

COMPSCI 732

CLASS EXERCISE: Visual Language Evaluation

1. Introduction

The aim of this exercise is to give you experience in evaluating a visual language (as described in a research paper), work in a group, and communicating your conclusions to the class. The exercise is to be done in the groups of 4-5.

2. Requirements

Each group member should have previously read

A Visual Language to Describe Collaborative Work, Swenson

Usability Analysis of Visual Programming Environments: a cognitive dimensions framework, TRG Green and M Petre

The "Physics" of Notations: Toward a Scientific Basis for Constructing Visual Notations in Software Engineering, D Moody

Each group member must make their own evaluation (using the Cognitive Dimensions framework and Physics of Notations) of strengths and weaknesses of Swenson's Regatta language and possible improvements to it. You may wish to follow up literature (e.g. using Google Scholar or Learn) to see if other papers have been written about the language or referencing it. During the Thursday 4th March class members must meet to discuss their individual evaluations and develop a consensus evaluation. This consensus evaluation does not need to cover all cognitive dimensions or PON principles – focus on ones you think are important and consider the tradeoffs that have been made in the design. Look particularly for situations where PON and CD are telling you different things.

3. Results

The group is responsible for preparing a short evaluation document and emailing it to John Hosking (john@cs.auckland.ac.nz) prior to the following Monday class. These evaluations will be made available to other class members on the course website. The evaluation can be in the form of brief bullet points, but make sure you highlight tradeoffs that occur