SWE 432 Homework 3
Fall 2008
Eval: ISE : Due 9/22

Where is the wisdom we lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we lost in information?
- T. S. Eliot

Just as with homework 2, 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. Put your report on both of your web sites.

The next homework assignment will be to conduct another small **usability evaluation**. Evaluate the Department of Information and Software Engineering's departmental website: http://ise.gmu.edu/.

Carefully consider the intended audience for the website. Evaluate it in terms of the hypertext and GUI design criteria as well as the five measurable criteria that were discussed in class.

The five measurable criteria are (time to **learn**, **speed** of UI performance, rate of user **errors**, retention of **skills**, and **subjective** satisfaction). Just as in Homework 2, use these in three ways: (1) rank them in **priority** on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being the *highest* priority, (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 goals and achievement 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 be in large part based on whether the user interface achieves its goals.

After providing the information about the five measurable criteria, consider the suggestions made in class about hypertext to evaluate the web site. Consider the usability of the software as a whole, including the available features, and the usability of each individual feature. Consider some specific pieces of information that you would like to find, and evaluate the web site in terms of finding that information.

Your report should describe exactly what you did with the web sites. Then there should be a short narrative explaining your comments on the design, and finally a summary statement about the usability. I expect your report to be 2 or 3 pages in length; please make it direct and to the point.

Submit your report by making a link to it on your class web page the same way that you did with homework 2. **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 to the information form. (Enter your first name, last name, and PIN, click **Retrieve**, change the URL, and resubmit.)

You can put the report up as an HTML file, plain text, or formatted as PDF or PS. **NO FORMATTED OR WORD PROCESSOR FILES!** If you choose to use a word processor, you can save it to a file as PDF or PostScript. If you use MS Word, PDF files can be created if you have Adobe Writer, and PostScript files can be created by first installing a PS printer and then saving to a file.

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.