

Building User Interfaces

Design Paradigms, Patterns, & Languages

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What we will learn today?

- Design paradigms
- Design patterns
- Design languages

Recap: What is interaction design?

Interaction Design

Definition: Defining behaviors for a system that engages the full spectrum of its user's perception, cognition, and movements.

Differs from visual design in its closer and more complex relationship to user behavior and context.

Example: visual designers do not think about navigation models!

Five Dimensions of Interaction Design¹

1. 1D: Words
2. 2D: Visual representations
3. 3D: Physical objects and space
4. 4D: Time
5. 5D: Behavior

We talked about *visual design* and *navigation*, but how do we address all these dimensions?

5 DIMENSIONS OF INTERACTION DESIGN

The image shows a wireframe of a web application form. At the top, it says "Application Form". Below that is a text input field with placeholder text: "Please enter the description below: [REDACTED]". At the bottom is a "SUBMIT" button.



INTERACTION-DESIGN.ORG

¹ [Interaction Design Foundation](#)

Interaction Design Paradigms

What is a Design Paradigm?

Definition: An archetypal solution or an approach to solving design problems.

Historical Interaction Design Paradigms ⁹

1. Implementation-centric
2. Metaphoric
3. Idiomatic

⁹ Cooper et al., 2014, About Face

Implementation-centric Design

Definition: Interaction design maps directly to how system functions are implemented.

Source² ³



² Pintrest

³ Entrepreneur Magazine



Pros & Cons of Implementation-centric Design

Pros:

1. Very easy to build, easy to debug, easy to troubleshoot

Cons:

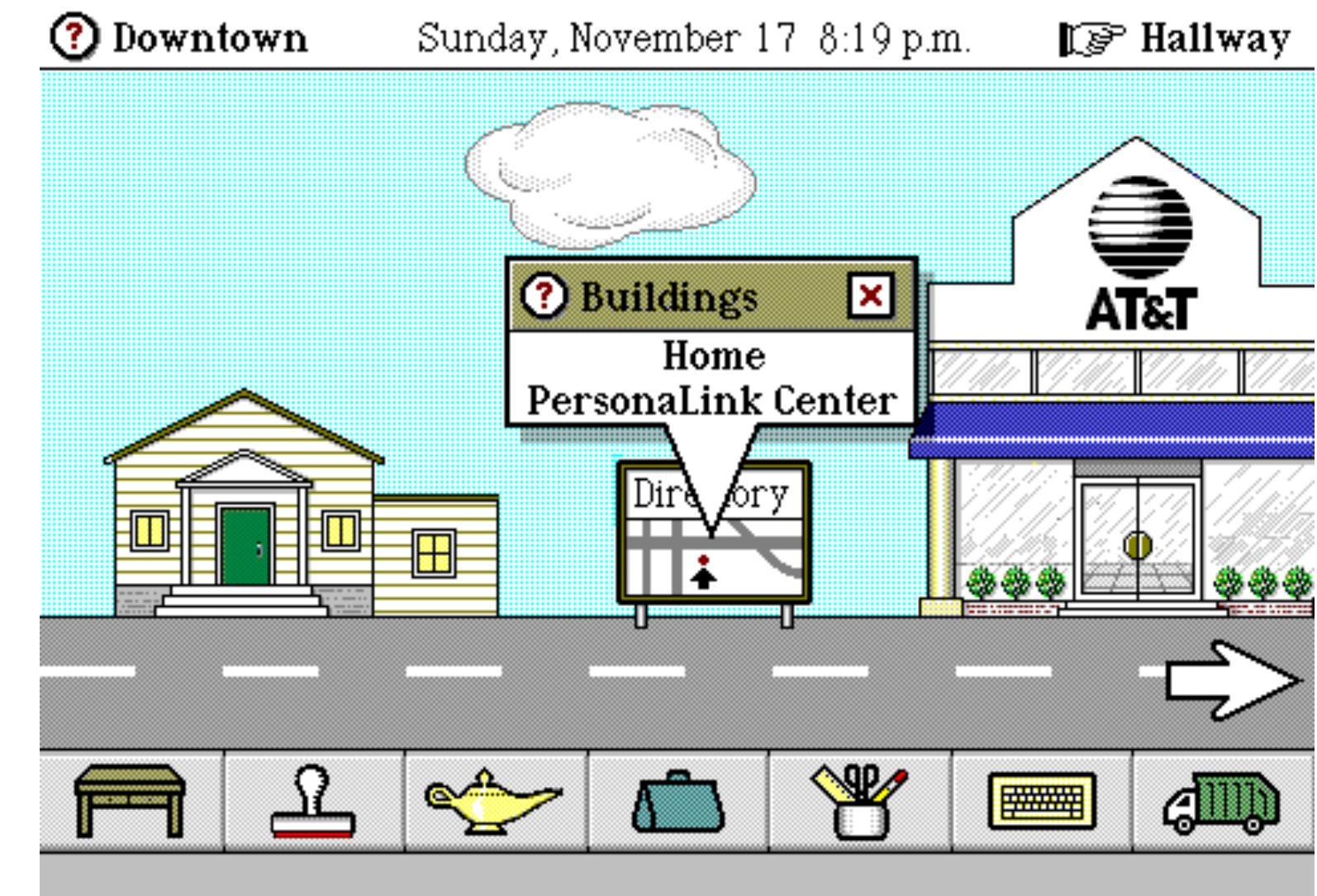
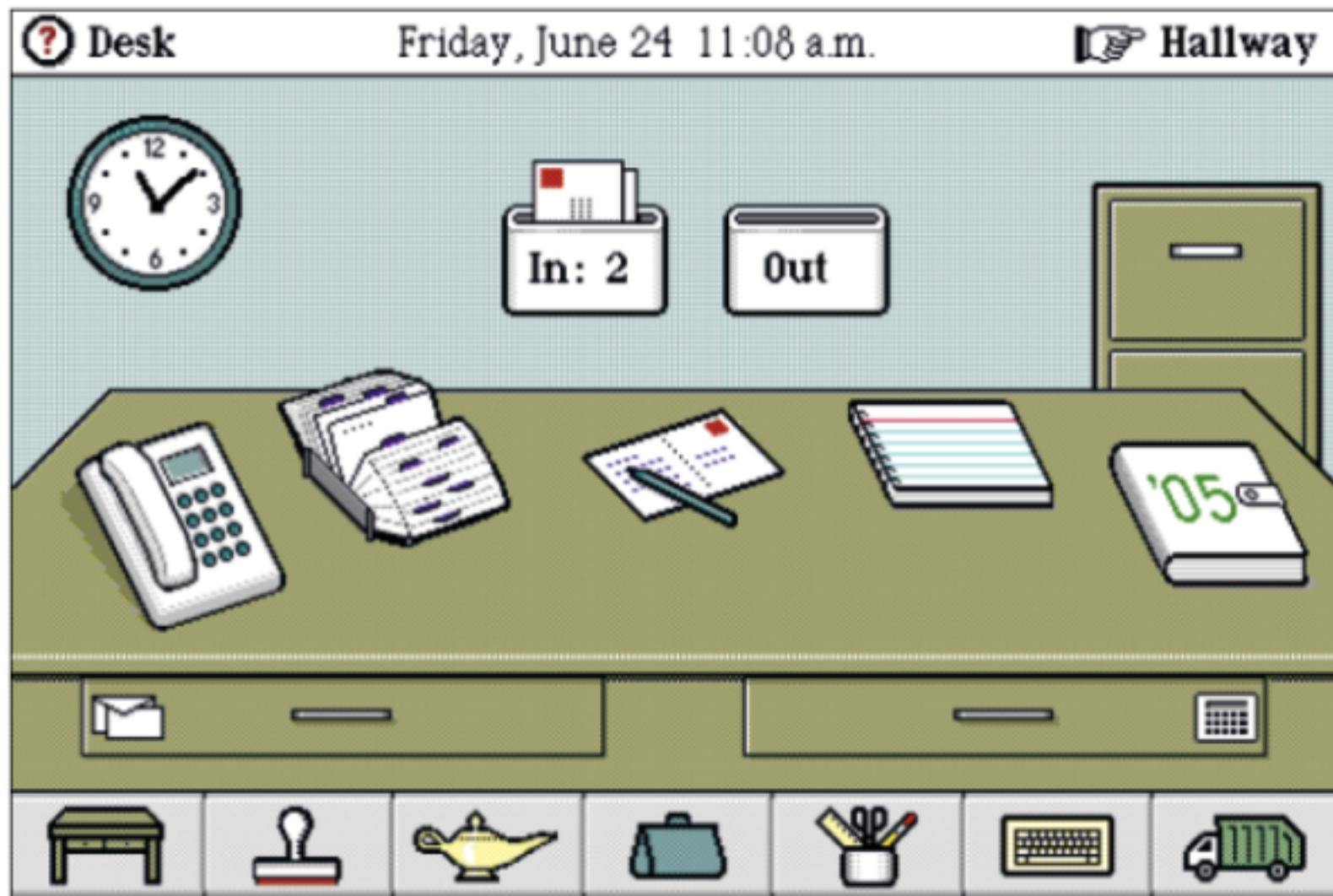
1. Requires learning how the functions work
2. Requires skills in using the functions
3. The system cannot perform high-level actions

