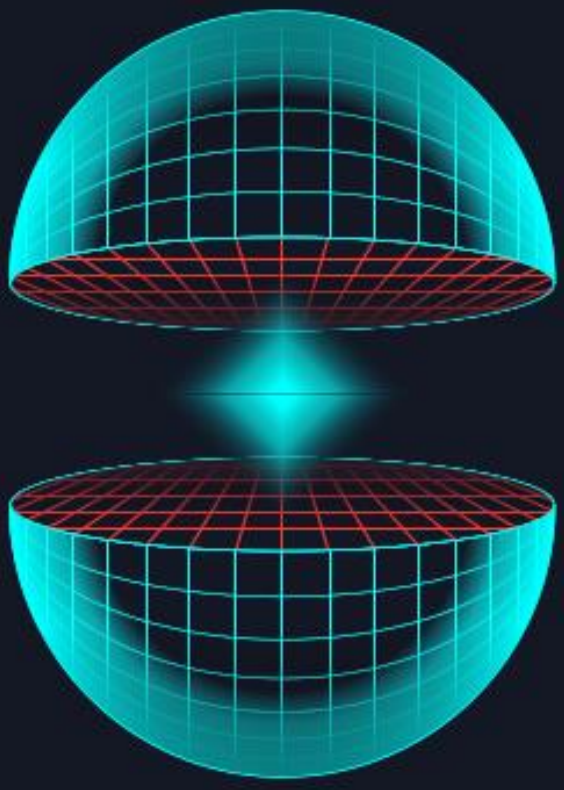
UXPin

The Elements of Successful UX Design

Best Practices for Meaningful Products



UX elements

1. **Useful** – Does the product solve the right problem?

    1. Empathize – Go deep inside the mind of your users: their feelings and opinions, their behaviors, and their preferences. Consider all of these elements the raw materials of your product.

    2. Define – As you start to see patterns in the user research, create a clear problem statement as a foundation for the product.

    3. Ideate – Brainstorm ways to rectify the problem statement. Now you start to shift from “building the right product” to “building the product right”.

    4. Prototype – Take the best ideas from the ideation phase (usually expressed as sketches or wireframes for digital products) and build them into a testable prototype..

    5. Testing – Even after your first lo-fi prototype (e.g. a paper pro-totype), you can start testing with a minimum of 5 sample users.

2. **Usable** – Is the product easy to use?

    1.Learnable – A new user can easily figure out how to use the product for the first time.

        1.Use clear signifiers and UI patterns

        Because they’re used repeatedly across diverse websites, signifiers (like an envelope representing mail) and UI patterns are immediately recognized.To help designers focus more on perfecting user flows and interactions.

        2.Design good empty states Often seen as a placeholder screen, an empty state communicates what new users can expect from a page after they interact enough to populate it. More than just decoration, these help users orient themselves immediately.

        3.Use white space as a design tool

        White space, or emptiness in the screen, can improve comprehension by up to 20% when Designing for Usability used correctly. Placing ample space between elements and text provides breathing room and a welcome pause for people to process what they’ve just seen.

4.Good onboarding

The onboarding phase is a golden window in which you show users the product's core functions while also influencing them for upgrades. Focus on the 20% of features that users will need 80% of the time. Be concise, use plenty of visuals, and consider adding a completeness meter.

5.Progressive disclosure

Reveal information gradually instead of all-at-once, even giving the user control so they can choose their pace. Progressive disclosure covers features such as content toggle (hiding/revealing more information), "more" or "expand" links, and instructional overlays.

2.Efficient – Users can accomplish tasks quickly and easily.

1.Use color saturation to set visual hierarchy

Saturated colors are more vibrant and attract more attention, while desaturated colors have the opposite effect. As Anthony Tseng of UX Designing for Usability Movement suggests, apply saturation to the elements you want seen (like CTAs, alerts, system messages) and desaturate colors in menus and panels to minimize distraction during core tasks.

2.Simple (not less) clicking

Some might think that every page should be accessible within three clicks of another – but this isn't as accurate as people think. A better methodology is designing simple clicks with clear labels and navigation. As long as every click brings the user closer to achieving their goals (and feels effortless), exceeding three isn't a problem.

3.Speed matters

Don't neglect site or app performance. Users only feel in control if reaction times are under 0.1 seconds. Users lose their feeling of control for delays exceeding 1 second.

4.Time users during testing

Time the completion of tasks during user testing. Usability expert Jeff Sauro offers some great advice for measuring and interpreting task efficiency.

5.Write out task flows

Make a list of each step it takes to complete a task [i.e., (1.) open Gmail, (2.) click "Compose," (3.) Type recipient's emails, etc.]. Review the list for redundancies and trim as many steps as you can.

6.Reorganize layouts

Cognitive load is the enemy of efficiency. Rearrange the screen layout to minimize the number of distracting, secondary elements so that only the elements related to the goal are visible.

