

Step 11: Sample Dialog Box Standards ⁱ

Dialog Box Standards

- Always use medium gray as a dialog box background color.
- Match title to the menu bar selection that brought it up, left-justified in the title bar
- Create vertical groups of logically related fields
- Within field groups, left-align captions, left-align fields, try to minimize white space between captions and fields (though careful labeling), use first-letter caps for all main words in captions, include a colon immediately following each caption
- Use group boxes, embed all-caps titles in upper left of group box (do not use all caps anywhere else)
- Order groups left to right, top to bottom according to natural order or expected frequency of use
- Use white space to set off and reinforce groups
- Right-justify or decimal-align numbers and currency upon display (allow left-justified input)
- Always place OK push button at lower-left edge, Cancel push button at lower-right edge, any other push buttons evenly spaced in between (push buttons are dark gray)
- Never use scroll bars in dialog boxes
- Background colors for fields:
 - Read-only – medium gray
 - Required – white
 - Optional – dark gray
- Use consistent labels for common fields
 - SSN (Social Security Number)
 - DOB (Date of Birth)
- Use consistent display format for all dates: Jan 1, 2000

ⁱ Mayhew, Deborah J.(1999), The Usability Engineering Lifecycle, p. 284-285