

Cooper Careers: Visual Interface Design Exercise

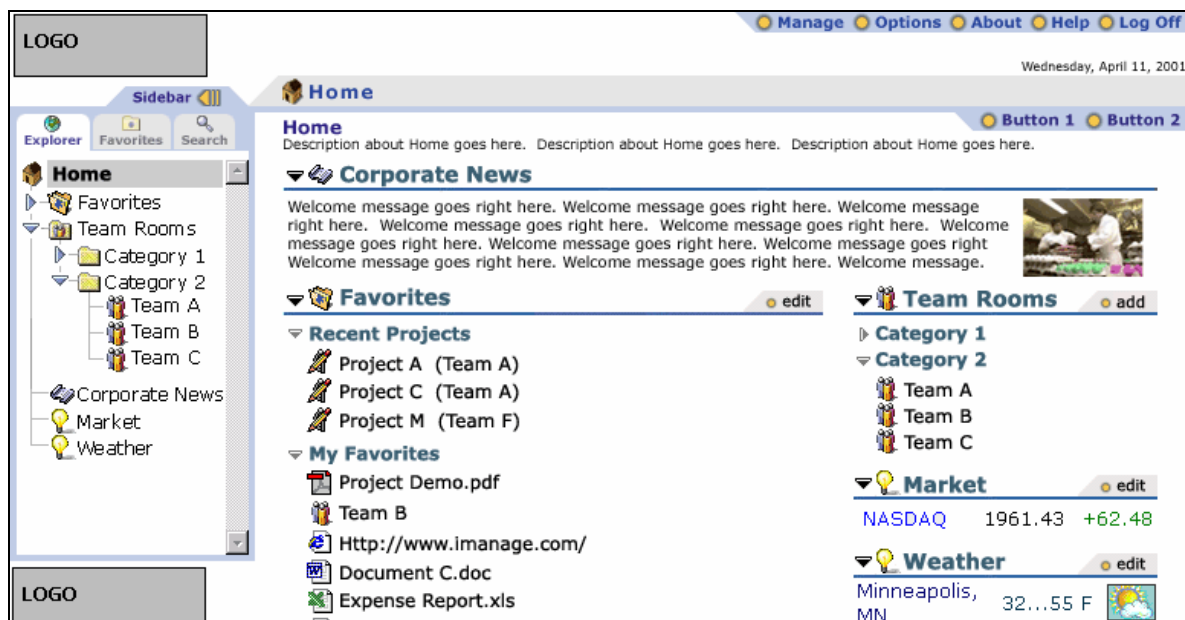
The aim of this exercise is to help us determine how well you might fit the visual interface designer role. We are looking for examples of your ability to:

- Identify and solve design problems
- Describe your design and tell us why it's good
- Understand the people for whom you are designing
- Excel at both conceptual and detailed design

Obviously, this is a take-home test, so feel free to use whatever tools you feel you need, but make sure the response is your own. Provide enough illustration and written description of your designs, in whatever medium you are comfortable, to get your point across. Finished art is not necessary.

Above all: Have fun! If this exercise isn't fun, this job probably isn't for you. Spend as much or as little time as you wish, but an hour on part one and no more than a couple of hours on part two should be plenty.

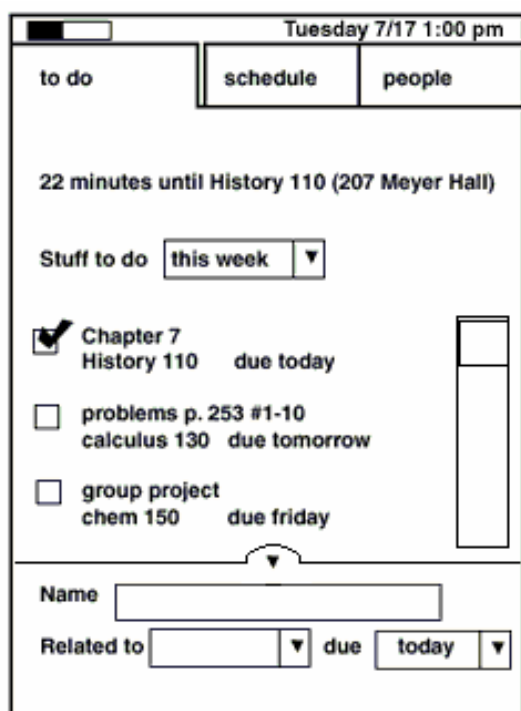
Part One



This is the home page for a document-sharing portal. The page has two frames. The frame on the left (called the "sidebar") contains three tabs that switch among different search modes. The frame on the right contains a set of general administrative links at the top. The gray strip displays a "bread crumb" trail as a user drills into various content areas; each drill-down has its own name and icon in the bread crumb trail. The content area below contains modules that can be collapsed.

How do the visual design choices shown here enhance or detract from the user experience? Write down a few thoughts. (We're looking for constructive critique; we don't need you to draw a new visual treatment unless you feel that's essential to getting your point across).

Part Two



This screen sketch represents part of the interaction design of a PDA for college students. The screen is $\frac{1}{4}$ VGA and grayscale. Users will have a stylus for text entry, but will often use the controls with just a fingertip. This is not the Palm OS and the client doesn't want a look that will be mistaken for Palm, Mac, Windows, or any other operating system.

The small bar at the top is a battery power indicator.

The three tabs are navigation through the primary applications on the device. Each tab should have an icon; it's up to you whether you also use the text labels.

The first bit of text is a countdown meter so our college student knows whether he should read a chapter or go get a sandwich. It's the most important piece of information on the screen.

The "stuff to do" control is a pulldown that lets him select to-do items for today, this week, or some other time period. The list displayed below is scrollable (that's a crude scroll bar on the right of the sketch). When items are checked off, they remain visible during the session, then disappear in the next session. The list is sorted on due date by default.

At the bottom is an area for creating a new entry. The "name" field is filled in with the stylus. The whole area can be collapsed (like closing a drawer) using a small toggle control at the top.

Your mission: Create a visual design that enhances the usability of the screen, as well as adding aesthetic appeal. A single bitmap is plenty—no need to go crazy with alternative styles unless you want to do so.