

SWE 432 Homework 2

Fall 2008

Eval: GMU Student Information System : Due 9/15

I do not fear computers. I fear the lack of them.

-Isaac Asimov

For this homework you may work with **one** partner. If you work with a partner, submit the same report and put **both names** on the report. Post your homework assignment on your website before class starts on the due date.

The next homework assignment will be to conduct a small **usability evaluation**. You need to evaluate the user interface in terms of the five measurable criteria that were discussed in class (time to **learn**, **speed** of UI performance, rate of user **errors**, retention of **skills**, and **subjective** satisfaction). Use these in three ways: (1) rank them in **priority** on a scale of 1 to 5, (2) rate each criterion in terms of what you think the user interface's goals **should** be, and (3) rate each criterion in terms of what you think the user interface actually **achieves**. For the ratings, you must use the following scale of **importance**: **low**, **moderate**, **high**, **very high**. For example, if you think the rate of user errors is crucial to the success of the interface, then your rating for **Errors** should be **very high**. Your priority ranking and your measurable goals should be consistent with each other, and your evaluation will in large part be based on whether the user interface achieves its goals.

You should evaluate GMU's student information system at <https://patriotweb.gmu.edu/>.

Submit a **brief** report that describes the task you used the interface for, then present the rankings and criteria goals. Then provide a short narrative explaining your use of the UI, and finally a summary statement about the usability. I expect your reports to be 2 or 3 pages in length; please make them direct and to the point.

This homework is supposed to be fun and I expect it to take about 1 to 2 hours to evaluate and write up the report.

Submit your report by making a link to it on your class web page. If you work with a partner, submit links from both of your web pages. **This should be the URL that you gave us in the information form! Very important:** if you are going to use a different URL, submit an update through the information form.

You can put the report up as an HTML file, plain text, or formatted as PDF. **NO WORD PROCESSOR FILES!** If you choose to use a word processor, you can save it to a file as PDF. If you use MS Word, PDF files can be created if you have Adobe Writer and several free tools (for example [pdf995](#)).

Making your report available to me and the TA is **your** responsibility; if we cannot access your file then you will not get credit. Be sure to test access to your file before the due date.

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