

Assignment 6

1. Fun and engagement are in the different ranges. I think fun is close to one of the emotional factors and engagement is close to one of the emotional status. Fun is one of the most important emotional factors to cause people the engaged status, but it cannot be said that when people are engaged into something, they feel fun.

When people feel fun in doing something, it makes them to want to do the thing again spontaneously, and we can call it as engagement. Thus, fun is an important cause of engagement. However, we can see many other kinds of engagement. Do we feel fun when we listen to classical music such as Chaconne by Vitali or Pathétique by Tchaikovsky? Do we feel fun when we experience the runner's high? There are many emotional factors related with engagement, and fun is one of them, although it is very strong and important one.

On the other hand, engagement sometimes makes people feel fun even if they are doing what is not fun normally. For example, when people are doing some kinds of simple-and-repeated motions such as clicking, weeding, sewing, and knitting, they sometimes become engaged into the motions and feel fun from the motions themselves. Because that kind of works is not challenging, so it is not a kind of the hard fun. Also, this work is neither new nor unpredictable, does not contain any kind of colorful animations, so does not have any fun factor. In this case, the engagement itself causes the fun. Of course, this kind of fun would easily disappear when people feel tired or desperate, but it is true there IS fun no matter how it is ephemeral.

Thus, although fun and engagement are different kinds of words with different ranges, they have very close relationship which can arouse and increase each other.

2.

3. Most of the articles in Funology have the same opinion in the point of that the desirable system which can help people to feel fun is important. However, their ways to approach to this matter are slightly different.

John M. Carroll in Beyond Fun and Don Norman in Interview with Don Norman said that usability and fun should not be separated – they should be incorporated. Don Norman said about goodness as an incorporated pursuable goal.

There are some views about how we can achieve this goal – incorporated fun and usability. Ben Shneiderman, in Designing for Fun: How Can We Design User Interfaces to Be More Fun?, suggested three goals to achieve this – right functions, reliability, and fun-features. Wensveen, Overbeeke, Djajadiningrat, and Kyffin said about freedom of interaction as one of the goals for desirable systems in their article Freedom of Fun, Freedom of Interaction. According to them, when people are expressing their emotions to stuff, they do not limit the kinds of their expressions. Also, because "the experience becomes even more engaging if the result reflects the expressive action," products have to pursue freedom of interaction followed by freedom of expressions.

Some articles showed examples to incorporate fun into usability. Dennis L. Chao showed his try to incorporate the usability and fun by using game interfaces in Computer Games as Interfaces, although he also showed the limit of his work. In Narrative Construction as Play, Brenda Laurel suggested making background stories as one of the methods to giving fun into works and tasks. On the other hand, some people said that trying to design fun is incorrect not because that fun is not good, but because that it is impossible. In Emotions Can Be Quite Ephemeral. We Cannot Design Them, Marc Hassenzahl said that because emotions are strongly depending on the contexts and situations, we cannot design emotions. He said, rather, we should focus on improving the several kinds of usability because it will increase the possibility of arousing the emotions.

For the desirable system, it is required to have decent usability. At least, if it is not useful, there is no reason to use it. Also, as Hassenzahl and Shneiderman said, usability is also one of the essential factors for fun, because people feel fun when they are conquering something, not they are desperate.

Beside this usability problem, I would choose the interactive fun as a factor which can contribute to incorporate fun into usability. When we use some tools, then it assumes that we manipulate them and they will make some results for our input. Thus, it includes interactions, inputs and outputs, by nature, while it sometimes does not include colors, shapes, sounds, or any other factors for sensual fun.

In input, we have to allow various and numerous input, which means freedom of inputs or expressions by Wensveen et al., because limitation of kinds of manipulation would cause the desperation, and so deprivation of fun.

Don Norman said, there is some "expectation driven" fun when "the device responds precisely as expected," and Wensveen et al. also said that "the experience becomes even more engaging if the result reflects the expressive action." Thus, in output, the system should respond according to various inputs. If there are hundred kinds of inputs, it is desirable if there are hundred kinds of counterpart output to make all the various inputs meaningful.