Metaphorical Design

Definition: Following a real-world metaphor that users are expected to be familiar with.

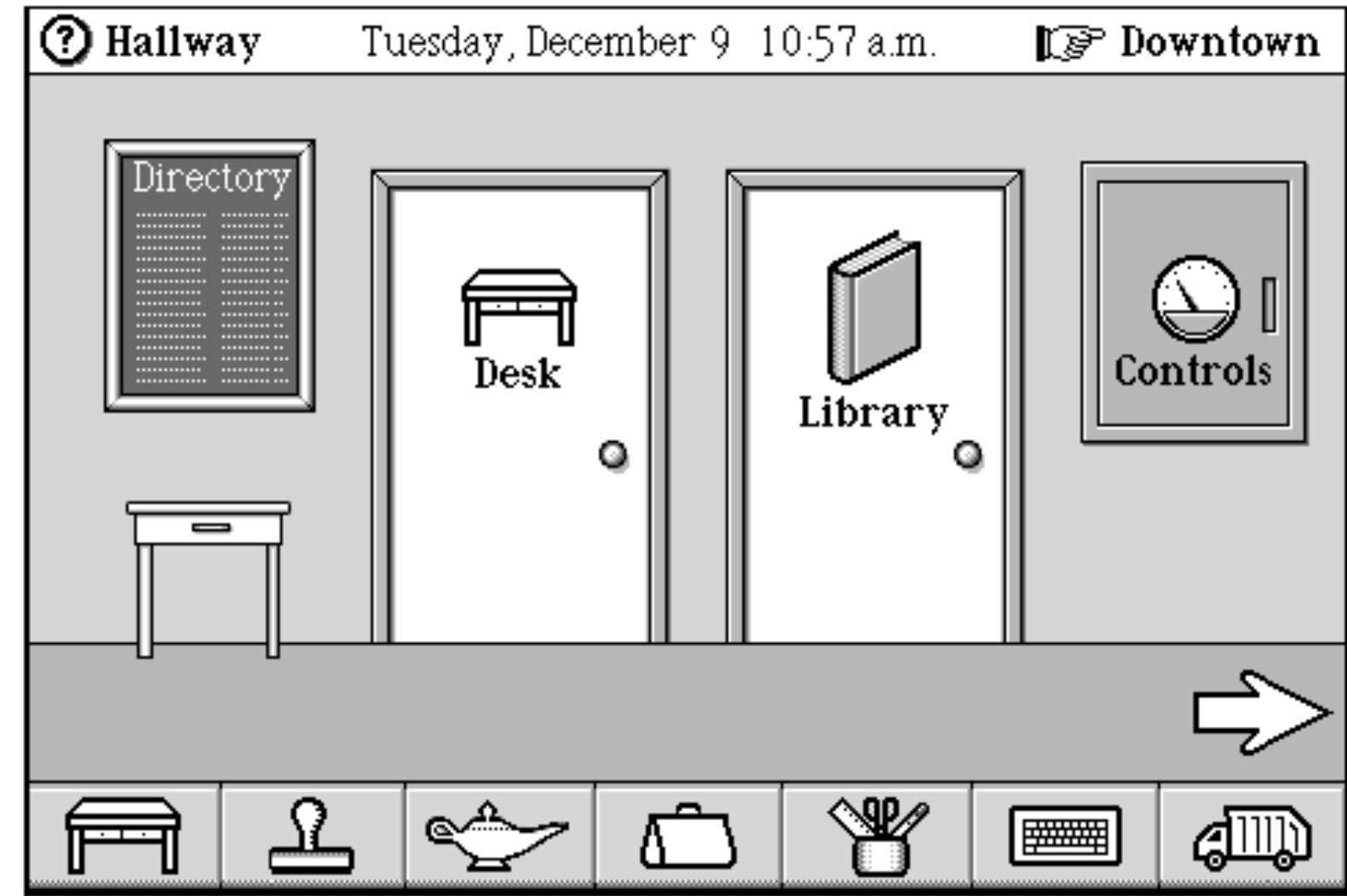
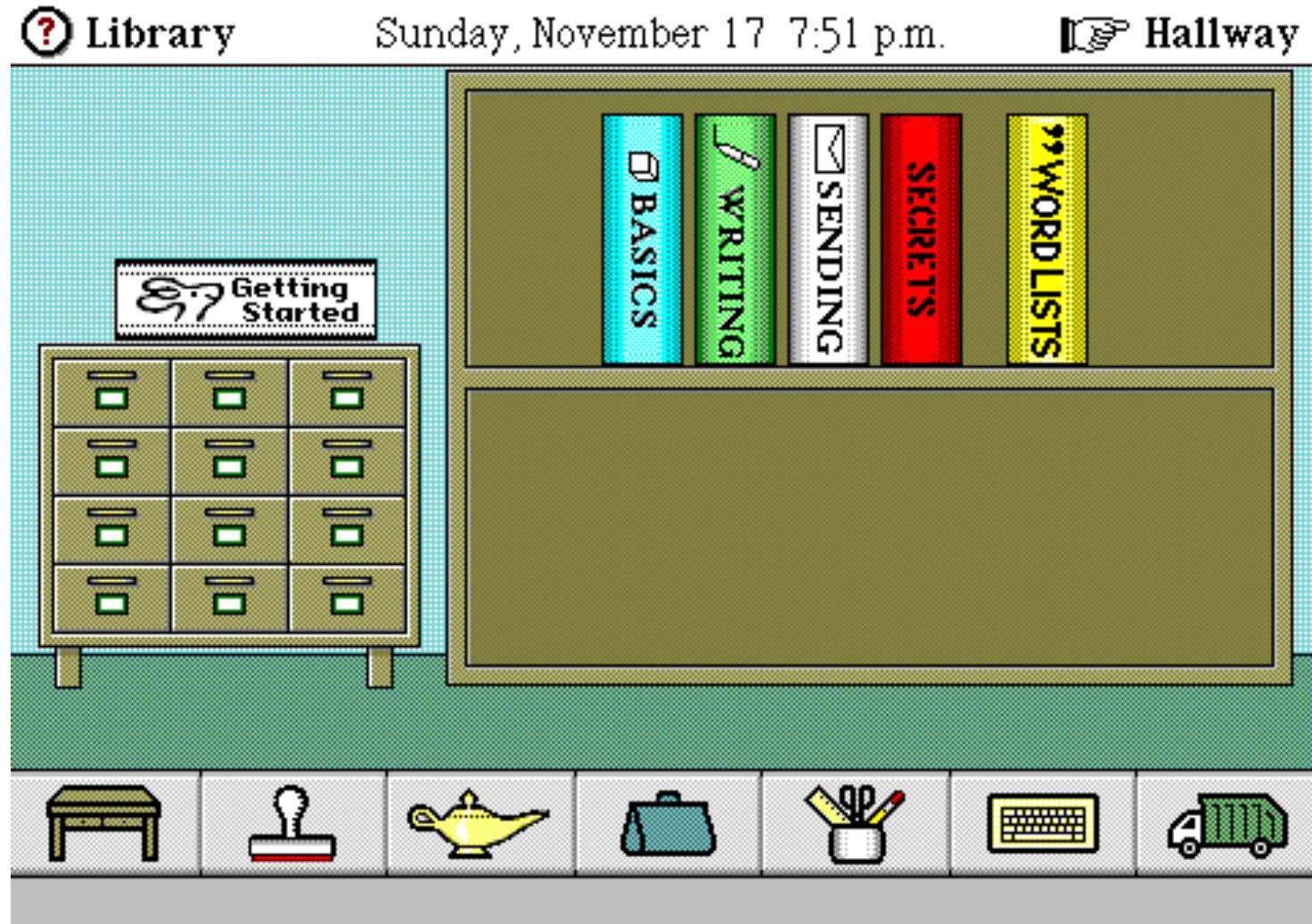
Metaphorical designs "jump-start" user mental models, rely on their existing knowledge of how things work in the real-world, and thus eliminate learning.

