

## **interface criticism and aesthetics**

Dr. Carman Neustaedter, tweaked by John Bowes

### **what do the evaluation methods tell us?**

heuristic evaluation

usability study

controlled experiment

cued-recall debrief

### **what do the evaluation methods tell us?**

heuristic evaluation – match to standards

usability study

controlled experiment

cued-recall debrief

### **what do the evaluation methods tell us?**

heuristic evaluation – match to standards

usability study – issues from participant's verbal response

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*heavy emphasis on **technical and cognitive aspects**  
less emphasis on **cultural and aesthetic***

### aesthetics

appreciation of beauty

critical reflection on **art, culture, and nature**



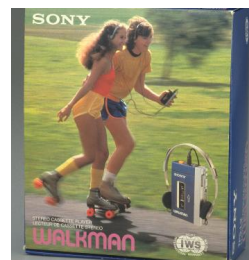
**my favorite mug:**  
hand crafted by someone (a piece of art)  
it uses raw materials (nature)  
it represents a culture of 'craft'

### the sony walkman

1979: first personal stereo tape deck  
why would anybody want one?



### marketing campaign about culture & beauty



vintagead.com

### focus on aesthetics



### what kind of music player are they using?



which phone do you prefer?



**aesthetics of representation**

how something (e.g., piece of information, abstract concept, real object) is represented using a material or medium

how that **representation** is related to the **cultural context**

**aesthetics of interaction**

aesthetics are also rooted in the **human experience** of using an object as part of **culture**

aesthetics are dependent on **context of use**

**performing 'interface criticism'**

1. gain basic knowledge of aesthetics
2. step through each principle and assess (like heuristic evaluation)

use as formative assessment

use when there is still 'openness' in the design

use on storyboards, sketches, etc.

**criteria / principles**

stylistic reference

standards

materiality & remediation

genre

hybridity

representational style

challenges to user's expectations & potentials

**stylistic references**

analyze stylistic references in the interface

e.g., interfaces inherit style from their predecessors



### stylistic references

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iphone 3

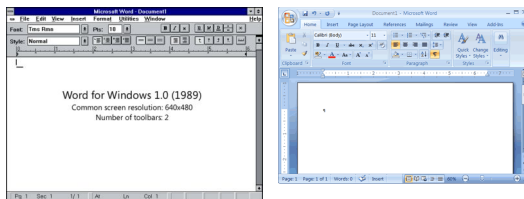
iphone

iphone 3gs

iphone 4

iphone 4s

### too much of a tie to stylistic reference



### standards

identify the use of standards and conformance to tradition

what is their origin? should we continue it? (culture)

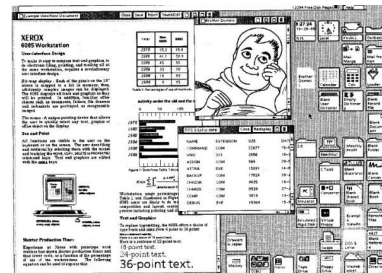
### windows, icons, mouse, pointers (WIMP)

Xerox Dandelion, 1981



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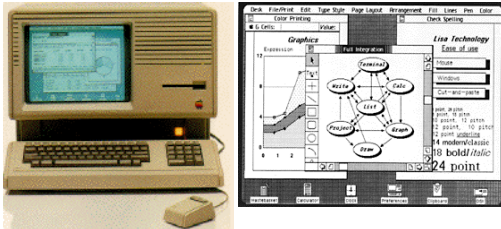
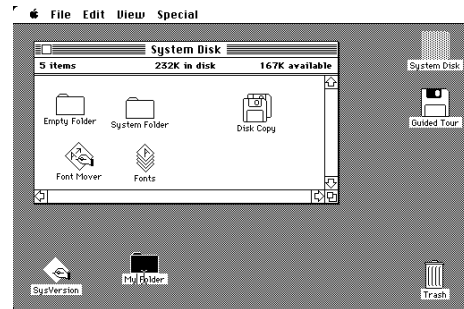
Xerox



