

Chapter 3

Web Interface Design

3.1 In Page Editing

Introduction

Designing Web Interfaces

- Principle One: Make It Direct
- Principle Two: Keep It Lightweight
- Principle Three: Stay on the Page
- Principle Four: Provide an Invitation
- Principle Five: Use Transitions
- Principle Six: React Immediately

Make It Direct

In-Page Editing
Drag and Drop
Direct Selection



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Introduction

Single-Field Inline Edit

Editing a single line of text.

Multi-Field Inline Edit

Editing more complex information.

Overlay Edit

Editing in an overlay panel.

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Introduction

Table Edit

Editing items in a grid.

Group Edit

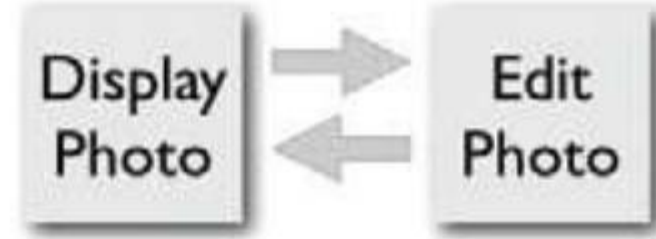
Changing a group of items directly.

Module Configuration

Configuring settings on a page directly.

Make It Direct

- In-Page Editing
- Drag and Drop
- Direct Selection



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In-Page Editing



The screenshot shows a Flickr photo titled "Front Grounds" with a yellow background. A tooltip "Click to edit" is visible over the title. The photo itself shows a building with a blue roof. The interface includes icons for "ADD FAVORITE", "SEND TO", "ADD TO SET", "TAGS", and "PRINTS".

Invitation to edit

On mouse hover, the background is backlit with yellow. A tool tip invites the user to "Click to edit".

Invitations attempt to lead the user to the next level of interaction (from mouse hover to mouse click).

Invitations have to be discovered to be useful. Flickr's bet is that the user will drift his mouse over the title (of his own photo).



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In-Page Editing



Editing

Once the user clicks on the title, it is placed into an edit mode. An edit box is switched into view immediately under the title text.

The “Save” and “Cancel” buttons make it clear we are editing the title by providing a familiar interface—the user input form.

A disadvantage to this approach is that the picture gets pushed down to make way for the additional interface elements.



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In-Page Editing



Completion

There are a number of ways to signify that the text is being saved. In this example, the title text is temporarily replaced with the text "saving...". Upon completion, the new title is shown in the non-editing style.

An alternative approach is to show a busy progress indicator while the change is being made.



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Challenges associated with In-Page Editing

Discoverability

- Just how discoverable is this feature? In the example, there are a number of cues that invite the user to edit. The invitations include:
 - Showing a tool tip (“Click to edit”)
 - Highlighting the background of the editable area in yellow
 - Changing the cursor to an edit cursor (I-beam)
- But all these cues display after the user pauses the mouse over the title (mouse hover).
- Discoverability depends on the user hovering over the title and then noticing these invitations.

