MATCHING THE DESIGN OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROGRESS INDICATORS TO USERS' MENTAL MODELS

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ABSTRACT

Progress indicators are graphics that appear on screen to inform users of the progress made as a task moves toward completion. This study investigates the matching of progress indicator design to users' mental models. Pairs of progress indicators were presented to participants in a data elicitation exercise. The features of one progress indicator in each pair were designed to match the mental model of users. The features of the second progress indicator were designed contrary to the users' mental model. Data supports the contention that participants prefer progress indicators designed to match their mental models.

Keywords: Progress indicators; progress bars; waiting; mental models.