Source⁴



⁴ Wikipedia: [Magic Cap](#)

Source⁵⁶



⁵ Wikipedia: [Magic Cap](#)

⁶ NN Group: [The Anti-Mac Interface](#)

Source⁷

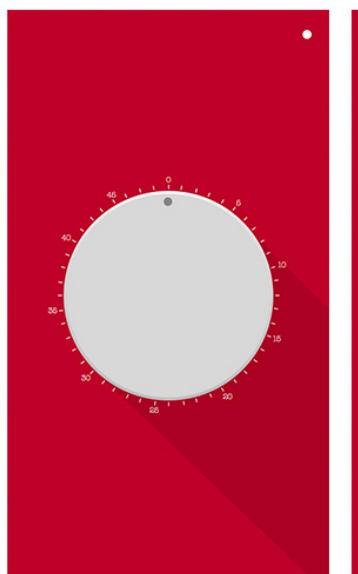
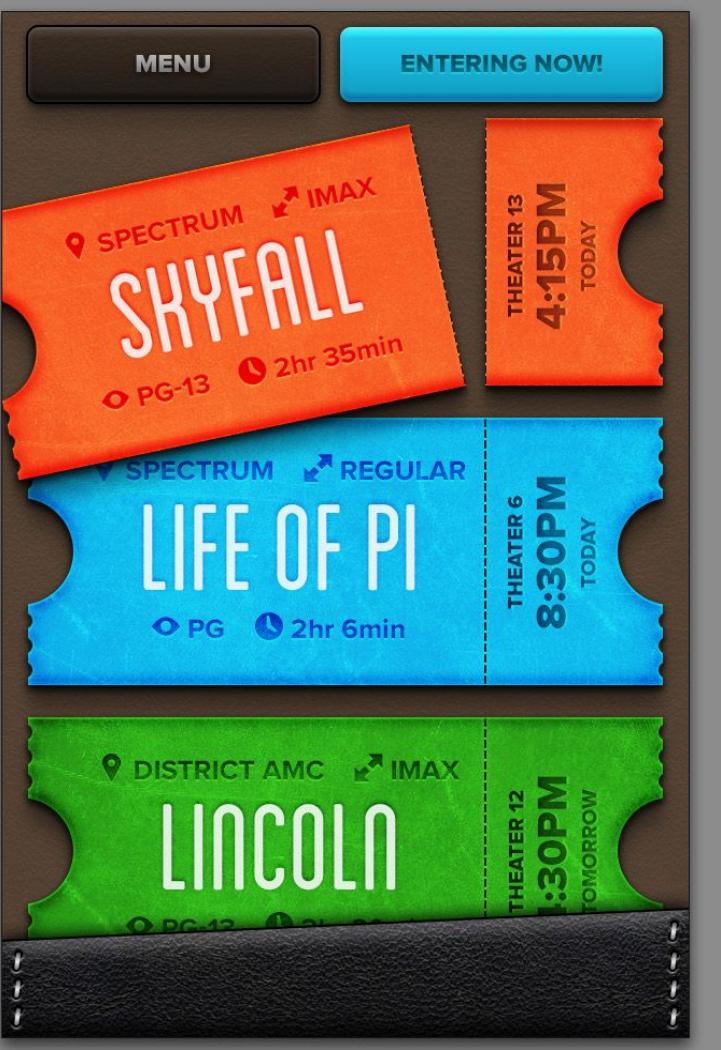


⁷ UX Planet: [Metaphorical Design](#)

Source⁸



⁸ Apple App Store: [76 Synthesizer](#)



AND REDISEIGN FOR APPLE WATCH



Pro Tip 1: Metaphors may use a familiar model from another domain (e.g., building vs. computer windows); analogies are similar to models in the same category (e.g., physical cards vs. e-cards).

Pro Tip 2: Metaphors can be applied at different levels of abstraction.

Pro Tip 3: Mixed metaphors bring together models from different domains in a single design.

Global Metaphor

Definition: A *global metaphor* provides a single, overarching framework for all the metaphors in the system (e.g., Magic Cap).

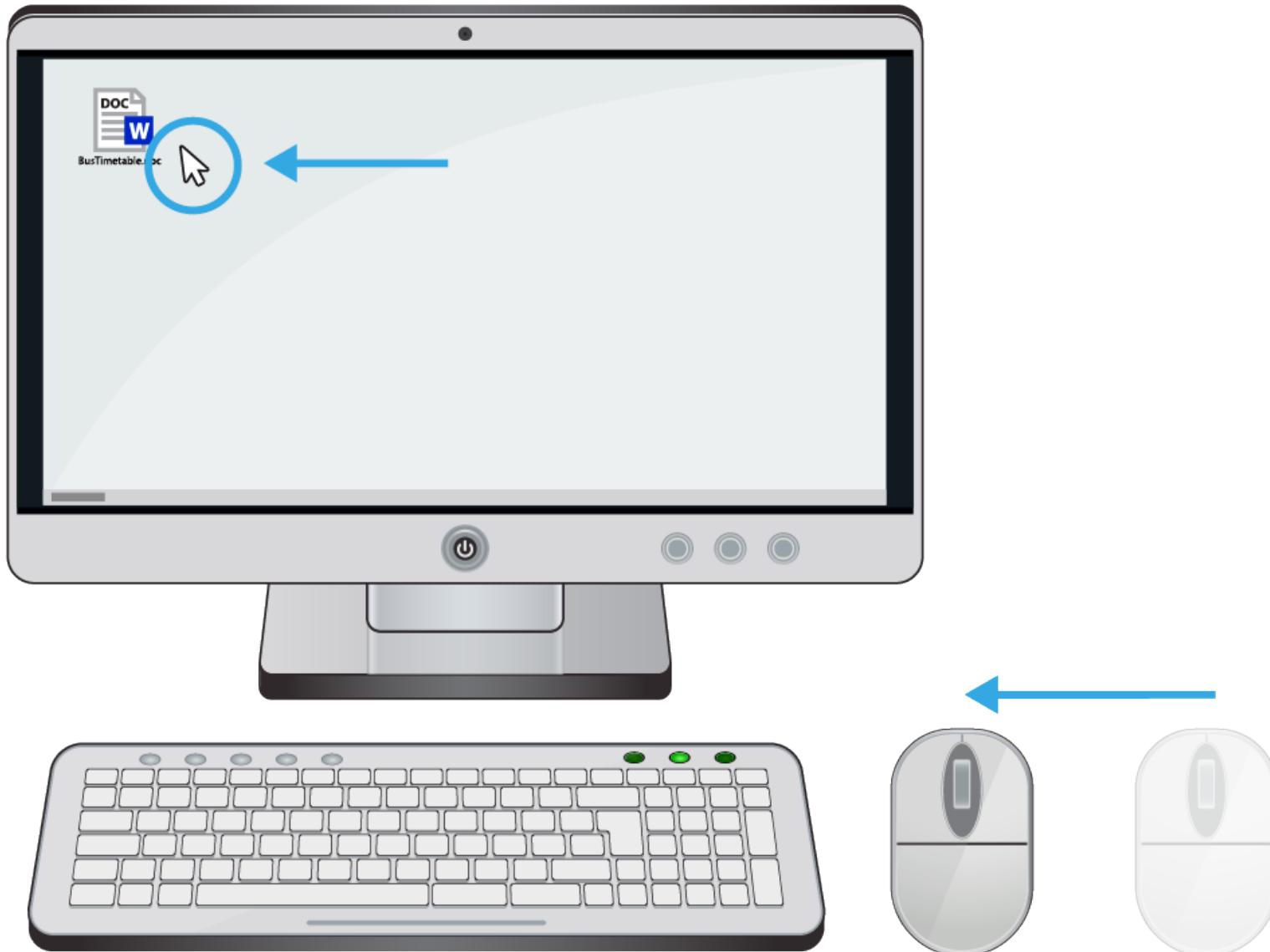
Pros: They work well in interfaces where the interface simulates a real-world system.

