CMSC 435 - Software Engineering
Spring 2010
Quiz 8

Name: SOLUTION

Answer the questions below. Be clear and concise in your answers, writing in complete sentences and providing examples for support as appropriate. No answer should take more than three sentences. You will lose points if you do not follow these instructions.

1. (8 pts.) What is a user interface? Why should software systems have good user interfaces?
   A user interface is the portion of the software that allows the user to interact with the application. It is possible for a piece of software to have multiple user interfaces.
   Software systems should have good user interfaces because user interfaces directly support usability. There are examples of powerful software systems that never succeeded because of poor user interfaces.
   3 pts. for definition
   5 pts. for motivation for good UIs

2. (2 pts.) How does information visualization relate to UI design?
   Information visualization (info vis.) is simply the consideration of how visual information should be displayed to the user. We watched a talk that made great use of information visualization techniques to display many types of data. We noted that as the data being processed by software systems continues to increase in volume and complexity, it would be worthwhile for UI design to make use of a solid understanding of info vis (otherwise our systems risk becoming unusable).
   2 pts. for identifying a connection between info vis and UI design