

DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

CSC 318S
THE DESIGN OF INTERACTIVE COMPUTATIONAL MEDIA
Fall Term, 2002-3

Assignment 2
BRIEF DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL FOR TERM PROJECT

HANDED OUT: Wednesday, September 18, 4 p.m.
DUE BACK IN: **Tuesday, September 24, 6 p.m. to CSC318F Newsgroup**
WORTH IN MARKING SCHEME: 2 points (TEAM GRADE)

This term all students will work in multidisciplinary 4-5 people teams on a semester-long course project to carry out the user-centred, iterative design of prototypes of computational tools or systems appropriate to the needs of senior citizens. The job of each project team is to conceive, design, prototype, and evaluate a novel approach to technology that assists some group of senior citizens in some aspect of their lives, for example, in carrying out tasks in which they are typically engaged.

THE PURPOSE AND TASK OF THIS ASSIGNMENT

The purpose of this assignment is to help you crystallize an idea for your term project and to force you to form the teams of 4-5 people that will be required for carrying it out.

Your task is to articulate in 3-6 paragraphs the basic idea for your term project. Describe the need that you would like to meet, the problem that you would like to solve. Describe the kinds of users and/or tasks and/or situations for which your idea is intended. Sketch your idea for a solution, and indicate what you believe is novel or valuable about the idea.

BRAINSTORMING HEURISTICS

If you have trouble coming up with ideas, review the approaches suggested in Assignment 1.

GROUP FORMATION HEURISTICS

The following are useful suggestions as you try to form your groups:

- 1) Team up with people with whom you have successfully worked in the past.
- 2) Team up with people whom you know to be bright, hard-working, and resourceful.
- 3) Team up with people whose skills complement your own. For example, each team would ideally contain at least one of:
 - a person knowledgeable in the problem domain, i.e., the needs of senior citizens
 - a person who is skilled in programming
 - a person skilled in articulating ideas and expressing them in English
 - a person skilled in visual thinking, sketching, or graphic design, which can be applied to user interface envisionment and prototyping
 - a person skilled in the behavioural sciences, e.g., psychology or sociology, which can be applied to interviewing prospective users and carrying out usability tests.
- 4) Consider compatibility of goals. There could be problems if some people are trying to get As, and others are merely trying to pass the course.

5) Consider compatibility of working styles. There could be problems if some people like working ahead and others prefer to wait until the last minute (which of course is very bad for this course), or if some prefer working during the day and others during the night.

No matter how well you form your group, working together will be a challenging process.

Experience has shown that some groups will encounter some of the following interpersonal problems sometime over the semester:

- a) difficulty contacting group members
- b) feeling that your opinions were not considered
- c) feeling that you had to take the leadership role to get anything done
- d) difficulty taking or receiving feedback from team members
- e) insufficient brainstorming
- f) inflexible positions on the part of team members
- g) defensiveness on the part of team members
- h) misunderstandings due to unclear expression of ideas
- i) misunderstandings due to poor listening.

Experience has also shown that some groups will encounter some of the following organizational problems sometime over the semester:

- a) difficulty agreeing on a shared vision
- b) failure to clearly define responsibilities
- c) failure to divide tasks equitably
- d) failure of some individuals to carry out what they had promised
- e) difficulty adjusting to change when reevaluating plans seemed advisable.

Part of my Sept. 18 lecture will address problems such as these and strategies for dealing with them.

WHAT YOU SHOULD HAND IN

Carry out the task described above, write it up as a plain text document, and submit it to **the course listserv by Tuesday afternoon September 24th. The posting should have a descriptive title, e.g., “Memory Aid”, “Navigating Public Transit”, or “My Family History”, and not “Assignment 1”, or “John Smith”.**

Many of the groups will have thought of several ideas, and be legitimately uncertain whether they have picked “the best one”. This is OK, and it is still possible for a while to change your topic if you later decide you have a better idea. To facilitate dialogue with your TA about this dilemma, should it arise, you may want to include a note on your submission such as: “Two other interesting ideas we have considered are “xxx xxx xxx” and “yyy yyy yyy”.

Please give the names of your team members and their email addresses in what you submit to the listserv. This is particularly important if your team does not contain 4 or 5 people.

Finally, you should also submit, as a separate email attachment to Kelly Rankin, the following form. This form describes your team, which should be comprised of 4 or 5 people. The information in the form will be helpful to your team and to your TA.

CSC318F — 18 September 2002

Project Name _____

	<i>Person A</i>	<i>Person B</i>	<i>Person C</i>	<i>Person D</i>	<i>Person E</i>
Name					
Phone Number					
Email					
Best times for meetings?					
Writing skills?					
Organizational skills?					
Research skills?					
Behavioural/ social science background?					
Visual design background?					
System/ interface prototyping background?					
Special areas of interest?					
Anything else your team should know?					