Cons: Inability to scale; lack of familiar real-world system for entirely new capabilities; cultural differences; inability to adapt as capabilities evolve.

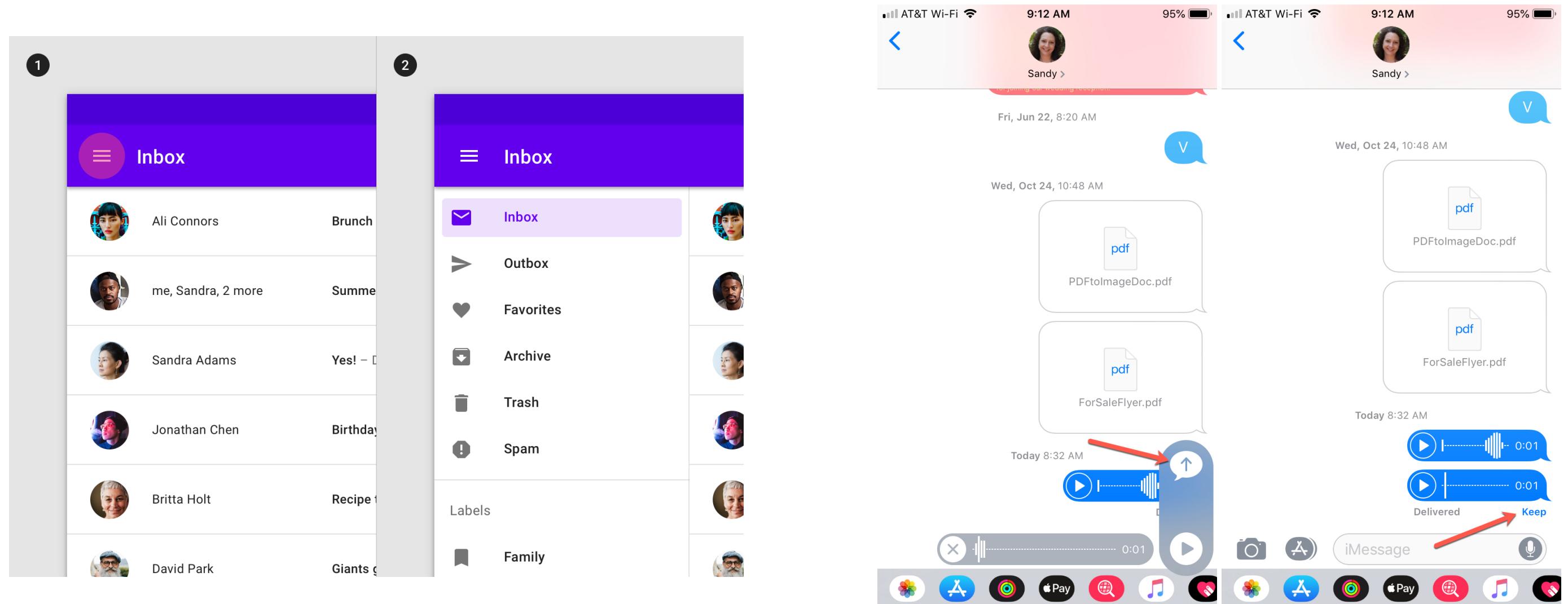
Idiomatic Design¹⁰

Definition: Building dedicated, highly expressive interaction capabilities that users must learn.

Mapping cursor movements on a screen to mouse movements is an extremely successful example.



¹⁰ [Image Source](#)



