

VISUAL INTERFACE DESIGN

Adaptive Product

We live in an era of the smartest machines that humans have ever created, with the ability to remember things about those who use them and the context they are being used in. But for the most part, they don't do either of these things. They are dumb to our individual use.

Some people have resisted this lack of individualization by hacking or covertly adapting the products for their own uses, or by using products in ways they weren't designed for. This is interesting, but challenging to design for—perhaps not even possible or desirable to design for.

For your final project, we're going to be forward-looking to a time (hopefully in the near future) when the products we use adapt to us: who we are, how we use it, and in what context. They will do this not by configuration menus, but by observing what we do. Users will go to the configuration menu mainly for initial set up and to make adjustments if the system guesses wrong about their behavior.

Of course, there is an art to this: adaptive products could become as annoying as Microsoft's Clippy, constantly popping up and asking if you want to do something. The best adaptive products will be subtle.

For this project, you can either take an existing product (application, website, digital device) and make it adaptive or else come up with a new product that adapts over time with use. You will work in self-selected teams of four or five people. I encourage you to work with some classmates other than the ones you worked with for the last project.

You will present twice for this project: once for your user research findings and initial concepts, and once for your final concept. Both of these presentations should be formal ones (with Powerpoint or Keynote or PDF). For your final concept, I expect to see some sort of storyboard with a scenario of use for your product.

IMPORTANT DATES

Team Meetings with Dan: Monday, April 4

Research/Concepts Presentation: Wednesday, April 13

Team Meetings with Dan: Wednesday, April 20

Final Presentation: Wednesday, April 27th