Support offered User Performance Speed, Memory, Effort, and Comfort by Package Features

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It is suggested that ease of use of a package may be evaluated as a function of the support which design and assistance features offer user performance speed, memory, effort and comfort. Features provided in software which are believed to alleviate the human shortcoming of limited memory capacity include databases, macros, menu structures, mnemonics, icons and templates. Macros, commands to bypass menu structures and shallow menus are all features designed to minimize the user's effort. Shallow menu structures and commands have been found to be faster than deep structures as have menus redesigned according to frequency of use. Use of natural language systems may or may not require the same amount of time to use and yet be considered more comfortable than other interaction methods. Text size and placement, use of figures, graphics, color, sound, highlighting, etc. are all features which contribute to the appeal of the package. Also, conceptual models provided by the system or developed by the user have also been found beneficial to the user. A package will be easier to use and learn when support of these factors by package features is greater. In this paper, the support for these factors are examined in the Human Factors and Learning literatures, relative to specific package design and assistance features.