A Usability Assistant for the Heuristic Evaluation of Interactive Systems

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Abstract: The increasing demands for usable interactive systems in the context of limited project budgets bring in front the need for faster and cheaper evaluation methods. Heuristic evaluation is a kind of inspection method that proved to be cost effective. Typically, the method involves a small number of evaluators that are testing the interactive system against a set of usability principles called heuristics. A way to increase the efficiency of usability evaluation methods is to provide evaluators with software tools able to assist in documenting and recording of usability problems. This paper presents a software assistant for usability evaluation which provides with various facilities to conduct heuristic evaluation: definition of the tasks set, specification of heuristics used, and documenting of usability problems. In order to support the specific requirements of a target application domain a set of usability guidelines could be specified that are detailing the heuristic set. These guidelines could be consulted during usability problem identification and specification. This way, a broader range of evaluator preferences and requirements could be accommodated.

Keywords: usability, heuristic evaluation, usability evaluation assistant, software tools, tools for working with guidelines