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CS377C: HCI Design Patterns – Borchers

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Assignment 4

<div align="center">HCI Design Pattern:</div>

<div align="center">**Web buttons***</div>

INTERNET navigation requires use of several tools—these tools however are provided the design of a website and users are at the mercy of whatever methods are available. A common object/tool used on web pages is the clickable button.
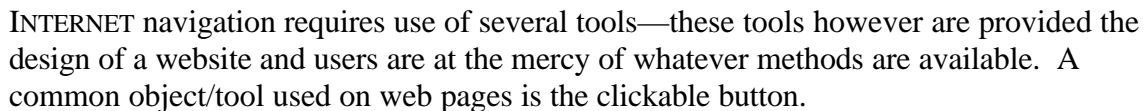
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The "web button" is a unique element of a web page that allows users to both navigate within a page while providing concrete, confirming feedback.

A common feature in web pages has been the clickable web button. The web button has carved out its own niche successfully in the place of navigation on webpages.

Functionally, buttons serve to hail the users attention and provide a method of feedback from the user. Because buttons physically set themselves apart on a page, they are much more effective than simple text links. Graphical user interface designers create buttons that have a 3-dimentional, tactile look to them—even the simplest buttons

highlight the edges of the button to identify them as distinct objects. The most successful buttons are clearly visually marked, informative, and easy to click. In the screenshot above, we see how the text "add to bag" is not confusing; further, the 3-d quality of the button affords clicking even without having to drag the cursor over it to indicate clicking. Also, the button in relative size is easy to click and hard to miss.

Buttons also serve varying navigational functions. It is common to find cases in which confirmation buttons lead users to another screen, whereas in some cases the buttons execute actions on the same page. To provide concrete examples for button functionality, let us view three scenarios in which buttons are commonly used.

Buttons seem to most frequently appear in the use of e-commerce web sites. Shopping carts, order confirmations and other significant decisions required of the user are often set apart by the use of buttons. Users confirming a final purchase order often are left with a final button that often even includes some fine print (e.g., "By clicking on this button, you acknowledge to pay for all…").

Less frequent but also utilized is the button as an in-screen device to make changes to the current web page. In the webmail client, Hotmail, for example, users may add attachments to an e-mail by clicking a button, and the filename will appear added in a window with no navigational changes.

A common navigation use of the button is to move between screens or steps in some ordering or configuration scheme. Web sites will sometimes need to break down a process that configures downloadable software, for example. Such buttons are often labeled "Next," "Go to next screen" or even "Previous."

Overall, web buttons provide a method for visually setting apart an object designers deem as a significant choice-indicating option for the user. This runs the whole gamut from within-screen functions to screen navigation to final order confirmation.

Therefore:

Provide users with clearly labeled buttons that afford clicking, that are large enough for users to click accurately, and that give the user a sense of where they will go next upon activating the button.

Descriptive, navigational label

Large size ⟹ ⬇ GO TO TRIAL DOWNLOAD ⟸ Clear demarcation

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It is suggested that designers view TABS as an organizing method for the overall flow of the page; the NAVIGATIONAL BAR is the traditional method of page organization that may also supplement the TABS design; designers may also wish to view how GRIDLINES can enhance button placement and page organization; HIGHLIGHTING can be an effective tool in drawing attention to tabs, buttons, or bars; when buttons seem inappropriate, designers may resort to the traditional TEXT LINK.

References:

Tabs:

Problem – Users have a concept of a tabs system in paper file organization, and such a paradigm can be harnessed for web page navigation.

Solution – Use tabs to clearly differentiate topical sections of a web page without delving into too much detail. Tabs should be utilized as a reference point for general navigation.

Navigational Bar

Problem – The "navbar" is the traditional form of web page navigation, however it is still an incredibly effective form of user navigation.

Solution – Depending on the length of individual pages, ensure the navbar is constantly in view and accessible to the user. Drop-down menus within navbars can further provide users with feedback as to their navigational location.

Gridlines

Problem – Page layouts are often complex or busy, and users must somehow use visual and cognitive processes to sort and take in the information at first glance.

Solution – Utilize simple gridlines when organizing web page materials and objects. Reduce the number of necessary gridlines that cross to minimize the need for the user to have to do extra visual sorting.

Highlighting

Problem – Page designers often wish to highlight various portions of a page and create potential affordances without producing a cognitive overload in viewing a page.

Solution – Designers can use highlighting on buttons, tabs, or objects to "disguise" affordances. Thus objects which might already subtly afford action can be enhanced even further when the user drags the mouse over the object.

Text Link

Problem – In producing web content, designers wish to provide a simple, descriptive method of navigation via text, without having to create a multitude of clickable objects, buttons, etc.

Solution – Use text links that can be within page content. Designers must ensure, however, that regardless of text links appearing alone or within a paragraph, the link must be descriptive and produce a nearly unquestioning and clear sense to the user of where she will go by clicking on such a link. The text link is less obtrusive on a web page than a button, as it has an ability to "lay flat" upon the page.