

Analysis of Different Systems and Values They Embody

Value in Design Work

- ❖ Can technology embody? Should it embody? Cannot help but to embody?
- ❖ Values are embedded in technology
 - Personal values condition the system design
 - Awareness of bias is important → can result in design consequences

→ Dropbox

◆ Overview

- Founded in 2007
- File hosting/cloud storage service
- Free to use, with pay to use premium services
- Neutral system
- Minimal features showcase values
- No bias among users

◆ Current Values Embodied in the System

- Privacy
 - password check
 - ownership of upload by user
- Convenience
 - available through multitude of devices
 - able to upload and share any type of file
 - click actions
 - automatically syncs files
- Connectivity
 - blog written by developers to share updates

◆ Proposed Alternative Values

- Collaboration instead of Privacy
 - public space, a free for all
 - less secure
- Aesthetics instead of Convenience
 - previewable thumbnails
 - busier layout - better for image files
 - May accommodate some filetypes well, but be clunkier for others

◆ Dropbox's simple features help showcase their design values

◆ Changing the values of a system inherently changes the design

→ Google Drive/Docs

◆ Overview

- Cloud based file storage (Drive) and word processing (Docs)
- ability to create and edit various file types
- Free to Use

◆ Current Values Embodied in the System

- Preservation

- must give Google complete access to your information so they can secure it for you
- Natural Disaster Proof: Copies of data are stored in data centers in different locations
- Drive
 - ◆ can pass ownership of the Drive to other users w/out any hassle
- Docs
 - ◆ synonymous syncing when doing offline work
 - allows you to choose to overwrite previous work
 - ◆ automatically saves with every edit
 - ◆ revision history allows user to go back to previous versions
 - is possible because data is never truly deleted
- Collaboration and Openness
 - real time updates - changes other users make can be seen immediately
 - supports sharing to and usage by multiple users
 - Drive
 - ◆ holds up to 15 GB
 - Doc
 - ◆ chat box
 - ◆ highlight and add notes
 - ◆ users are assigned to a specific color during editing
 - ◆ can see people editing as they are doing it
 - ◆ revision history
- ◆ Proposed Alternative Values
 - Security instead of Preservation
 - would need physical hardware
 - Accountability instead of Collaboration and Openness
 - user cannot be truly anonymous
 - ◆ only Google accounts can edit
 - ◆ will stop relying on user-to-user accountability
 - more data security

→ Microsoft Word

◆ Overview

- Brief history
 - MS Word 1.0, 1989
 - ◆ not successful
 - ◆ very expensive product (nearly \$500)
 - MS Word 2003
 - ◆ very popular due to interface overhaul
 - ◆ Over 400 millions users

- ◆ Overall layout of program is mostly the same
- MS Word 2007
 - ◆ toolbar change
 - toolbar's look went from simple to complex in an effort to make Word simpler
 - allows features to be more visible
 - changes are centered around how users use MS
 - ◆ .doc vs .docx
 - .docx format breaks compatibility with older versions
 - .docx allows user to use newer features
 - ◆ however, kept the same model so that it wouldn't complicate/overwhelm the user
- MS Office 2013
 - ◆ cloud storage via OneDrive
 - ◆ online sharing
 - Are values created by the designer or chosen by the user?
 - What are the standards/norms upheld by users?
 - Are values social constructs?
- ◆ Current Values Embodied in the System
 - Usability
 - Aesthetics
 - ◆ has easy-to-use and complex features
 - ◆ centered around accessing functionality
 - icons are associated with actions
 - ◆ fixed menu at top
 - ◆ ribbon toolbar
 - ◆ bullet points provide convenient note-taking abilities
 - Efficiency
 - ◆ icons instead of shortcuts
 - icons are easier to learn
 - ◆ widely accessible
 - Consistency and Timelessness
 - same default print layout since the 90s
 - ◆ helps visualize a physical, printed document
 - similar look, tasks associated with same menu options
- ◆ Proposed Alternative Values
 - Shortcuts instead of Icons
 - make MS more like Vim
 - faster than clicking/searching for an object
 - limits the population of certain users
 - limits tasks that can be performed

- significant learning curve
 - ◆ would need to know a vast number shortcuts to use well
 - ◆ Users may have to learn a document mark-up language such as LaTeX
 - Innovation instead of Consistency and Timelessness
 - marginless document
 - ◆ web layout vs. print layout
 - a document with no breaks
 - ◆ document's purpose would be for notetaking
 - higher chances of gaining and losing users
- ❖ Upgrade cycle is present
- ❖ Alternatives allow us to see the limitations of certain values
 - hard to see the alternatives when complacent with present values
- ❖ Continual changes/adaption of innovation
 - value proposition
 - hard to think outside of what is presented
- ❖ Origins of MS Word can be traced back to Xerox PARC
 - Possible reason for using print layout as the default
 - Alternative word processors built for creative writers
 - Promote creativity in the writer instead of promoting printing
- ❖ Other text editors
 - There is a text editor which removes all toolbars, so that the user can focus entirely on writing without worrying about interface
 - There is another text editor which lets the user set a time limit and word count goal. If the goal is not reached before time runs out, the editor automatically begins deleting text.
 - Both these examples prioritize creativity over efficiency or ease of use
- ❖ Demetricator Chrome Extension
 - removes all numbers on facebook (number of likes, numbers of friends, time posted)
 - gets away from valuing "how much?"; instead values who and/or what
- ❖ TrackMeNot
 - does multiple tasks while you are browsing
 - the plug-in goes to other websites and do other searches at the same time that is irreverent to what you do
 - protects from surveillance
 - values in obscuring information
- ❖ Design and technology are ways to affect change, to express values that are positive
- ❖ It is possible to take a non-critiquing position on design, one of exploration
 - Use for reflection/introspection
 - A space to look for solutions

While reading the documents for next week think about:

- ★ Critical Reflection: becoming aware of your unconscious values and experiences, those values/experiences are actually conscious in your endeavors somehow