

2005 Paper 9 Question 1

Human–Computer Interaction

A company that sells both spreadsheets and word processors has received complaints from users in the banking industry. The users often copy data from spreadsheets into letters offering special finance terms to individual customers. The default behaviour of the word processor “paste” command is simply to insert the numeric value, whereas a special option (in the “paste special ...” dialog) inserts a recalculating formula. The special option is used so regularly that users have requested an extra item on the pop-up (right click) menu.

- (a) How would you estimate the increase in operation speed that might result from this change? [6 marks]
- (b) How would you confirm the actual speed increase after constructing a prototype? [4 marks]
- (c) The design team suggest an alternative – that the word processor should be enhanced with sufficient calculation functions that a spreadsheet is not needed at all. What factors should be taken into account in order to assess the effect this would have on user tasks? [10 marks]