(12 pts – 20-30 minutes) Projects and Tradeoffs. Briefly describe two tradeoffs your group made in doing your mini-project. For each, what was the choice, and how did you make it? This could be about any aspect of the project, from topic/domain choice to choosing data collection and analysis methods to specific issues around designs to how you thought about which design was most interesting. As usual, refer to specific ideas from class/readings as part of your discussion. (Note: this is not to be discussed with your group members, although we understand there is likely to be some overlap in your answers.)

One tradeoff our group had to make was domain choice. We initially began with the idea of Mac vs PC, but realized that it narrowed down our design options too much. We felt that most of the designs we came up with were centered around the computer and we really wanted to extend the scope of our difference beyond computer use. Under this domain, we ended up with designs such as a customizable operating system that would integrate both Mac and PC elements. Generalizability was poor. We thought we would have a much stronger justification for our design if we extended our domain beyond simple Mac vs. PC differences and more thoroughly analyzed the differences that led people to prefer Mac over PC or vice-versa.

Thus, we sacrificed specificity and ease of designs for a wider range of opportunities in design. Since deadlines were looming as well, another tradeoff we had to make was time. Starting over with a new set of differences would definitely take up more time and effort to make mockups, design sketches, etc.

Another tradeoff our group discussed was deciding the types of data gathering we would do. Focus groups would have provided us with a lot of useful data, but we really had to consider whether or not the time it would take to perform such focus groups would be worth it in the end. Also, because of the time constraints would only one or two sets of data from focus groups accurately represent the wide domain of potential candidates for our set of differences? Given our limited range of time and our general unfamiliarity with running focus groups, we decided to go with the more simpler approach of rapid user testing and interviews (i.e. interviewing and quickly testing a bunch of our friends who were available at the moment). We perhaps suffered a bit from lack of quality data and that may have affected our development of personas, tasks, and scenarios but we were able to get a wide range of data in a short period of time and come up with some useful design ideas based on them.