

CS3724
Introduction to Human-Computer Interaction
Homework 2

Due at the beginning of class: Monday, March 6, 2000

You are the usability person in your project group and your project manager is only moderately aware of what usability is and of its value and how it works in a project. So it's pretty much up to you to determine what happens in the usability development area for this project. To that end, you recently tried out some exploratory formative evaluation sessions on a prototype of a new product the group is developing – partly to get an initial look at the product's usability and partly to familiarize the project developers with the concept and the process. Everyone was amused when, in one of those sessions an observing developer (in a separate room from the user) made a comment about how stupid the user was when the participant couldn't figure out how to do something (and the person who made the comment wasn't entirely kidding).

Your assignment is to write a memo to your project manager explaining this situation, expressing yourself from your perspective as the usability person in the project.

Grading: One of the responsibilities of the usability person in a project is to sell the usability concept and proper attitudes about the process. The process cannot work correctly under the belief and attitude expressed in the scenario given. You have to enlist your project manager's help in setting it straight.