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5 problems trainees can meet with eLearning user interfaces

User interface is sometimes experienced as frustrating because it is easy to get lost or because the system does not often work as expected. How to make sure that participants have fluid interactions with eLearning?

User interface graphics are an essential part of designing learning experiences. It can influence a user's perception of an entire learning event. So here's how user interface design should be from the audience's point of view.

1. I do not want to think about the user interface

Design the user interface to be transparent to the public. It must not be an obstacle or something that students must decipher.
If everything is clear and works as expected, then students can continue their task of learning and not wasting cognitive resources thinking about how to interact.

2. I always want to know what to do next

If the design is not linear and exploratory, make sure that learners understands what problem it has to solve. Let them know they should explore. Whatever it is, your audience should not be wondering what to do next.
It is surprisingly difficult to write on the screen concise and clear instructions that must be understood by all students. Most likely you will need several revisions. Test some members of the public or of your work colleagues to see if they understand.

3. I want the program to behave as I think it should

Anyone familiar with computer applications has a mental model of how different types of software work.
If your course uses a generic approach, then you will follow logical and obvious conventions. Think about how members of the public expect the system to work and make sure it does so.

4. I do not want to ask myself what an icon means

When using icons for menu options and buttons, User Interface experts recommend supporting icons with text. In fact, people often do not recognize or locate the hamburger menu (three horizontal lines) on mobile apps.
You can easily speed up the recognition process by adding text below the icon. If there is no space for text, you can make the label display with a mouse-over action - but this will not be so useful.

5. I want to know where to click, drag or touch

Your user interface can help users by providing affordance. In his book The Design of Everyday Things, Donald Norman defined perceived affordances as characteristics of an object that provide users with clues about how to perform an action using the object.
When designing the user interface, a slight shading of a button or a thick line around a flat button suggests that it is an object to press. The goal is to make your user interface as clear as possible.

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