User Interface Design
Critical Analysis

THE PROJECT
Suggest changes
to current UI of
Physics 20 applets

ICONS

INTERFACE

LANGUAGE

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INTERFACE

CHALLENGES
- Competing, dissimilar layouts
- Static, utilitarian visual presentation
- Inconsistent placement of operational elements

GOALS
- Hierarchy, Flexibility, Focus

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Organizational hierarchy should be established to create focus and provide direction.

Operational icons, modification sliders, help buttons and other elements should be organized to indicate where the student should start. Basic "play" operations should appear first, then the modification fields or sliders.

The organization should be consistent across all applets. For example, common operational buttons (play, step forward, restart, etc.) should be grouped together in a consistent place and order on a button bar to be used on all applets. Buttons particular to a specific applet should appear consistently adjacent to (perhaps appended to the end or underneath) the common button bar.

Breadcrumbs, indices, a navigation bar or some other indicator should be included to give students a sense of where they are in the applet collection.

- Colour palette and button design need to be distinguished from the default browser colours and controls.

The current presentation has a static, grey look. A confusing array of new symbols compete with the standard browser controls, making it easy for one to lose one's place.

- Layouts must consider differing sizes and appearances of applets.

Some applets have an extreme horizontal orientation, some have a square orientation which leaves a disbalance of white space on the page. A consistent framing layout including a consistent head, a consistent content (applet) field and consistent placement indicator should be developed. Re-sizing some of the applets should be considered.