

## IS-146 MIDTERM ANSWER CRITERIA

### QUESTION #1, 25 points

+5 points for each of the three listed concepts you chose to explain (problems: some of you stated opposite positions to Manovich on his suggested concepts and did not explain why—especially “being ‘interactive’”; some of you did not explain why these concepts do or do not help provide a good definition of what makes New Media new; some of you incorrectly explained the concept—especially “transcoding”)

+10 points for explaining an unlisted concept (problems: some of you missed doing this at all; some of you explained an already listed concept)

### QUESTION #2, 15 points

+ 5 points for correctly naming at least two communication models relevant to the material. (Most of you chose to use the conduit metaphor and the toolmaker's paradigm)

+ up to 5 points for adequately describing these communication models.

+ up to 5 points for making a convincing argument as to how they are useful in new media design.

### QUESTION #3, 20 points

The interviewer is trying to understand college students' relationship with the web - what they like and dislike and how their communication patterns have shifted, particularly in environments where they co-habitate with others (such as dorms).

"What's cool about the web?"

- biased, leading
- broad in a way that will encourage lists, not stories
- assumes web use
- inappropriate language
- Alternate: "How do you feel about the web?"

"Does spam piss you off?"

- yes/no question
- biased, leading
- inappropriate, abrasive language
- assumes email and spam experience
- Alternate: "Describe your experiences with and feelings about spam"

"Do you IM with your roommates and the folks down the hall instead of talking to them?"

- yes/no question
- biased, leading
- assumes IM use
- assumes college & assumes roommates and dorm hallways
- multiple questions in one
- Alternate: "Who do you communicate with on IM? Describe situations in which you may IM with them versus talk to them face-to-face? Follow-up: Are there situations when you would IM even when face-to-face is easy? If so, what would those be?"

Overarching bias of all questions: assumption of web, IM use and spam.

Issues in Ethnographic Account:

- 1) Questions obviously biased answers.
- 2) Who is "everyone"? There's no documentation of who is being referenced, how many people were talked to, etc. Lack of demographic information in general
- 3) Questions don't permit the conclusions. For example, how do these questions allow us to conclude that "spam is the only bad thing about the web"?
- 4) Judgmental - "people are lazy"
- 5) Policy conclusion "IM should be banned..." is not based on the perspective of the people interviewed, but the interviewee's desire and judgment.
- 6) Not based on the interviewee's perspective at all; very much driven by what the interviewee wants to see
- 7) Technological conclusion concerning notification is based on judgments; analysis driven by technology
- 8) No reference to actual people and their voice
- 9) Lack of thick description

Reasons you may have lost points:

- Not dealing with audience scope problem (this isn't about "everyone")
- Failure to discuss bias issues in the questions
- Failure to discuss that the questions are leading
- Failure to deal with the yes/no problem
- Failure to deal with the inappropriate slang
- Failure to offer a better approach or alternate questioning
- Reworked questions have bias/yes/no problems
- Didn't handle all questions
- Did not really address the account
- Did not talk about the bias/judgment employed in the account
- Did not talk about how the conclusions do not come from the subjects but from the interviewer's desires
- Didn't answer what the interviewer is trying to understand
- Asking positive only questions (ie "What do you like about the web?") as this is still leading

#### **QUESTION #4, 10 points**

+10 for talking in some way about the interaction of users, designers, culture, and technology in ethnography and design, especially understanding users as designers

Better answers explained some examples of ethnographic methods (e.g., participant observation, interviewing, etc.) or ethnographically-informed design methods (e.g., personas, scenarios, etc.)

#### **QUESTION #5, 25 points**

5(a) i. & ii.

+ 3 points for correct answer, using poly directly as a subfunction (not penalizing for minor syntax mistakes)

+ 2 points for correct code which doesn't use poly directly (e.g., copying poly's internals)

+ 1 point for demonstrating considerable understanding of the problem

5(b) i.

+ 4 points for the correct answer (a single square with sides of 10 pixels)

+ 2 points for demonstrating an understanding of u-turn but getting confused on positioning

5(b) ii.

+ 5 points for any working, correct answer (the simplest was to change "right 90" to "left 90" within draw-plus, but more complicated variations were still given full credit)

+ 3 points for a working version that draws a '+' rather than an outline of a plus

+ variable points for demonstrating understanding of the problem without providing a correct answer

5(c)

+ 7 points were awarded for defining procedural abstraction. Acceptable answers included descriptions of the ability to not worry about implementation details (black-boxing), the ability to build higher and higher level primitives, and the ability to "do more with less" through the use of generalized parameters.

+ 3 additional points were awarded for describing how it is relevant to New Media. Good answers included a discussion of how procedural abstraction supports modularity and variability (customization falls out of this as well) of the media itself. Describing the benefits of procedural abstraction without tying directly to the ramifications of New Media itself resulted in lower points

- Points were deducted for any incorrect or incomplete statements of the above.

#### **QUESTION #6, 5 points**

+5 points for defining the signifier (the sensory impression of a signal), the signified (the corresponding concept or mental image), and clearly stating that the sign is the unity of the two.

- Points were deducted if any of these were missing or incomplete.

- 1 point was deducted if the answer was a regurgitation from the text and did not include any commentary or words of your own.

= Many people talked about connotation and denotation as well, sometimes incorrectly. We were lenient and did not count this against you if you gave a satisfactory description of signifier, signified, and sign independent of this.