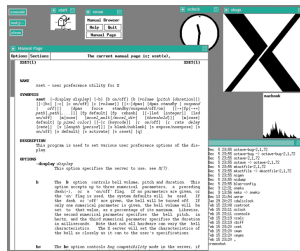


**windows, icons, mouse, pointers (WIMP)**

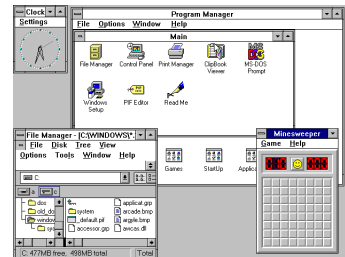
Apple Lisa, 1983

**windows, icons, mouse, pointers (WIMP)****windows, icons, mouse, pointers (WIMP)**

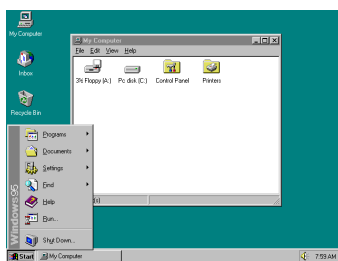
Unix X Windows, mid 1980s

**windows, icons, mouse, pointers (WIMP)**

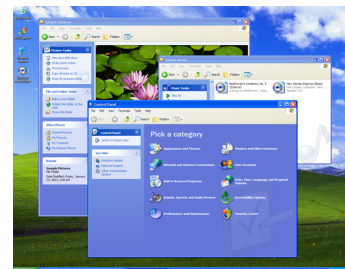
Windows 3.11, early 1990's

**windows, icons, mouse, pointers (WIMP)**

Windows 95, 1995

**windows, icons, mouse, pointers (WIMP)**

Windows XP, 2001



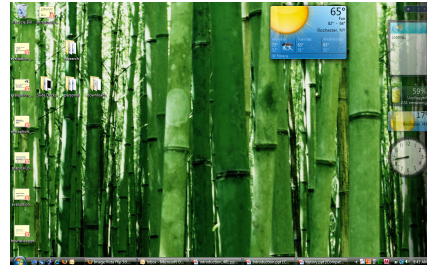
**windows, icons, mouse, pointers (WIMP)**

Mac OS X



**windows, icons, mouse, pointers (WIMP)**

Windows Vista, 2008



**windows, icons, mouse, pointers (WIMP)**

Windows 7



**new paradigm**

Mac OS X Lion



**new paradigm**

Windows 8



**materiality and remediation**

consider the **materiality of the interface** (e.g., what it is made of: code, algorithms, pixels)

does it show it or hide it? is it important to see it?



### materiality and remediation

consider how the interface draws on the **materiality of other media** (e.g., text, photography)



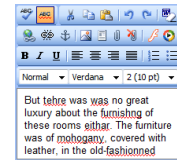
### genre

identify and consider various genres in the interface

how is the interface created to suggest what it should be used for?

e.g.,  
tool genre – Microsoft Word  
user has control of the content

but automated features take that control away



### genre

storybook genre brings certain expectations



### hybridity

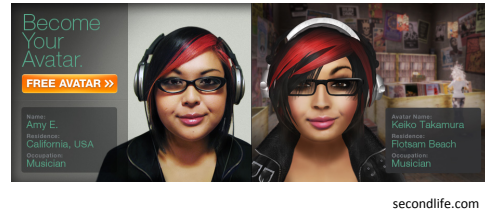
discuss the interface as a hybrid between the functional (control interface) and the cultural interface

combine both functional and cultural



### representations

identify **representational techniques** and analyze how they work (e.g., natural/realistic vs. symbolic/metaphoric)



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### challenges to expectations and potentials

list elements that are likely to **amuse, surprise,** or **challenge** the user

consider **unanticipated use** and including **challenges**



example: recall what each is

**stylistic reference** –

**standards** –

**materiality & remediation** –

**genre** –

**hybridity** –

**representational style** –

**challenges to user's expectations & potentials** –

example: recall what each is

**stylistic reference** – how does it inherit from predecessors?

**standards** –

**materiality & remediation** –

**genre** –

**hybridity** –

**representational style** –

**challenges to user's expectations & potentials** –

**example: recall what each is****stylistic reference** – how does it inherit from predecessors?**standards** – does it conform to existing standards?**materiality & remediation** –**genre** –**hybridity** –**representational style** –**challenges to user's expectations & potentials** –**example: recall what each is****stylistic reference** – how does it inherit from predecessors?**standards** – does it conform to existing standards?**materiality & remediation** – is the material important? does it show or hide it?**genre** –**hybridity** –**representational style** –**challenges to user's expectations & potentials** –**example: recall what each is****stylistic reference** – how does it inherit from predecessors?**standards** – does it conform to existing standards?**materiality & remediation** – is the material important? does it show or hide it?**genre** – is the genre / metaphor of the interface important?**hybridity** –**representational style** –**challenges to user's expectations & potentials** –**example: recall what each is****stylistic reference** – how does it inherit from predecessors?**standards** – does it conform to existing standards?**materiality & remediation** – is the material important? does it show or hide it?**genre** – is the genre / metaphor of the interface important?**hybridity** – does it combine function and culture?**representational style** –**challenges to user's expectations & potentials** –**example: recall what each is****stylistic reference** – how does it inherit from predecessors?**standards** – does it conform to existing standards?**materiality & remediation** – is the material important? does it show or hide it?**genre** – is the genre / metaphor of the interface important?**hybridity** – does it combine function and culture?**representational style** – what style is used and is it appropriate?**challenges to user's expectations & potentials** –**example: recall what each is****stylistic reference** – how does it inherit from predecessors?**standards** – does it conform to existing standards?**materiality & remediation** – is the material important? does it show or hide it?**genre** – is the genre / metaphor of the interface important?**hybridity** – does it combine function and culture?**representational style** – what style is used and is it appropriate?**challenges to user's expectations & potentials** – does it present any alternative, unexpected uses?



examples

my alarm clock

wrapping up