Challenges associated with In-Page Editing

Discoverability

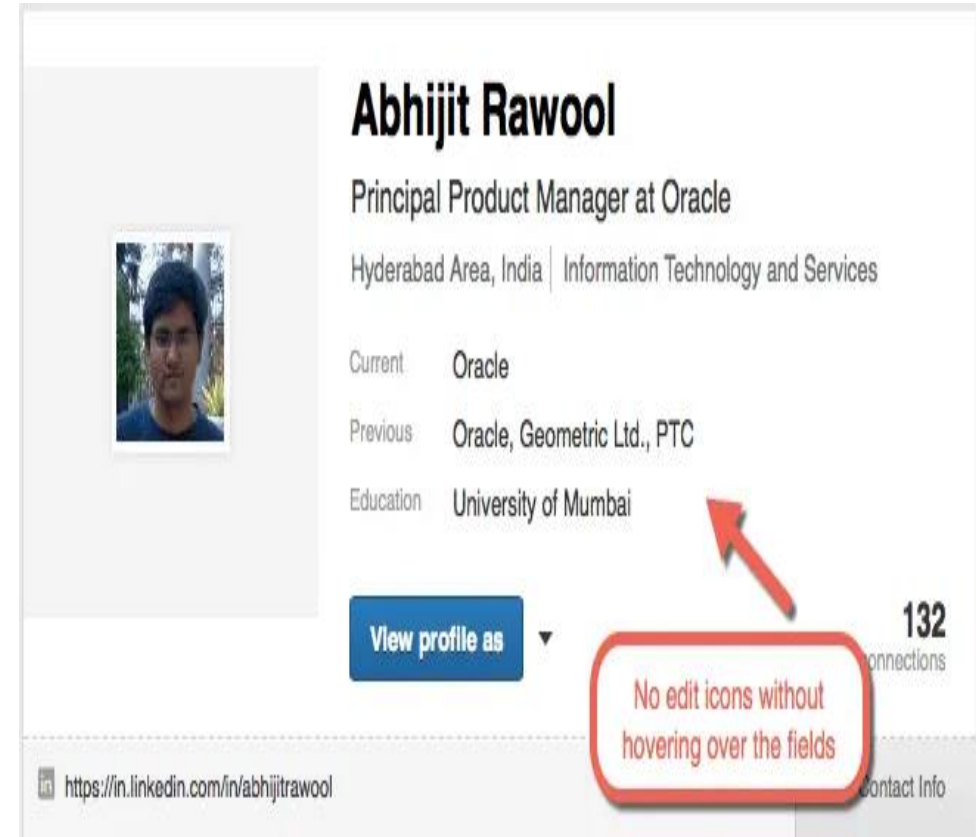
- To make the feature more discoverable, invitational cues could be included directly in the page. For example, an **“edit” link** could be shown along with the title.
- How do you think the users are going to discover that the name field will become editable once you click inside it? Not without someone telling them or them accidentally discovering it.

Challenges associated with In-Page Editing

Discoverability



- By showing the link at all times, the edit feature would be made more discoverable.
- But this has to be **balanced with how much visual noise the page** can accommodate. Each additional link or button makes the page harder to process and can lead to a feature not being utilized due to the sheer volume of features and their hints shown on the page.

Challenges associated with In-Page Editing



Challenges associated with In-Page Editing

Account

Email	anrawool@gmail.com	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Let people find your blogs through this address.	
Password	
Dial-a-post	<div>Set up your phone</div> <div>This is the '90 from your p</div>	<div>Edit icons always visible</div>
Language	English ▾	
Last account activity	02-Hyderabad, IN Sep 28, Mon @ 1:46pm View history	

Delete account



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Challenges associated with In-Page Editing

- Accessibility

Another concern that arises from inline editing is the lack of accessibility. Accessibility affects a wider range of users than one might first consider.

- Assistive technologies help those with physical impairments, medical conditions, problems with sight, and many other conditions.



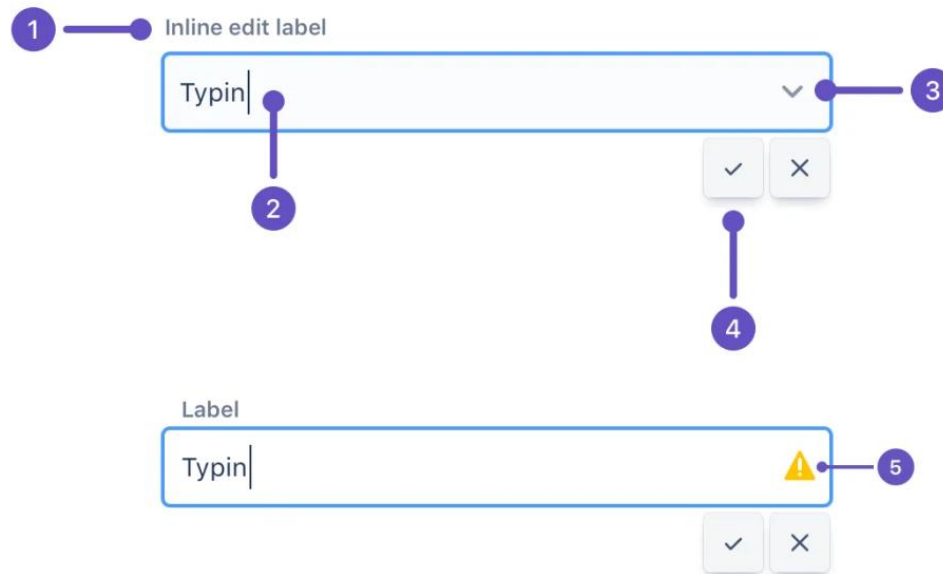
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Multi-Field Inline Edit

