CS465 Principles of User-Interface Design Project Proposal
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The variety and number of Open Source Software (OSS) increase everyday; however, non-professional users still prefer to use proprietary software. One common entry barrier for new users is the lack of user-friendly interfaces in OSS. In order to improve the quality of the user interface in OSS, developers need to employ better interface design from the very start of the development process. We assume that a creative collaboration tool for developers and user interface (UI) designers would foster better UI design, but the tool needs to be designed and studied carefully so that both groups can be motivated to participate. We designed this tool, WIKIFACE, based on information that we got from conducting two interviews and receiving six survey results out of 20 survey requests that we sent to Open Source UI designers. WIKIFACE, not only enables UI designers to be involved and communicate easily, but also encourages them to use their creativity and skills to design high quality interfaces for Open Source projects. By using our recommended tool, interested designers could participate in the OSS development process and the improved interfaces would promote the popularity of OSS.

We began this project in CS565, and would like to continue it in this course, if possible. We have already conducted user surveys and designed a paper prototype. The prototype we develop must:
- Motivate UI designers to participate in Open Source projects
- Facilitate communication between designers and developers
- Facilitate the communication of usability problems
- Provide an onion model of involvement, and a community where experts can be known and trusted
- Support the creation of a “quick and dirty” prototype
- Provide reference and easy access to design and development knowledge

Along with this our current design allows for a calendar where designers can schedule meetings (which can happen in the chat feature) and deadlines. Also, we have a small multiples view of variations on a design so that designers can visually compare and contrast differences. To better support usability, we have a reference section for usability guidelines along with a way for users to submit surveys and/or comment on part of an image of a design. We also intend to explore the use of video or “slide shows” to help the designer analyze the interaction with the proposed interface.

For our CS465 project, we propose the following:
- We will conduct an additional user survey about the paper prototype. We want to make proper adjustments on the design of WIKIFACE based on user feedback and the principles that we learn from the class.
- We will implement the system according to the adjusted design. Currently we plan to write a plug-in for an agora page as provided by TSG.
- We will evaluate the implementation and analyze the beneficial and detrimental aspects of our design.