Course C17
An Introduction to Designing for the Scent of Information
1 unit

Instructor: Jared M. Spool, User Interface Engineering

Companion Course: Designing for the Scent of Information : Advanced Concepts

Benefits:
If your users can't find the content they are seeking, your site will fail. One of the biggest secrets of successful web sites is that they design for Scent.

In recent research, we've uncovered that users know when they are on the right track to finding their content—they follow the Scent of Information. We've seen that users confidently work their way through web sites to find what they're looking for.

Understanding scent explains why users consistently fail to find their desired content. If your site's content doesn't have good scent, everything you're doing could be at great risk. By understanding how users pick up and keep the scent, you can design more usable web sites.

We'll demonstrate how the successful sites provide a strong scent, and what happens when they don't. Using the results of hundreds of usability tests, we'll show you how users follow a scent trail and the different ways your design could be blocking scent. We'll also discuss how the quality of links, page length, page density, and graphics affect whether users find the content they're looking for.

Origins:
We've presented it at previous conferences, including CHI 2006, IA Summit 2006, and the UIE Roadshows.

Features:
+ What is the scent of information?
+ What does scent look like when it works?
+ What does scent look like when it doesn't work?
+ Common scent blockers:
  + Search engines
  + Navigation panels
  + Optimal link length
+ 3 Types of graphics:
  + Content graphics
  + Navigation graphics
  + Ornamental graphics
  + The design process for scent
+ Measuring scent with user confidence

Intended Audience:
Web Designers & Usability Practitioners

Presentation Style:
Lecture

Instructor's Background:
Jared M. Spool, Founding Principal of User Interface Engineering.

If you've ever seen Jared speak about usability, you know that he's probably the most effective, knowledgeable communicator on the subject today. What you probably don't know is that he has guided the research agenda and built User Interface Engineering into the largest research organization of its kind in the world. He's been working in the field of usability and design since 1978, before the term "usability" was ever associated with computers.

Jared spends his time working with the research teams at the company, helps clients understand how to solve their design problems, explains to reporters and industry analysts what the current state of design is all about, and is a top-rated speaker at more than 20 conferences every year. He is also the conference chair and keynote speaker at the annual User Interface Conference, is on the faculty of the Tufts University Gordon Institute, and manages to squeeze in a fair amount of writing time.