Menu Selection, Form Fill-In and Dialog Boxes: Introduction, Task- Related Menu Organization, Single menus, Combinations of Multiple Menus, Content Organization, Fast Movement Through Menus, Data entry with Menus: Form Fill-in, dialog Boxes, and alternatives, Audio Menus and menus for Small Displays.

Introduction

Menus are designed around the idea as an attractive alternative when direct-manipulation is intangible or inappropriate. They are effective because they offer clues that elicit recognition.

Task-Related Menu Organization

The goal of the menu is to be sensible, comprehensible, memorable, and convenient. This calls for like items to be grouped together. E.G. Restaurants have appetizers entrees and desserts separated into categories.

Single Menus

A. Binary Menus
These are very simple and very basic and usually only have one option and one command attached to them. The form would usually have a list of options but only one choice would be acceptable and applicable in the list.

B. Multiple-item Menus
These are used when there are more than one function or features of a program that can do somewhat the same thing, this menu allows for all the item to be listed and your choice will execute the selected choice of the function for feature of a program.

C. Multiple-selection Menus or Check Boxes
These are used when more than one option is needed to continue with the job, they are used for more detailed applications or survey's and may not allow you to proceed without multiple options being selected.

D. Pull-Down Menus
Available in the top level menu bar, when an option is chosen in the top level menu it displays the following menu in a pull down or sometimes called a drop down menu.

E. Pop-up Menus
When hovering over folders or checked items, a small pop-up menu will display allowing for further choices to be selected or information will be displayed.

F. Toolbar Menus
Allow for actions to be executed on a displayed object like a picture or text box, it will display a toolbar that will allow you to change color, text, text size, position, window size and etc.

Menus for long lists

G. Scrolling Menus
These are becoming more widely used for pictures on websites, they can display man different pictures but an arrow on each side of the listed pictures which allows you to navigate through the pictures without having to open one up at a time.

H. Combo Boxes
Commonly-used graphical user interface which is a combination of a drop-down list or list box and a single-line textbox, allowing the user to either type a value directly into the control or choose from the list of existing options. Combo boxes are typically applied to provide auto complete or autotype functionality in a convenient way to the user.

I. Fisheye Menus
Is a dynamically change the size of menu items to provide a focus area around the mouse pointer. This makes it possible to present the entire menu on a single screen without requiring buttons, scrollbars, or hierarchies.

J. Sliders and Alpha Sliders
Are sliders that are commonly used for a long list of information that is sorted out best alphabetically, which then the slider allows you to scroll through the information quickly to say a contact on a phone or an artist on your ipod.

Combinations of multiple Menus

A. Linear Menu Sequences
Commonly used when installing programs, it is a menu that displays what is needed and then a very clear button usually titled "Next" that will send you to the next part for further instructions.

B. Simultaneous Menu Sequences
These menus are used in active sites that hold carts for purchases online, like Amazon or Cingular, a cart is updated and menu that progress from what is the most vital information need to the end, like a checkout menu and confirmation page.

C. Tree-Structured Menus
Are becoming more widely used in web pages with big menus but have been mastered my Windows in Windows Explorer and recently in Office Suite. They are items that are familiar in actions and are grouped together but once you go further into the tree menu more options are available.

D. Menu Maps
Usually used in information handling of persons, businesses and products, it's used for product listing which

displays the categorized information in an organized view. The information usually has something in common which would allow for list to be created. Etc. date, sequence number.

Content Organization

Meaningful grouping and sequencing of menu items, along with careful editing of titles and labels and appropriate layout design, acan lead to easier-to-learn menus and increased selection speed. This can be done by relating tasks and grouping them together.

Fast movement Through Menus

Once the general construction of the menu has been completed, it is ideal to allow expert users the ability to speed through menu selections. This can be done with shortcuts yet again, shortcuts need to follow general rules of menu selection by grouping like items and when there is no group giving shortcuts intuitive key presses.

Data Entry with Menus: Form Fill-In, Dialog Boxes, and Alternatives

Previous sections have shown how to enter some data but when it comes to things that are more specific one must make use of items such as the form fill-in, and dialog boxes.

Design Guidelines:
1) Meaningful titles
2) Comprehensible instructions
3) Logical grouping and sequencing of fields
4) Visually appealing layout of the form
5) Familiar field labels
6) Consistent terminology and abbreviations
7) Visible space and boundaries for data entry fields
8) Consistent cursor movement
9) Error correction for individual characters and entire fields
10) Error prevention where possible
11) Error messages for unacceptable values
12) Marking of required fields
13) Explanatory messages for fields
14) Completions signal to support user control

Format Specific Field
1) Coded Fields
a. Telephone numbers

b. Social-security numbers

c. Date and Times

2) Dialog Boxes is a combination of both menus and form fill-in techniques

Internal Layout Guidelines:

1) Meaningful title, consistent style

2) Top-left to bottom-right sequencing

3) Clustering and emphasis

4) Consistent layouts

5) Consistent terminology

6) Standard Buttons (OK, Cancel)

7) Error prevention by direct manipulation

External Layout Guidelines:

1) Smooth appearance and disappearance

2) Distinguishable but small boundary

3) Size small enough to reduce overlap problems

4) Display close to appropriate items

5) No overlap of required items

6) Easy to make disappear

7) Clear how to complete/cancel

Audio Menus and Menus for small Displays

Once again ease of use is paramount, this is why it is important to use alternative menu styles when necessary. When eyes are busy, it is advisable to use some sort of auditory clue, and when displays are small, they either need be simple or divided up into smaller steps. Common uses for audio menus and small displays are in cell phones, iPods, and CD players.

Audio Menus

1) Useful for the blind.

2) Complex menu structures should be avoided.

3) Limit number of choices to 3 or 4 to reduce the amount the user needs to memorize (in some instances, applications actually do need longer lists, such as a theater information system).

4) Know the user's goals, and make those tasks the easiest to perform.

5) Let users speak while an instructional prompt is being read, so that users that already know what's going to be said can go straight to where they want to go.

Menus For Small Displays

1) Common apps are calendars, address books, navigation systems, repair and inventory management systems,

and some medical devices.

2) These menus need to be learned quickly, and be easy to navigate as there are usually no documentation at hand to help the user navigate.

3) Since only a small amount of information can be displayed at one time, interfaces should display the most important information first, and anything else next.

4) On cell phones, the use of "soft keys" is essential when displays are extremely small. They allow designers to provide direct access to the next logical command.

5) Have dedicated buttons for launching the most used apps.

6) Do away with unnecessary letters or spaces, every word counts on small screens.