

Better User Interfaces for Seniors

Computer Club

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Seniors Need Good Interfaces

- PC/laptop – keyboard/mouse, touchpad
- Tablet/iPad/smartphone – fingers, buttons
- Watch – finger, knob
- We should not have to struggle with weak interfaces. But we do. Even healthy seniors have difficulties. The interfaces CAN be better.
- We will cover ideas on how you can cope.
- YOU can ask for better.
- I am committed to push for easier ways.

Examples of poor interfaces

- Elevators in Millers Run cannot be read. Dim blue numbers fail to show floor number. You have to read the floor number on the side of the exit.
- I do not know how to adjust the clocks in my apartment. The microwave has a keypad of numbers but the oven has only up and down arrows. My bedroom clock has hour and minute buttons. I cannot find any way in my modern car with digital clock controls somewhere.
- My friends cannot drive the modern digital car. Call the dealer for help!

Example of Good Interface

- Apple watch with iPhone – finger, knob, button
- Has 40 apps, taps my wrist to remind me of appointments, mail, messages, calls
- I can reply and send messages (voice to text)
- Asks me if I am OK when I fall, or sends my location for help
- Stocks, weather, alarms, reads books, calculator, camera click, Uber, etc.

The Interface for MyErickson

- Used by over 400 residents on PC or smart phone. The interface is DESIGNED for seniors.
- “Back” button keeps you from getting lost in detail. Good design.
- You can choose large or small fonts.
- To log out is hidden until click on profile. OK but better to be always visible.
- Daily Happenings” is a series of bulletins. You have to wade through them all to find an item.
- There is no index of topics.

Touchpad Interface

- Use your finger to slide cursor to a spot on the screen.
- Tap to select a screen button or area.
- Spread or pinch 2 fingers to zoom out and in text, images and photos.
- Sometimes use 3 fingers to move a map.
- Beware you accidentally touch screen with finger, wrist or cheek NEAR the screen. Where am I? You can always power off and on.
- If you prefer, disable touchpad and attach a mouse.

Mouse Interface

- A mouse moves the cursor. You can make the cursor bigger to see it better.
- A wireless mouse is easier and common.
- The scroll wheel helps scroll. Clicking the scroll wheel changes scrolling behavior.
- You can change the speed of mouse and scroll wheel.
- Click the cursor in a window you want to use as the active window. Click outside a window to make it disappear behind.

Physical keyboard

- If a laptop has a small keyboard, you may add an extra larger keyboard for ease of use. A wireless solar-powered keyboard has no batteries to replace and just needs regular room lighting to recharge.
- Lookup keyboard shortcuts in your manual or on the web to save you time.
- Windows 10 PCs have F keys across the top. Print out a list of these 12 keys from the web as a handy reference. For example, F12 turns full screen on or off for YouTube, games and a bigger text area.

The Scrolling Problem

- One of the worst features of modern PCs is scrolling to read text. If you click on the lower part of the scroll bar, or hit the Page Down key, the text should scroll down one page and you can continue reading.
- Unfortunately, it often jumps down more than a page. You skip some text and have to scroll up again. **THERE IS NO EXCUSE.** The user has no solution.

Voice Commands

- Voice may be easier for people with shaky finger or mouse movement. Voice needs to be clear and rapid. A long pause will often end the command too soon. It should be more patient for seniors.
- Gather your thoughts so you can speak your command in a continuous sentence. For a PC or laptop, a mic will hear you.
- You may need to tap the mic icon or say “Hey Siri” to Apple or “OK Google” to Google or “Hey Cortana” to Windows. In the new Windows 10, you have to start the Cortana app.

Voice Commands while Driving

- Voice is important while driving. You cannot be distracted to touch a screen or read it. Some newer cars accept voice commands. You can always use voice with your smartphone through the car link.
- “Hey Siri, read my new message.”
- “Hey Siri, reply to message from Sally.”
- [What do you want to say?]
- “I will be 15 minutes late (period) Is that OK (question mark) Love you (exclamation point)”
- [Are you ready to send it?] “Yes”

Voice Calling while Driving

- This is a way to avoid distractions and keep eyes on the road.
- “Hey Siri call Bill”
- [Which Bill, Bill Jones or Bill Smith?]
- “Bill Jones”
- [Hello] “Hi Bill”
- Push disconnect to end the call.

I am lost on my screen

- This can happen on a PC or a phone. Here are some tips.
- Look for a left arrow at the top or bottom left side “<” or the word “Back”.
- Tap or click the center and see if a left arrow or “X” appears at the top. 
- In Google searches or Google News, swipe down (scroll up) and see if a left arrow “<” appears.
- Swipe from top edge down or left edge to the right to a prior window.
- Power down and reboot.

The Window I Want is Covered

- A box or window may cover what I want to see. What I want to see is hidden.
- Look for an “X” at the top to close the window in front. Tap the window and the “X” may appear.
- Tap outside the window and it may go away (be hidden behind other windows).
- On a PC, find the app you want on the taskbar or close the app you do not want with “X”.
- On a phone, hit the HOME button and select an app icon.

Windows 10 hidden windows

- Windows 10 has some apps on the taskbar that support several windows in one app.
- If you use MS Word, use View>New Window to open a second document. The first document is now hidden.
- Go to taskbar>Word to see all the windows in Word and select or delete.
- Google puts tabs on each window. You can now group tabs to handle lots of tabs.

How do I Print This?

- On a PC you can always hit “CTRL-p”.
- If this is too much text, you can select the text and image you want to print and then hit “CTRL-p”
- You can send the print to a file if you want to save it, maybe print it later. Choose the printer as a file name and folder path.
- Copy material to Notepad if you want to remove all custom fonts, colors and images before printing just the simple text in black.

My PC or Phone is acting Strange

- Hold CTRL-ALT-DELETE keys. Select Task Manager. Try to close the task that is causing the problem, such as Google or MS Word. Open the task again to see if it is fixed.
- The best general solution is power off and restart. This will often fix problems.
- You need to hold the power button until it shuts down or gives you a choice to power off.
- Wait 30 seconds for things to settle.
- Power on again, restart.
- If the problem persists, try to search the web for this problem and possible fixes.
- Contact family, friends or support for help.

Stay Safe and Sound

- Install updates of your software
- Back up your data and an image of your hard disk. Use the cloud services from Google, Microsoft and Apple.
- Find out what your keyboard can do.
- Find out your settings choices.
- Do not open or respond to messages or emails that are unusual, threatening or ask for your private information. It is probably FAKE!!
- Use strong passwords. For your financial data, use 2 FACTOR passwords that call you up with a code to use.