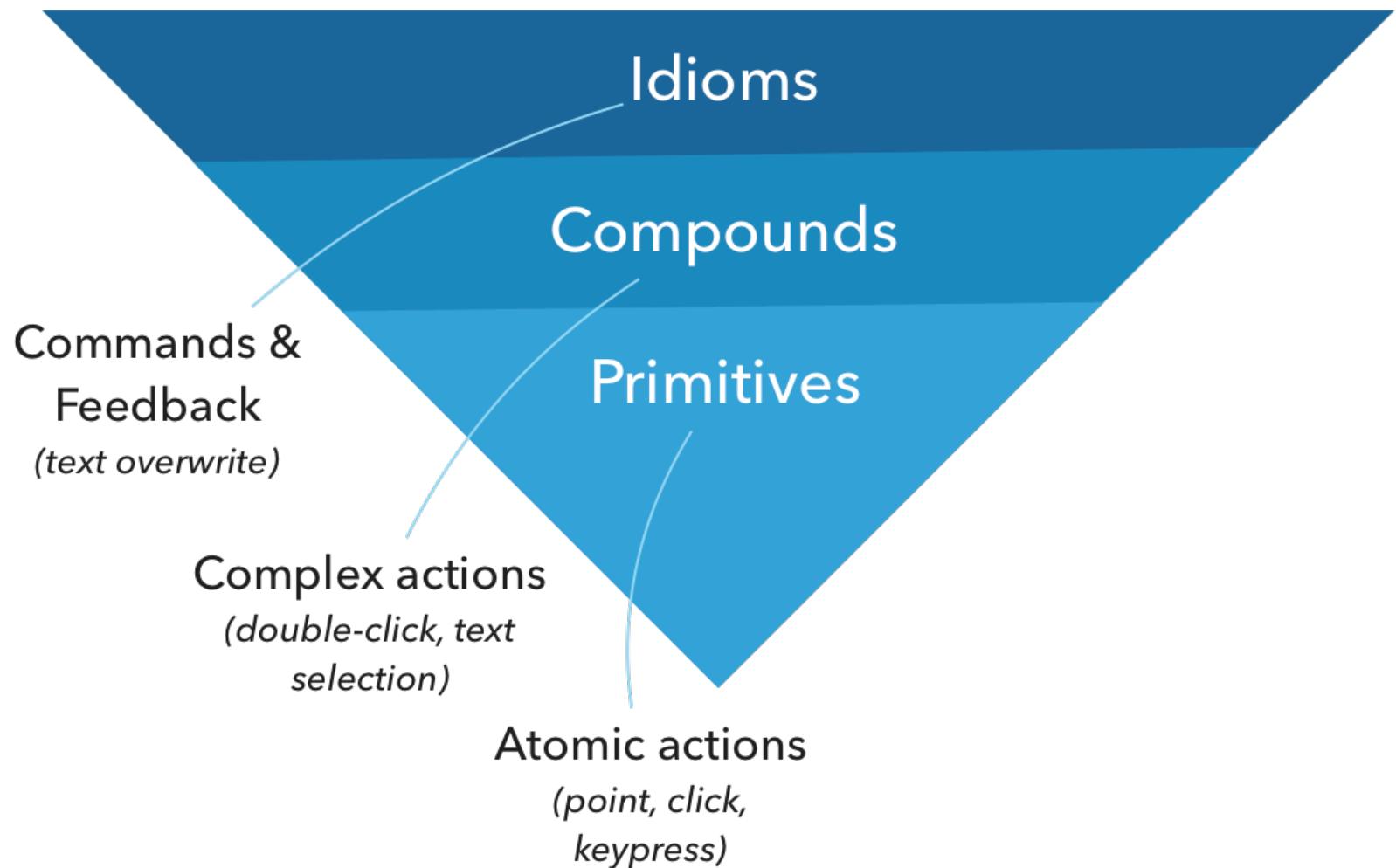
¹¹ Image Source

¹² Image Source

Developing Idioms¹³

In designing idioms involve, three elements are established:

1. **Primitives**: atomic actions, e.g., point, click
2. **Compounds**: complex actions, e.g., double-click
3. **Idioms**: higher-level elements, e.g., deleting text



¹³ Cooper et al., 2014, About Face

Class Discussion

Direct manipulation versus agents.

Affordances

Affordances

Definition: The perceived properties of a design element that give clues about how to interact with it. Designers have borrowed the concept from ecological psychology.

Theoretical Roots: James Gibson (1977, 1979) suggested that the human environment is structured in a way that communicates action possibilities through *affordances*.

Which environment affords *walking*?

