use by the server). This will create a link you can follow that will then allow you to upload the image. Alternatively, you can use the "Upload file" link in the toolbox to upload the image first, and then subsequently create a link to it on your wiki page.

Add Link to Your Finished Assignment

Once you are finished editing the page, add a link to it here with your full name as the link text. The wiki syntax will look like this: * `[[IH01-FirstNameLastName|Homework 1 - FirstName LastName]]`.

Note: the same guideline can be accessed via the following URL

http://lbs.cs.berkeley.edu:8080/wiki/index.php/Individual_Assignment_1