

# How to avoid angry users

GUI Bloopers Chapter 1

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# What is a GUI?

(Why is it important to get right?)

# Usability



**THE PRODUCT DOES  
WHAT YOU NEED IT TO DO**

**THE PRODUCT DOES IT  
QUICKLY AND SAFELY**

**THE PRODUCT IS EASY TO  
LEARN**

A stylized sun graphic on the left side of the slide. It consists of a solid yellow circle representing the sun, with several short, curved yellow dashes above it representing rays. The sun is partially obscured by a large white semi-circle that frames the text.

# Nine Basic Principles of GUI Design

1. Focus on  
the users  
and their  
tasks (not  
the tech)



## 2. Consider function first, presentation last



hangin\_on\_by\_an\_RJ45 · 9 mo. ago

Jack of All Trades

Looking at you, Windows 11, with your inability to adjust the taskbar size any longer, and only providing a registry hack to do it now, which doesn't work well either. Also, installing volume licensed Office products. Big Fuck You to microsoft for how they botched that whole process.

**17** Reply Share Report Save Follow

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4grams · 9 mo. ago

I swear the windows versions are named after the number of clicks needed to get anything done because I swear every version just hides the last behind yet another new UI.

**18** Reply Share Report Save Follow

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# 3. Conform to a user's view of the task

The image shows a presentation slide with a dark background and white text. The slide is titled "Class User Interface Design" and contains a list of questions for user research. The slide is part of a presentation, as indicated by the navigation icons and the "GET ALL FEATURES" button in the top right corner. The slide is also part of a larger presentation, as indicated by the "GET ALL FEATURES" button in the top right corner.

## Class User Interface Design

- **Collab with users to learn about their tasks**
  - Two way feedback:
    - Dont just collect data, present preliminary analyses to them and get their opinion
    - Leads to more reliability
- Questions:
  - What tasks does the person do that are relevant to the application's target task area?
  - Which tasks are common, and which ones are rare?
  - Which tasks are most important, and which ones are least important?
  - What are the steps of each task?
  - What is the result and output of each task?
  - Where does the information for each task come from, and how is the information that results from each task used?
  - Which people do which tasks?
  - What tools are used to do each task?
  - What problems, if any, do people have performing each task? What sorts of mistakes are common? What causes them? How damaging are mistakes?
  - What terminology do people who do these tasks use?
  - How are different tasks related?
  - What communication with other people is required to do the tasks?

2.Consider function first, presentation last

- Collaboration

- You can also do both simultaneously

7

## 4. Design for the common case

- Required amount of effort proportional to complexity
  - Do a little, get a lot is often better!
- How Often vs How Many
  - More frequent, less clicks
  - More users, more visible
- Design for core cases, not edge cases



5. Don't distract users from their goals

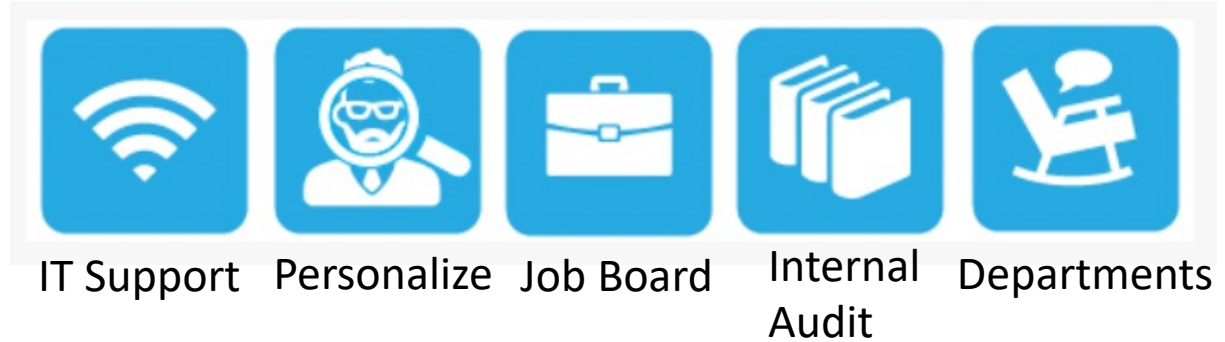
The screenshot shows the Microsoft Excel interface. The title bar reads "Excel Book - Saved". The ribbon includes "File", "Home", "Insert", "Draw", and "Page Lay". The "Insert Function" button is visible. The active cell is C2, containing the formula `=SUM(B1:B6)`. The spreadsheet data is as follows:

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Day	Hours	Total		
2		1	1	14	
3		2	2		
4		3	4		
5		4	5		
6		5	2		
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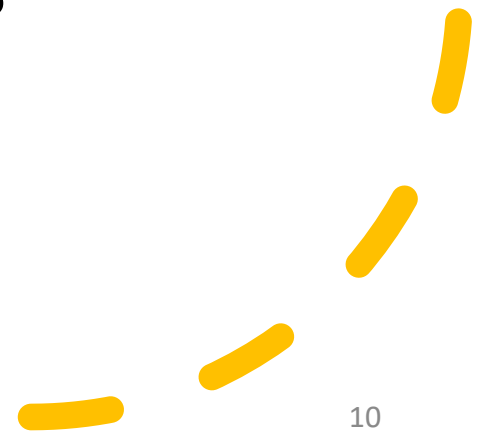
A dropdown menu is open, listing various functions: ARRAYTOTEXT, BAHTTEXT, CHAR, CLEAN, CODE, CONCAT, DOLLAR, EXACT, FIND, FIXED, LEFT, LEN, LOWER, MID, and NUMBERTOVALUE. To the right, the "Function Library" pane is visible, showing categories like Financial, Logical, Text, Date & Time, Lookup & Reference, Math & Trig, and More Functions. Under the "Data" section, "Calculate Workbook" and "Calculate Sheet" are listed.