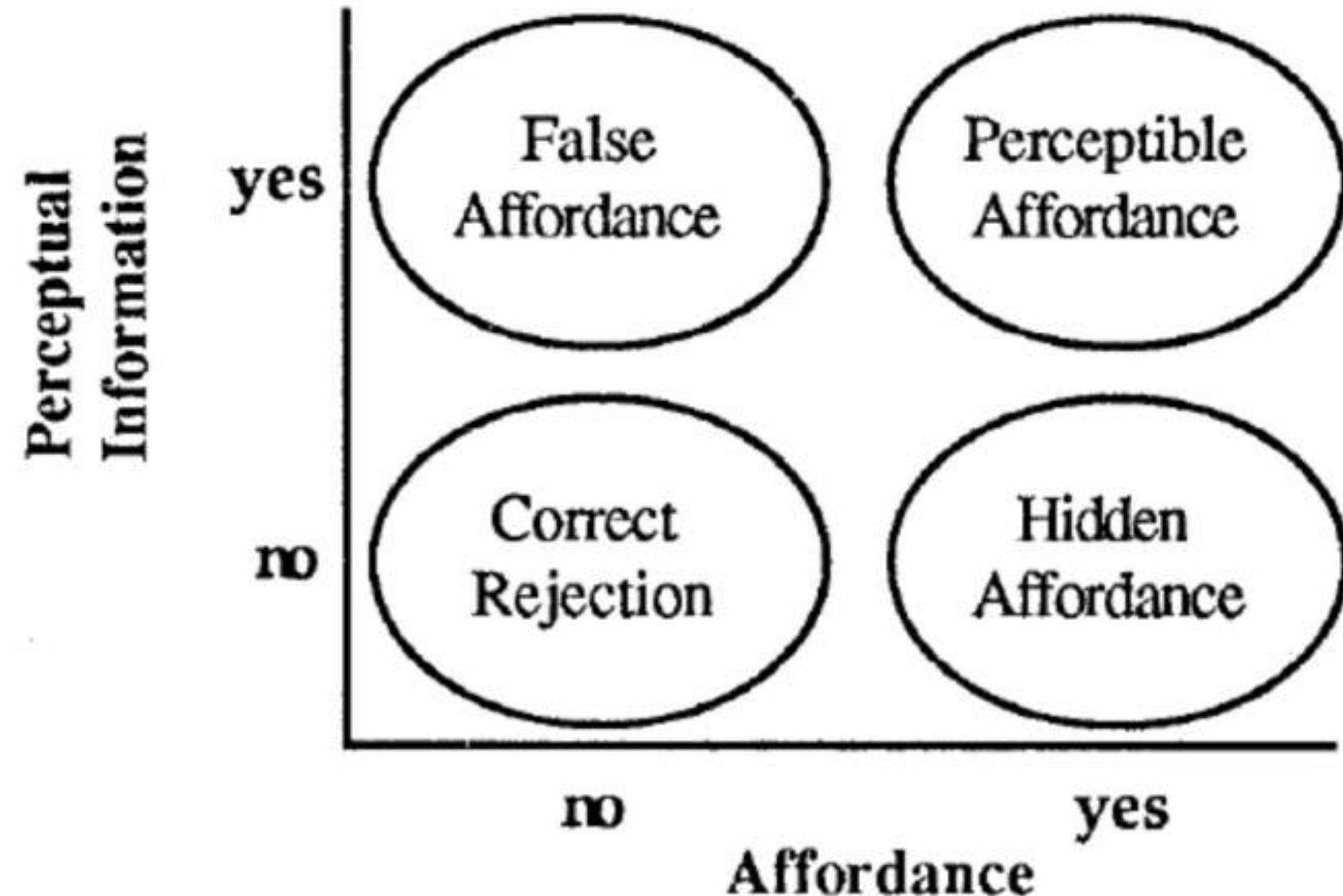




Affordances in Design

Perceptible affordances enable users to intuitively recognize actions that are possible with interface elements.