- The pattern Multi-Field Inline Edit describes this approach: editing multiple values inline



1. Label: Labels are sentence case and are as short as possible, while clearly describing the content of the field.

2. Text field: When in edit mode, the field snaps to the width of the column and the text remains aligned with the label. When in an empty state, this field is labeled as 'none'.

3. Control trigger: Indicates that actions are available in the field.

4. Controls: Always appear to the right of the field.

5. Validation icon: Select an appropriate icon.



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Readability versus editability

MY ACCOUNT:

Account Information (opened 10 Dec 2011) - » Edit

Payee Name: Abhijit Nishant Rawool

Address: Road No. 12, Madhavapuri Hills, Ahead of Luxor Park,
7508, Janapriya Nile Valley, Madinaguda
Hyderabad , Andhra Pradesh 500050
India

Account Password: [Change Password](#)

Account Survey: [Update Survey Information...](#)

Contact Information - » Edit

Name: Abhijit Rawool

Account Email: anrawool@gmail.com

Account Phone:

Preferred language: English

Time Zone: IST

Email Format: HTML

Customer Service Email: abhijit@questioningdesigns.com

Customer Service Phone:

Customer Service Web site: <http://www.questioningdesigns.com/sales-support/>

Transactional Email: abhijit@questioningdesigns.com

Communication Emails

Email:

Role: Both

Delivery Status: Subscribed ([show details](#))

Edit links on every region



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Readability versus editability

You will see this design in action on LinkedIn.

If you click on any of the Edit icons while you are editing your Education details on your profile, the entire region will get replaced with editable fields.

The image shows a side-by-side comparison of the LinkedIn 'Education' section. On the left is the compact, public-facing view. It lists 'University of Mumbai' with a degree in 'Bachelor in Engineering, Production' for the years '1999 - 2003'. It includes small edit icons (pencil and square) and a red arrow points from the square icon to the right-hand view. Below this, it lists 'Maharashtra English High School' with 'SSC' for '1996 - 1997'. Both entries have links for 'Add Grade', 'Add Activities and Societies', and 'Add Description'. At the bottom of each entry is an 'Add Media' section with buttons for Document, Photo, Link, Video, and Presentation. On the right is the expanded, form-based view. It has a title 'Education' and a '+ Add education' button. The 'University of Mumbai' entry is shown as a form with fields for 'School' (University of Mumbai), 'Dates Attended' (1999 - 2003), 'Degree' (Bachelor in Engineering), 'Field of Study' (Production), 'Grade', 'Activities and Societies', and 'Description'. At the bottom of the form are buttons for 'Save', 'Cancel', and 'Remove this school'.

Readability versus editability

- Readability is a primary concern during display. But the best way to present editing is with the common input form. The user will need some or all of the following:
 - Edit controls
 - Field prompts
 - Help text for user input
 - Error handling
 - Assistive input (e.g., calendar pop up or drop-down selection field)
 - Editing styles (e.g., edit fields with 3D sunken style)



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Overlay Edit

- Overlay Edit patterns bring the editing form just a layer above the page.
- While still not leaving the page for editing, it does not attempt to do the editing directly in the flow of the page. Instead a lightweight pop-up layer (e.g., dialog) is used for the editing pane.



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Overlay Edit

- What we observe here??

Account

Email

☒ Let people find your blogs through this address.

