

From: EDF 17-FEB-1984 18:27
To: GARY
Subj: Here is a first draft of my general thoughts on USER INTERFACE

The purpose of this memo is to state the basic principles I think are important in end user interface development. I have really made no effort to integrate previous RTI statements of interface standards at this time.

1. Minimize the number of distinct commands and distinct concepts which end-users or system-builders need to know.
2. Avoid command proliferation by creating generic commands.
3. Make the interface as uniform as possible. In particular make all the commands menu (or form) driven and have the same global choices on all menus and have the same keystroke combinations required to accomplish the analogous tasks on all menus or forms.
4. In "help" in documentation and in error messages, the same words should mean the same thing throughout the product.
5. Make it extremely easy to find information. Try to monitor a session in such a way that it is possible for the product to volunteer information when the user appears to be foundering.
6. Make it easy for the user - even a novice user - to customize the system to his/her nomenclature. Allow a "programming by example" style where a user can use previous examples a basis for modification and extension. Make it very simple to develop macros and synonyms which make it possible for a user to define simple shorthand for his/her own commands. Make it possible for a user to create "global defaults" within INGRES which transcend the particular applications module or subsystem session.
7. Try to correct errors when possible rather than printing error messages. When user intervention is necessary to correct an error, don't force them to retype the entire command and offer choices of alternative remedies.