¹⁴

Affordances can also be *hidden* and *false*.

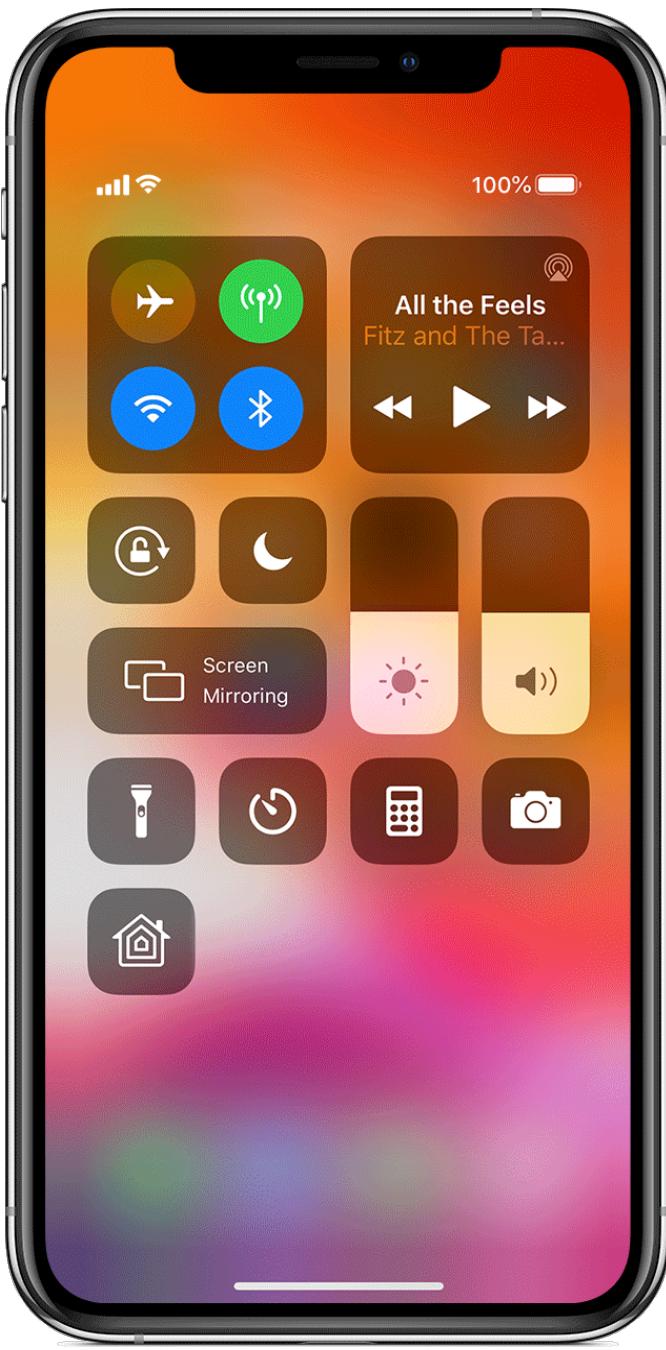
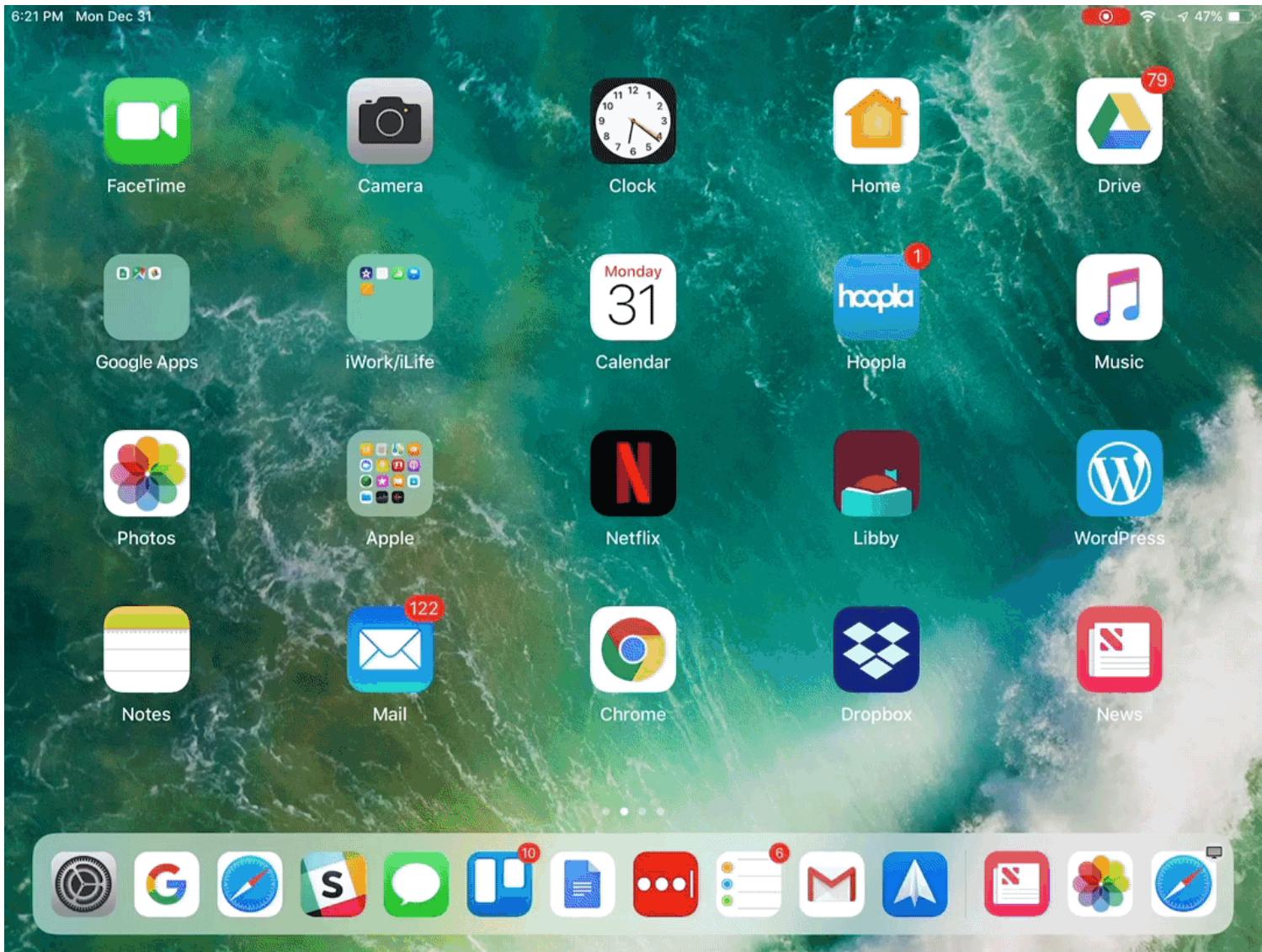


