GOAL-DIRECTED® Design

• Thoroughly assess the needs of the user and create a program that will meet these goals.
• Overall, the program should not make the user feel stupid and it’s primary purpose should align closely with the goals of the user and not attempt to do much more.

The User’s Goals

Generally speaking, most software users have similar goals, that often, have little to do with the objectives of the program.
• Not looking stupid
• Not making mistakes
• Getting an adequate amount of work done
• Having fun. (At least not being too bored)

Most user interfaces cause users to accomplish exactly the opposite result, and subsequently, fail to fully accomplish their intended purpose as well.

Good design makes the user more effective

Emphasis should be placed on the goals of the user and not the features of the program.

An example of a goal-directed dialog box for determining what kind of letter a user would like to write. By choosing based on their goals, the program would adjust the features accordingly.

Maintain the Flow

Any well designed program should allow the user to easily and efficiently accomplish their tasks. The best way to achieve this is to make the interaction with software transparent. Things to keep in mind:

1. Follow Mental Models
2. Direct, don’t discuss
3. Keep tools close at hand
4. Give modeless feedback

Good User Interfaces are Invisible

A user interface is an artifact, not something directly related to the goals of a user. No matter how cool the interface, less of it would be better.

Possibility versus Probability

Just because something is possible, doesn’t mean that it is probable. Therefore, many annoying functions of programs do not take into account what is likely, rather, only what is possible.

Follow Mental Models
• Most software conforms to the implementation model, or the structure of the way it was built.
• This is not easy for users to understand.

Direct, don’t discuss
• Most users don’t want to have dialog with a program.
• They would rather think of it as a tool.
• Dialog boxes interrogate the user.

Keep tools close at hand
• All the necessary tools of a program should be readily available to the user.
• Think of a jet fighter’s Heads-up display.

Give modeless feedback
• Feedback should not have to be dealt with.
• Feedback should also be readily available.