Example usability problems to classify for Homework assignments – Set #1

Case 8: PowerPoint helps users get started
This is an example of good design, rather than a usability problem. Like usability problems, this example is centered on a usability concept that can be located in Interaction Cycle and UAF. Here it is:

When a PowerPoint user creates a new slide, it says "Click to add title" in the middle of a box-like outline.

Case 11: User sends mail too soon
A word processor and email software made by the same company are the main applications used by a clerical person in a given office. By dint of sheer practice, he has become an expert user of both. However, he still makes a particular kind of error when doing email. This is because the word processor uses Ctrl+s to save the file and the email program uses Ctrl+s to send email. Sometimes by sheer habit due to repeated use of the word processor, he will do a Ctrl+s in the middle of a message and send it off before it is completed. This is frustrating and sometimes embarrassing, and often causes extra work.

Case 12: Program helps user in printing
This is an example of good design, rather than a usability problem. Like usability problems, this example is centered on a usability concept that can be located in Interaction Cycle and UAF. Here it is:

Using a certain spreadsheet program, a user has created a spreadsheet table that is taller than it is wide. When she requests it to be printed, she gets an informative message in a dialogue box that says: "This will require 2 pages to print in the current Landscape page orientation setting. If you use a Portrait orientation, it will require only 1 page to print. If you wish to change the orientation setting before printing, click on Cancel." The user found this most helpful, saving the time and paper involved in printing it wrong the first time, making the change, and printing again.

Case 13: Program helps user in printing, but not quite enough
This case is based on the previous case (case 12), where the program gave good advice about page orientation for printing:

Using a certain spreadsheet program, a user has created a spreadsheet table that is taller than it is wide. When she requests it to be printed, she gets an informative message in a dialogue box that says: "This will require 2 pages to print in the current Landscape page orientation setting. If you use a Portrait orientation, it will require only 1 page to print. If you wish to change the orientation setting before printing, click on Cancel." The user found this most helpful, saving the time and paper involved in printing it wrong the first time, making the change, and printing again.

After getting this dialogue box a few times, though, the user began to be less satisfied with the situation, saying: "It's nice that the program saves time and paper by warning me about the
orientation but, when I do want to change the orientation, I have to dismiss the dialogue box, click on the Properties button in the Print dialogue box, select the Portrait orientation, and return to OK the printing. Since I will often want to change the orientation setting when I get this message suggesting that I do it, why not give me a button right in the message dialogue box to do it directly?

Case 19: What can I click on to do various things?
A certain Web application gave users problems in knowing which objects can be clicked on. They complained that they needed better feedback (as cursor passed over objects on the screen).

Case 21: Unwanted confirmation message – b
Based on previous case (case 20): User clicks on a button to get the system to carry out a function and a confirmation message appears, "Are you sure you want to xyz?" As this was the only logical operation to the user at this point in the task, the user complained that the confirmation message was unnecessary and irritating and caused the user to make an extra mouse click to deal with it. But that's not the core problem in this case. In this case, though, the problem is that the user was an expert and had to do this task quite often, he wanted to be able to turn off the confirmation message for some usage sessions, but he couldn’t.