

Random notes on “Barely usable”

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Hall in my new apartment is narrow enough to make it impossible to bring ANY form of the furniture in. Wanna desk? NEEEEEEEEEEEEEE. Cupboard? NEEEEEEEEEEEEEE. Just impossible. Last 8 months I tried to live without a desk, but I must admit — just like the Internet access, I really do need a desk. I guess better chair is yet another investment I need to make. Anyway: hall = too narrow.

Sprinklers around Menlo Park are mounted together with garden lightning systems. When you get back at 2am it's easy to spot sprinklers directed straight to the garden lights. Not sure if that's safe.

My 20-year old vehicle makes it impossible to insert a car lift into a backup wheel compartment without removing the wheel.

Additionally, after 9 months of driving the car, I've noticed gas cover has a holder for a gas cap. Didn't notice that before! Very useful.

If you ever own three-letter-acronym car and you here 3 strange beeps while driving at 80mph, just keep going. It's the round-hour signal only. Because usability is important, they made it turnable with very intuitive “Memo” key on a dashboard.

Insect mesh door in the apartment make it nearly impossible to open main door while holding something in your other hand. Want to open mesh door without making a lot of noise in the night? Good luck.

It's interesting to sit in a pizza place close to where I live and observe people trying to get some water from a soda machine. Interface is more or less like:

1. show 4×4 matrix of drink choices, one of which is water.
2. React to a screen press by showing big “Water” button
3. Wait till user presses this button, which activates the water.
4. Release the button to stop the water

Nearly nobody can figure it out. I've seen SO many people getting confused and frustrated and looking around and checking, if anybody is seeing their confusion.

Peet's coffee machine at work is an interesting beast too. Easy to get your hands burnt. Why you ask? It's only about "Brew" button after all?

True. It is. So you flip "Brew", LED "show Brewing", and once stopped, LED gets turned off. What they don't say is that:

1. HOT water is still active for at least 20 seconds
2. Nobody calculated the time for a coffee to soak a bit more

Sounds complex? Not quite — Peet's coffee comes from the same sized bags always. Result: "Brewing" LED is confusing and I'd rather have no LED whatsoever.

... unless you like to get some more hot water on your hands, or hot coffee on the floor. 3x2 flip-switch on one of the PCBs I'm playing with is *really* similar to 3x2 power connector. Result? If you're connecting an USB relay you better be sure you're doing it to the right 3x2 beast.