

Re: Push buttons or a knob ? User interfaces.

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"ChrisGibboGibson" <chrisgibbogibson@aol.com> wrote in message
news:20041002195408.15758.00001350@mb-m13.aol.com...

> *From the subject line this could be anything.*

>

> *It was prompted by the thread re scopes.*

>

> *Obviously 3 buttons (or 2 or even 1) to scroll through a menu and adjust
> whatever is cheap but does it work in the long run ? Do people continue
to buy*

> *because of the user interface ?*

>

> *I wouldn't buy a hi fi that didn't have a volume knob. When my phone
rings I*

> *just switch the TV off because it's instant, using the normal up/down
buttons*

> *takes too long (more than 0.1 seconds). Am I being old fashioned ? Will
other*

> *people happily buy things without intuitively simple controls ?*

>

> *I like analogue/digital scopes that have the old knobs to set volt/cm
and uS/cm*

> *etc. It seems technically more accurate to use a menu but never
intuitively*

> *right.*

>

> *Having said that I've only just got used to digital meters. Analogue
seems so*

> *much easier to watch a "trend" on. Is it fashion ? Am I just old ?*

Yes. It is 'fashion' in part. Look at watches. First you had normal
'analog' watches, then digital, now it has moved back to analog. For my
'money', the best designs are the 'dual tech' ones, that have normal hands
(make it much easier to think of 'ten to four', rather than 3:50, but
retain the digital display for date, stopwatch etc.). However fashion, has
these being made in reducing numbers, and instead 'chronometer' watches,
with four or more dials, which are a real pig to read...

Many of the 'better' digital scopes, try to use logical user interfaces,
and have digital display of the range selected, but use a 'psuedo analog'

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change process, involving scrolling a wheel up/down, or a cursor button. Similarly, many of the modern hi-fi systems, offer remote control, but have a knob, using a quadrature encoder, to give an apparent 'volume knob' behaviour.

The same applies to the meters. When digital first appeared, there was a rush of people buying these for their accuracy, which was then tempered, when they realised how useless they were for viewing trends or rapid changes. Latter meter generations moved to having faster ADC sampling, and offering 'bar graph' displays as well the digital reading, or even combining both display types in one package, with a conventional analog meter, and a digital value shown as well. However the cheapest design was the basic digital unit.

Generally I'd say that if the prices are comparable, people will then buy the version with the better user interface, but if the price is cheap enough, a version with a poor user interface will still sell.

Best Wishes