7.Chunking

On a related note, if you can't get rid of certain content, try regrouping it. Chunking is an effective technique for reducing cognitive load without reducing the visible elements.

3.Forgiving – The design minimizes user errors through careful understanding of task flows. When errors are made, the design does not impose severe consequences and offers clear feedback for solutions.

1.Undo vs. Confirm

Popular opinion is that Undo creates a smoother interface than Confirmations about consequential actions, such as deleting. As Aza Raskin explains, users develop a habit loop with popup windows, where it's habit to click "Okay" before fully understanding what they're confirming. An Undo feature accounts for the habit loop instead of challenging it. There are some exceptions, namely when undoing is complicated, as with publishing something publically, or for critical actions (like deleting a whole email database).

2.Forgiving format for inputs

Input forms must accommodate multiple formats. The forgiving format UI pattern allows users to type in what they want; they sort it out in the back end. Announce this feature through input hints, like Yelp's placeholder text, "tacos, cheap dinner, Max's."

3.Autosaving

Cheap data storage makes autosaving great protection against users losing data, whether human error or other accidents like browser crashes or power outages. To maximize its effects, give a subtle indicator like Gmail below – something that doesn't require interaction, so not to distract.

4.Exceptional error feedback

You can't defend against errors forever. When they do occur, provide feedback in a helpful way to get users back on track. Clearly explain what happened and how to rectify the situation, even providing a call-to-action for their next step. Just keep it succinct, as they'll likely be skimming anyway.

4.Satisfying – The design is emotionally fulfilling.Let's look at some simple tips for design a smooth experience your users need.

1.Microinteractions

The tiniest interactions add up to a cohesive experience. Microinteractions make the interface smooth and enjoyable. Adding a fun animation or surprising element makes using the system more interesting, not to mention how they can improve usability.

2.Meaningful gamification

Gamification tends to be viewed as overused today, but when done well it can enhance the experience. Steer away from tired ideas like badges and currencies, unless you have an innovative spin on them. Gamification works best as a way to streamline user task flows, so remove interruptions. Show users their progress without patronizing or using a condescending tone.

3.Personality

Interacting with a digital product should feel as human as possible. A banking app that feels like a friendly advisor works better than one that feels like a call center agent. Personality involves the tone of the copy, the visual styling, and the pace of the interactions. There are no wrong answers as long as you build around your type of user. Start with user personalities (check their personas) before building your own.

3. **Desirable** – Is the product enjoyable to use?

    1. Transformation – There must be some change to add new meaning, utility or a useful action.

    2. Instantaneous – Hesitations will flatten the surprise and magic of each micromoment.

    3. Uniformity – The action should coincide with the other elements of the site. Otherwise, the action will be jarring.

    4. Subtle – Whatever is happening shouldn't distract from the experience as a whole.

    5. Minimal Preparation – It shouldn't involve work or effort.

    6. Trigger – A cue to start the action. These can be either external visual cues, even something slight like seeing Pinterest in your bookmarks, or something internal, like user's desire to alleviate boredom.

    7. Action – The specific action taken, in many ways the habit itself. In this case logging in and browsing Pinterest.

    8. Reward – The reason to take the action, whether completing a task or even a few moments of entertainment. In Pinterest, Eyal describes the rewards in terms of Tribe (relating to how we fit into our social circles), or Hunt (the thrill of finding new content that justifies the search).

    9. Investment – Each session of the habit should end with deeper investment. This might be slight at first, such as retaining the location of functions, but with more usage comes more investment, such as installing the Pin It button.

4. **Valuable** – Does the product provide business value?

    1. Know the Business Model Canvas

        1.Customer Segments – Which customer groups the product targets. Note which ones are most important, and the differences between mass/niche markets, and between diversified/segmented.

        2.Value Proposition – The point of the product: what user problem it solves. Note the differences in value between different customer segments.

        3.Key Activities – The actions necessary to achieve the value proposition. What needs to happen?

        4.Key Resources – Physical, intellectual (patents, data, etc.), human, and financial resources required to turn concept into reality.

        5.Channels – Which channels work best for the product. Note costs, how they differ between customer segments, and how they fit in with the user preferences and daily routines. Channels can be divided into 5 phases:

            1. Raising awareness about the product

            2. Influencing the user's evaluation of the product

            3. Allowing users to access or purchase the product

            4. Delivering the promised value

            5. Providing services after the sale

6.Cost Structure – All the relevant costs, fixed and valuable. Note which costs are most expensive, and whether your company is cost-driven (Walmart) or value-driven (Gucci).

7.Revenue Streams – Everything related to money coming in: how much customers are willing to pay, how they're paying (one-time or recurring like SaaS?), and how much each stream contributes to the overall revenue.