Rest of the fields fade out

Password

Dial-a-post This is the '90s. You can call in an audio post from your phone.

Language

Last account activity
[View history](#)



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Why to consider Overlay ?

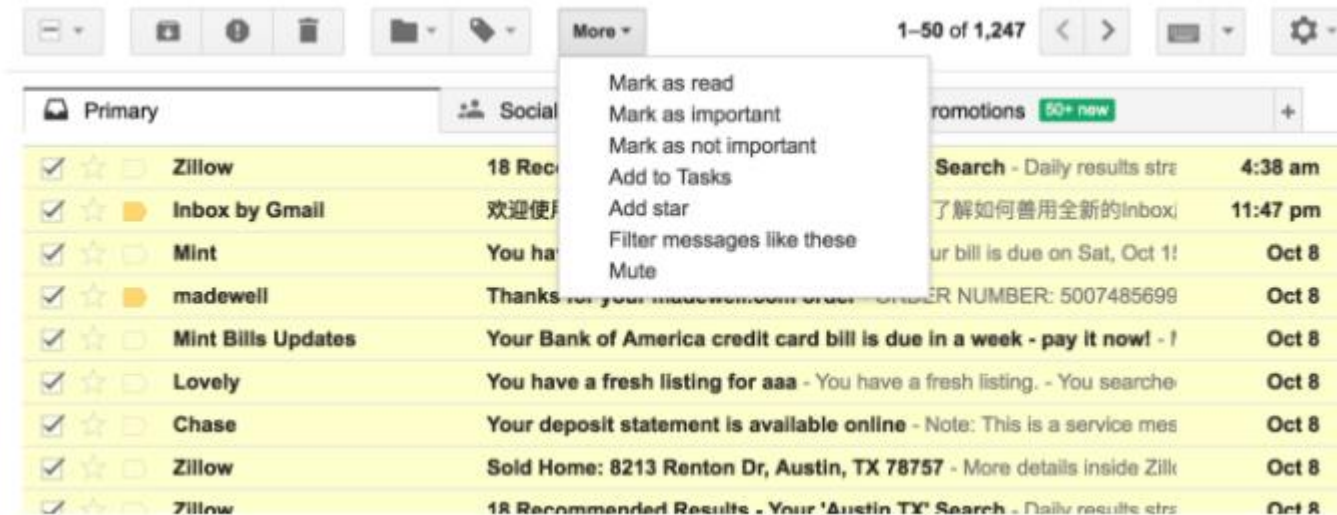
- An overlay should be considered when:
 - The editing module is considerably larger than the display values.
 - Opening an area on the page for the editing module would be distracting or push important information down the page.
 - There is concern that the opened information might go partially below the fold.
 - An overlay can be positioned to always be visible in the page.
 - One want to create a clear editing area for the user. Etc.,

Table Edit

- Editing tables of data is less common in consumer web applications but in enterprise web applications, however, tables reign supreme.
- The most common request is for the table editing to work like Microsoft Excel, which long ago set the standard for editing data in a grid. A good example of Table Edit is a Google Docs Spreadsheet.

Group Edit

- To keep the display of items on the page as uncluttered as possible while still supporting editing, consider using a single mechanism to enter a special editing mode: Group Edit.



