1 — One-sentence description

Identify the human activity you will support
Identify the user
Identify the usability (levels of support)
Identify the basic levels of solution

Design a cash-operated machine for quick, easy purchase of railway tickets by train passengers

2 — Know thy audience

Describe in a detailed way the “typical user(s)”
• Why is she interested in your application
• What is the problem she wants to solve
• Her educational background
• Her experience with high-tech
• Her assumptions, beliefs, preoccupations
• Her hopes and fears
• Her background on the subject you work on

The context in which the application will be used
You HAVE TO get this right!
• If you fail everywhere else, this can save you

3 — Find a good metaphor

• “…real world” object, event, thing that your audience is familiar with

Operating System: office desktop (MacOS)
Electronic mail: air mail (Eudora)
Painting: painter’s palette (Fractal Designer)
Database: organizing cards (HyperCard)
Writing: typewriter (Word)
Animation: theatrical stage (Director)
5 — Make it easy to navigate

- If it is difficult to use, it will not be used (simple, huh?)
- User needs to know:
  - where am I?
  - where have I been?
  - who am I?
  - where can I go from here?
  - how can I get there?
- Care about Usability

6 — Encourage interaction. Early!

- Get them to do something early on — click, type, select — not just sit back and watch
- Think of the novice user
  - Give her a short, well laid-out, to the point, introduction
- Think of the advanced user
  - Give her a way to skip introduction
- Specialized help for every screen
- Follow Chinese wisdom:
  - I hear and forget;
  - I see and remember;
  - I do and understand!
- KISS!!

7 — Don’t get it original; get it right!

- Design screen grids
- Be consistent in the screen design
- Minimize administrative debris
- Use icons
- Brief text — reading from screen is difficult
- Scrolling is evil
- Try serif and non-serif
- Use meaningful lines
- Be forgiving
- Break the rules, but only when you know how and why you follow them