**Assignment #1: Analysis of Instructions**

*Due: Wednesday, November 19, 2014 at 9:00pm on Learn*

*Points: 200*

For this assignment, you will find, examine, and critique a documentation set of instructions.

The length of this assignment should be between 3-5 pages, double-spaced, with 1” margins and turned in as a PDF.

You will choose an Open Source Software (OSS) program, download it to your computer, find the documentation for the program, and use it to perform a few tasks. OSS programs posit a unique situation: in most cases, the documentation is written by volunteers who use the program. Documentation, therefore, can be quite diverse. Some OSS programs use wikis, others establish formal style standards while some do not, some rely heavily on images while others more on words. The diversity of OSS programs should result in a wide spread of analyses. I have a list of possible programs you may choose below.

Your analysis may resemble the review genre. The analysis should start with a general overview of the software: what it does, how it works, where it is available, and how you plan to use it. The second part should take the reader through at least one of the tasks you engaged in a narrative form. Tell us what you did, how the documentation was helpful or impeded your ability to use the program. The final part of the analysis will be your qualitative assessment of the document. What did you like about it? What did you not like? Did it rely too much on modernist/postmodernist approaches to documentation design? How were the visuals? Do you have suggestions on how to make these instruction better? You may address these questions and more in the final section.

You may wish to consider using some of the following OSS programs:

Audacity Firefox Thunderbird

Inkscape GIMPshop K Touch

Pencil OpenProj Sunbird

Abiword Keynote PDFCreator

Freemind Workrave GnuCash

GanttPV KeyPass Programs in the Open Office/Libre Office Suite

Of course, you may choose something outside this list.

The assignment will be evaluated for adherence to the structure outlined above and the thoroughness of your analysis. I will also evaluate the document for clarity, style, and correctness.

**Grading Rubric: Analysis of Instructions**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Components** | Excellent | Good | Needs Work | Comments | Points awarded |
| **Attention to Prompt (10%)** | 20 19 18Your analysis includes all of the elements of the prompt. | 17 15 13 11Your analysis includes most but not all of the elements of the prompt. | 10 8 6 5Your analysis does not include the elements listed in the prompt. |  | 20 |
| **Content (40%)** | 80 76 72Each paragraph deeply explores the role of the instructions as you practiced them. You provide specific points in explaining places where you found success and challenges, and you demonstrate an awareness of what writing and design elements went into those successes and failures. The analysis makes references to the instruction set to illustrate your points. | 70 68 64 60 56Each paragraph generally explores the role of the instructions as you used them. You provide a cursory connection to points in where you found success and challenges, and you demonstrate some awareness of what writing and design elements went into those successes and failures. | 52 50 46 42 38The analysis and paragraph offers only surface level insights into your chosen instruction set. The reader is left with many questions about What the successes and challenges of using the instructions were, and the instruction set itself is either not mentioned or only mentioned in passing to illustrate your points.  |  | 80 |
| **Presentation (20%)** | 40 38 36Your analysis expertly demonstrates best practices of visual design, including the use of headings and subheadings, and when appropriate, images related to the points you are making. The text utilizes professional typeface choices, adherers to the assignment guidelines, and is delivered as a PDF. | 34 32 30 28Your analysis generally demonstrates some attention to visual design, including the use of headings and subheadings, and when appropriate, images related to the points you are making. The text utilizes typeface choices, adherers to the assignment guidelines, and is delivered as a PDF. | 26 24 22 20Your analysis lacks sound practices of good visual design, utilizing design choices that are cumbersome or confusing to the reader. The text may not utilize a professional typeface choice, adherers to the assignment guidelines, or is not delivered as a PDF. |  | 40 |
| **Organization / Structure (20%)** | 40 38 36Your analysis takes the reader on a journey, telling us about the product you choose, how you wanted to use it, and about your experience using the instruction set. The critical component of the text is clearly different from the description and reporting, and you close by offering ideas for improvement, or reflections on sound practices that you saw that you may want to use in your own documents. | 34 32 30 28Your analysis tells us about the product you choose, how you wanted to use it, and about your experience using the instruction set. The critical component of the text may not be clearly different from the description, or the conclusion. The text may not close by offering ideas for improvement, or reflections on sound practices that you saw that you may want to use in your own documents. | 26 24 22 20The progression of the document is confusing to a reader. |  | 40 |
| **Writing Style (10%)** | 20 19 18The style and tone are appropriate to the genre and rhetorical situation. | 17 15 13 11The style and tone somewhat matches the genre and the rhetorical situation. | 10 8 6 5The style and tone do not match the genre, rhetorical situation or assignment. |  | 20 |
| **Ethos** (bonus points)**(0%, up to 6 bonus)** | +6There are no errors in proofreading, grammar, punctuation, or usage, which contributes to a positive ethos. | +3There are very few errors in proofreading, grammar, punctuation, or usage. | 0The number of surface errors is very distracting, severely affecting one’s ethos, and interferes with the reader’s comprehension of the text. |  | 0 |
| Total points awarded out of 200 | 200 |