

# Helping Users Get Started with Visual Interfaces: Multi-Layered Interfaces, Integrated Initial Guidance and Video Demonstrations

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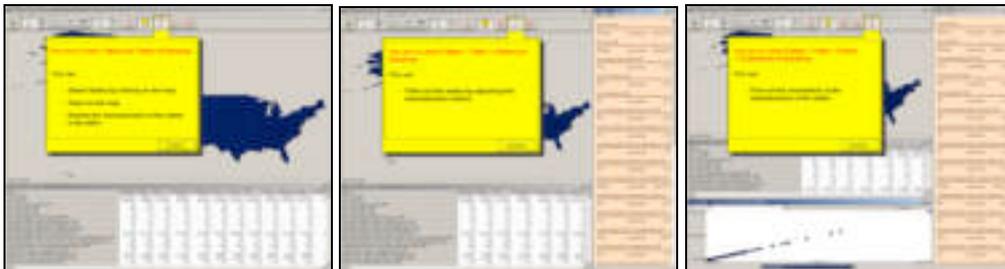
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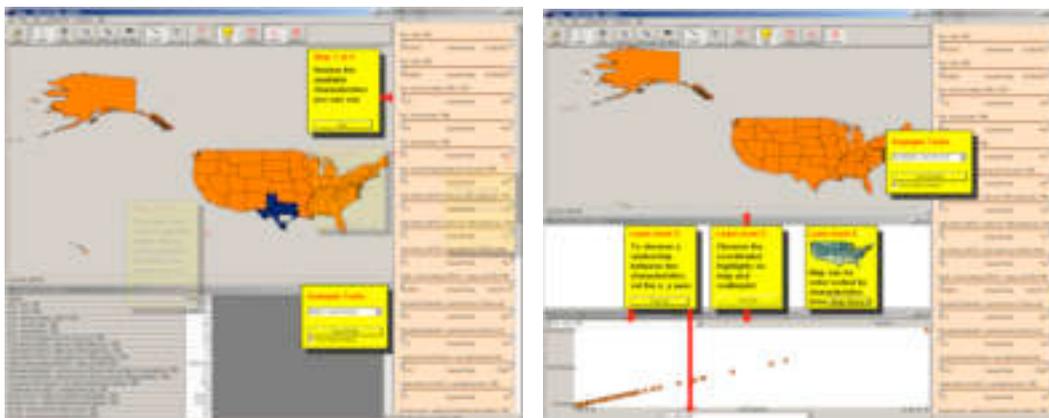
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We are investigating new ways to help users learn to use public access interactive tools, in particular for the visual exploration of government statistics. Our work led to a series of interfaces using multi-layered design, a new help method called Integrated Initial Guidance, and video demonstrations. Multi-layer designs structure an interface so that a simpler interface is available for users to get started and more complex features are accessed as users move through the more advanced layers. Integrated Initial Guidance provides help within the working interface, right at the start of the application. Using the metaphor of “sticky notes” overlaid on top of the functional interface locates the main widgets, demonstrates their manipulation, and explains the resulting actions using preset activations of the interface.



**Figure 1:** Three different levels of the multi-layered approach, (a) the first level shows only the map and the data table (b) second level shows slider bar along with map and table (c) the third level adds scatter plot. A yellow introduction panel lists the features of the level and indicates the location of the level buttons.



**Figure 2:** Two examples of Immediate Integrated Guidance sticky notes. The left example (a) corresponds to a serial grouping of sticky notes. It shows the series of steps to accomplish a task. The right example (b) shows the sticky notes representing separate or “parallel” features in a level of the interface.

**See also:** Kang, H, Plaisant, C., Shneiderman B., New Approaches to Help Users Get Started with Visual Interfaces: Multi-Layered Interfaces and Integrated Initial Guidance, paper in *Proceedings of DG'03* conference, Boston, 2003