Gmail e.g



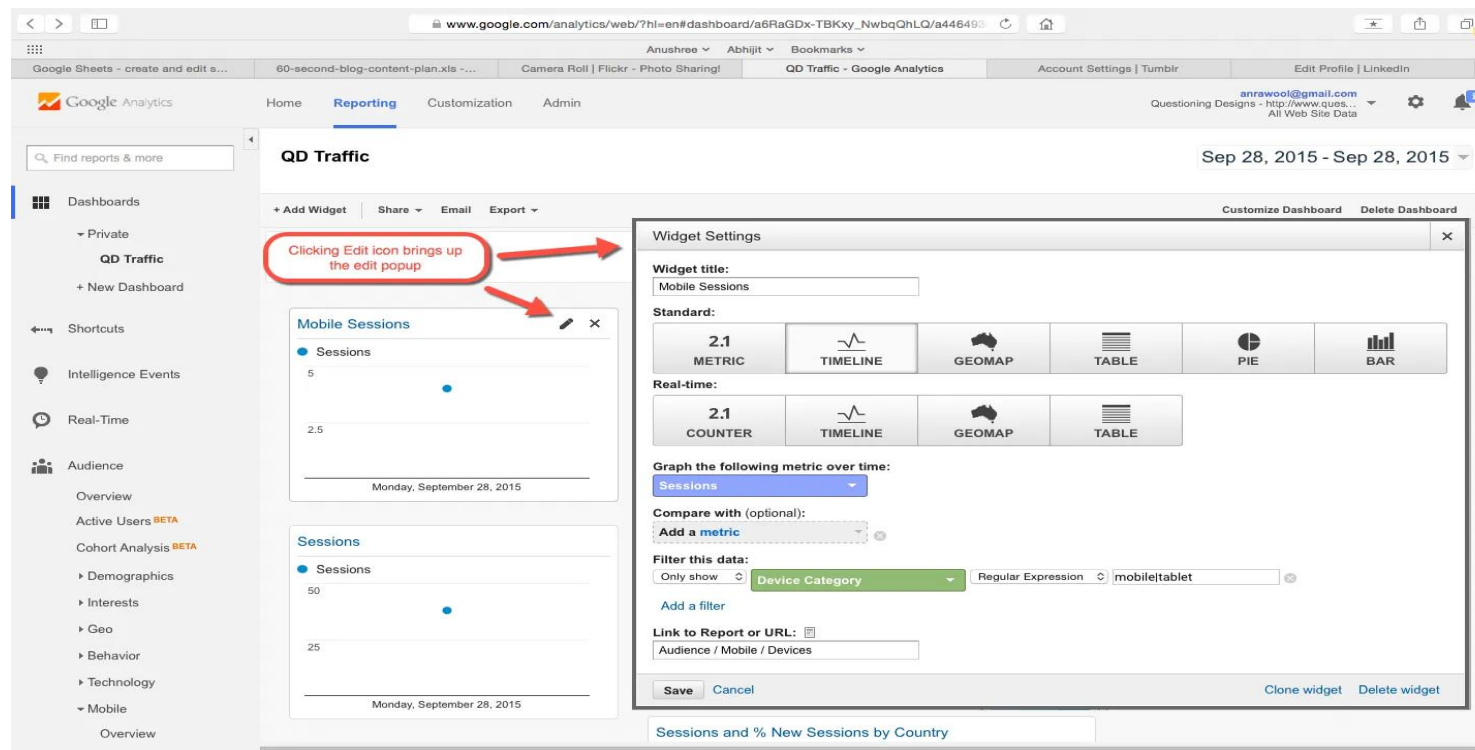
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Group Edit

- Google Analytics uses group edit. Click the Edit icon on any of the regions on the dashboard to get a popup with all the editable fields.



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Module Configuration

- Popular portal sites like Yahoo! and Google's interactive home page display specific content modules (e.g., Top Stories).
- Module Configuration is a common pattern on these types of sites. Instead of modifying modules on a separate page, the sites provide ways to directly configure the amount and type of content that shows in each module.
- Putting edit links on each module can be **visually noisy**. An alternative approach is to use the Group Edit pattern.

Guidelines for Choosing Specific Editing Patterns

- Whenever you have a single field on the page that needs editing, consider using the **Single-Field Inline Edit**.
- For multiple fields or more complex editing, use the **Multi-Field Inline Edit**.
- If you don't need inline context while editing, or the editing is something that demands the user's full attention, use **Overlay Edit**.
- For grid editing, follow the pattern **Table Edit**.
- When dealing with multiple items on a page, **Group Edit** provides a way to balance between visual noise and discoverability.
- When providing direct configuring to modules, use the **Module Configuration** pattern.

Summary on Inline Edit

- The inline edit design pattern is typically used on websites and apps that allow user-generated content.
- It is usually only presented to authenticated users (users who have logged-in).
- This pattern shouldn't be used if editing is the primary function of the screen.