

DESIGN OF USER FRIENDLY INTERACTIVE INTERFACES

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction.....	1
2.0	Background.....	3
3.0	Hardware Issues.....	5
4.0	Psychological Issues.....	7
4.1	Memory.....	8
4.2	Level of Experience.....	11
4.3	Closure.....	12
4.4	Attitude and Anxiety.....	13
4.5	Control.....	15
4.6	Error Handling.....	16
5.0	Design Issues.....	18
5.1	User Issues.....	20
5.2	Machine Communications.....	28
5.3	Error Handling.....	33
5.4	Summary.....	37
6.0	Analysis of User Interface for Friendliness...38	
6.1	Description of Interface.....	38
6.2	Overall Design.....	39
6.3	Entry Into Sedit.....	40
6.4	SEDIT Commands.....	47
6.5	Natural Language and Uniformity.....	53
6.6	User Aids.....	54
6.7	Error Handling.....	58
6.8	User Control.....	62
6.9	Summary.....	64
7.0	Summary.....	65
	References.....	66

LIST OF FIGURES

1.	Determination of User Experience.....	42
2.	Entry Prompt for SEDIT.....	42
3.	Commands Accepted From Entry	43
4.	Novice Instruction Menu.....	44
5.	Intermediate User Prompt.....	44
6.	Experienced User Prompt.....	44
7.	Menu For Too Many Errors.....	46
8.	Novice Create Menu.....	46
9.	Menu For Movement Commands.....	47
10.	Menu Showing Commands by Function.....	49
11.	Commands for Change Functional Area.....	49
12.	Menu For Examine Command.....	52
13.	Menu For "HELP".....	56
14.	Menu For "HELP?".....	56
15.	Menu For "REPLACE".....	57
16.	Example of Error Message.....	60
17.	Message For Examine Command.....	63

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to examine some of the principles and issues in designing a user-friendly interface for an interactive system. With the expanding use of computers, especially individually owned or used micro-computers, more and more users are no longer highly trained computer personnel, but rather a cross-section of novice and experienced users. The user-friendly interface is that part of an interface that makes life easier for the user while trying to solve a problem. The design of a friendly interface allows both groups to use an interface, the first learns while using, the second performs the job efficiently.

The first part of this report will discuss some of the principles and issues that are important in the design of user-friendly interfaces. Although these interfaces include machine design of the user hardware, this report will be limited to the interface created by a portable applications program used on some existing hardware. The main design principle is that an interface allows anyone to use it regardless of their level of experience on either computers or the interface itself. Friendly interfaces should be designed or implemented so the novice can enter the interface and use it. At the same time, the experienced user should not be hindered by the aids needed by the novice.

The second part of this report will analyze an existing user interface for its degree of friendliness and offer

suggestions for improving its friendliness. The analysis gives examples on improving friendliness so that all levels of users can interact with the system in an efficient manner. The analysis will apply the principles and issues discussed in the first section to improve the friendliness of this system.