2. Understand the 5 Business Goals

    1. Increase revenue

    2. Decrease costs

    3. Bring in new business

    4. Expand existing business

    5. Increase shareholder value

3. Quick Case Study: Bertucci's

    1. Interview users to learn about eating habits

    2. Survey users about food preferences

    3. Invite users out to eat, then document their food choices and eating habits

    4. Revise the existing dining experience based on user research insights

    5.Test new design in a prototype restaurant, iterate, then release to public

4. Talk to Stakeholders

5. Add Strategic Friction

6. Run Experiments

7. Go Beyond the Daily Grind

5. **Findable** – Can users find relevant content easily?

Building the Right Information Architecture

    1. Top-Down vs. Bottom-Up

    2. Meta Data and "Crucial Categories"

    3. The Best Practices for Information Foraging

        1. Descriptive links and categories – Give vital details about where the link will take them to strengthen the scent.

        2. Avoid format-based navigation – Organizing navigation by format gives a weak scent. Sure, having a "Videos" link lets your users know the site features videos, but it doesn't give enough information to entice a click. Moreover, it distracts users from accomplishing their goals because they have to calculate which format their target content is in.

3. Be honest – You can give a link any scent you want, but if you don't deliver what you promised, it will frustrate the user, cause mistrust of the entire system, and hurt sales/conversions.

4. Basic language – For the sake of clarity, use simple language and recognizable words. This means avoiding buzzwords or your own company's terminology.

5. Cross-reference – Users won't notice everything on the screen, so get in the habit of cross-referencing links in case they missed the initial one.

5 IA Layouts for the Web

1. Single Page

2. Flat Structure

3. Index Page

4. Strict Hierarchy

5. Coexisting Hierarchy

5 Navigational Menu Patterns

1. Menu Bar

2. Drop-down Menu

3. Mega Menu

4. Separate Pages

5. Dynamic Filters

Testing Findability

1. Card Sorting

2. Tree Testing

3. Click Testing

6. **Accessible** – Is the product usable by people of varying abilities and disabilities?

1. Perceivable – There are ample alternatives for experiencing content, such as text-alternatives to audio content for hearing impaired.

2. Operable – Users can actually use the product without time or functionality restraints. Operable designs entail complete keyboard functionality and content that remains sensitive to people with epilepsy. Returning to our previous example, the August Lock is quite operable since the device works regardless of physical capabilities.

3. Understandable – Content is readable and the product functions consistently. Again, notice how the principles aren't anything "extra". Any design must fulfill this criterion.

4. Robust – A product is compatible with user tools and aid, both current and for the future.

* Satisfying these four traits means designing with disabled users in mind. While the goal is to design universally, it helps to understand the common disabilities associated with accessibility, and their unique requirements:

1. Motor (Physical) Disabilities – Disabilities that limit a person's

movements.

    1. Mouse-only controls

    2. Keyboard-only controls

    3. Voice-activated controls.

2. Hearing Impairment – Disabilities affecting audio options.

    1. Captions

    2. Transcripts

3. Vision Impairment – Blindness, low vision, or color blindness.

    1. Screen enlargement

    2. Keyboard-only controls

    3. Screen-reader compliancy

    4. Sizable fonts

    5. Adequate color contrast

    6. Properly labeled elements for screen readers

4. Cognitive Disabilities – Mental and learning disabilities, including trauma.

    1. Consistent navigation

    2. simple interfaces

    3. no distracting or confusing visuals

7. **Credible** – Does the product feel trustworthy and reliable?

    1. Consistency

        1. The same styles and color schemes across different pages or screens.

        2. Layout and navigation consistency mean features are always in the same place, such as a search option always in the upper right corner.

        3. Functional consistency means visuals reflect the same function across the whole design, such as a green button always meaning Save.

    2. Quality Assurance

        1. Functionality – All interactive buttons work. This includes clickable functions and features, but also more subtle aspects, such as hover-triggered animations and gesture controls.

2. Proofreading – Typos and grammar mistakes scream untrustworthy – think of a typical spam email. Comb through all text to eliminate all errors, and hire a professional if your English is not up to the task.

3. No False Buttons

As a rule, only buttons should look like buttons.

False buttons frustrate the user, who waste time clicking them. The mistrust will spread to your whole design since users will think twice before interacting with other elements.

Don’t outline words or phrases in a box unless the user can click on it.

4. No Dark Patterns

As the name suggests, dark patterns are designed to trick users into actions that make the company more money. While tempting for short-term gains, they always damage the brand in the long run. You might be able to fool the user once or Designing for Credibility Designing for Credibility twice, but once they realize the deception, you’ll probably never earn their trust back.

1. Never sneak items into a user’s shopping cart upon checkout.

2. If users pay for a certain set of actions (e.g. 20 usability tests per month), don’t allow for more actions than what a user paid for, then demand payment or you’ll lock the account. Hostage-taking is never a viable UX strategy

3. On a more subtle yet equally sinister note, don’t design difficult opt-outs (like forcing users to take multiple steps to cancel an account).