## 6. Facilitate learning

- “Outside-in” not “Inside-out”
- Don’t let users misinterpret your design



- Be consistent, but be careful
  - Can be misapplied
  - Does it make certain tasks harder?
  - Let users try it out!
- Ensure a low-risk environment



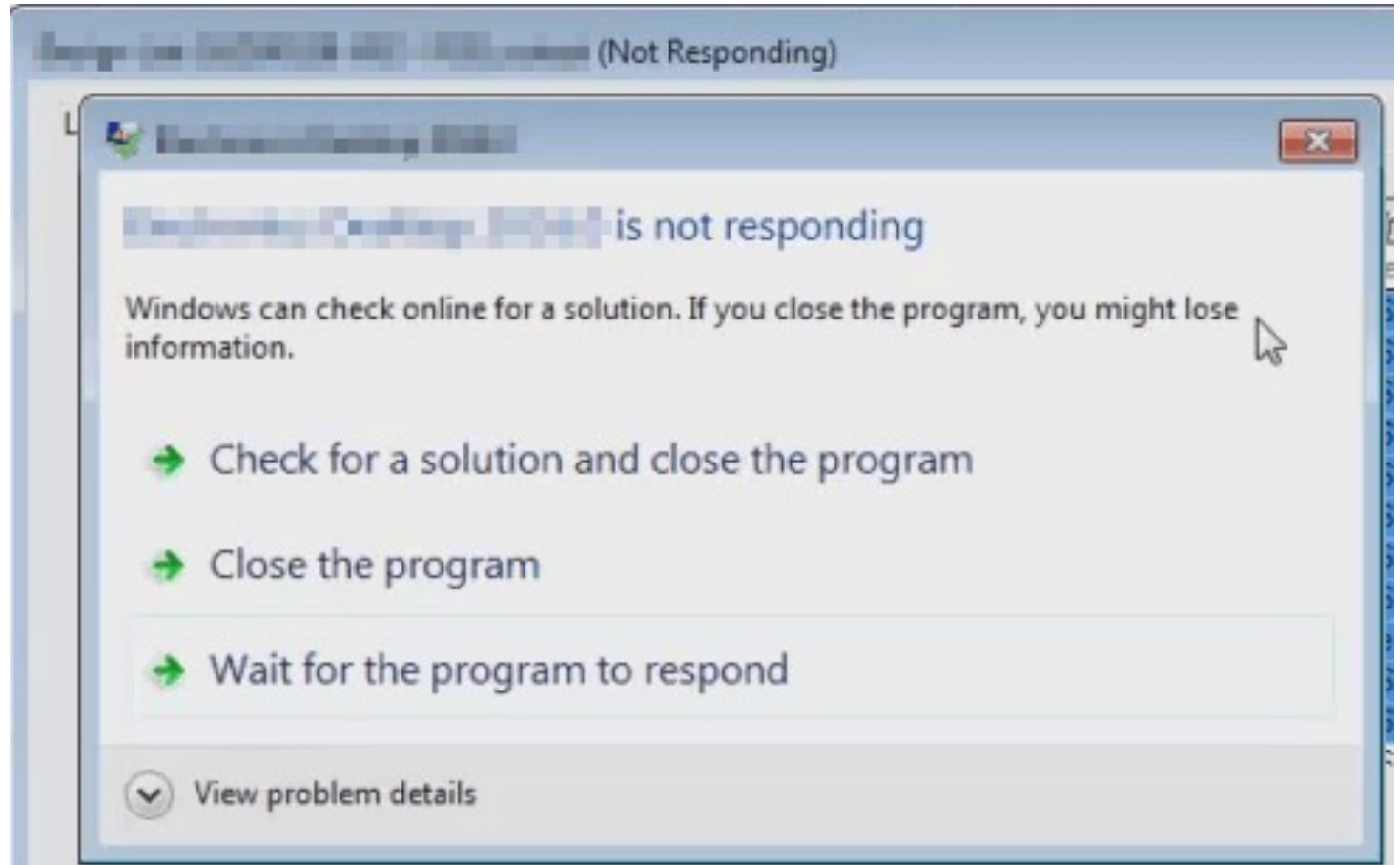
7. Deliver information, not just data



## 7. Cont.

- The screen belongs to the user:
  - **DO NOT TOUCH THE MOUSE POINTER (don't even think about it)**
  - **DO NOT MOVE CONTROLS TO MEET OR MOVE AWAY FROM POINTER (literally remove pointer from your vocab)**
  - **DO NOT AUTOMATICALLY MOVE OR RESIZE WINDOWS (they will come to your house)**

## 8. Design for responsiveness



## 9. Try it out, then fix it!

- Try a test wave! Then fix
- Remember: Nothing is perfect on the first try
- Informational vs Social Goals
  - Informational: What isn't working and how to fix it
  - Social: Convince your developers they're wrong (good luck)

Thank you! 😊