¹⁴ Figure: Gaver, 1991, *Technology Affordances*

False Affordances: an action that is perceived by the user but in fact does not work as expected.

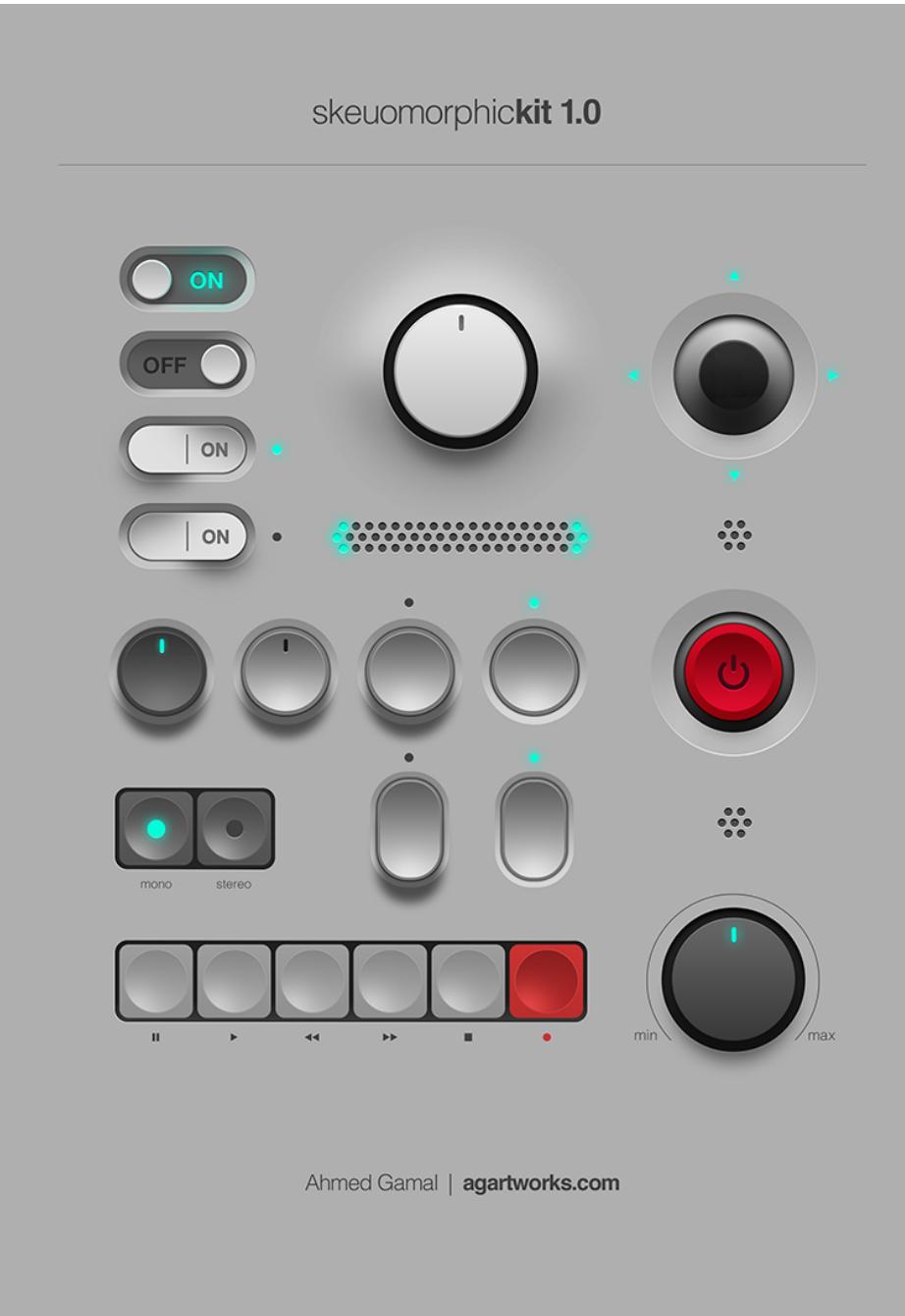
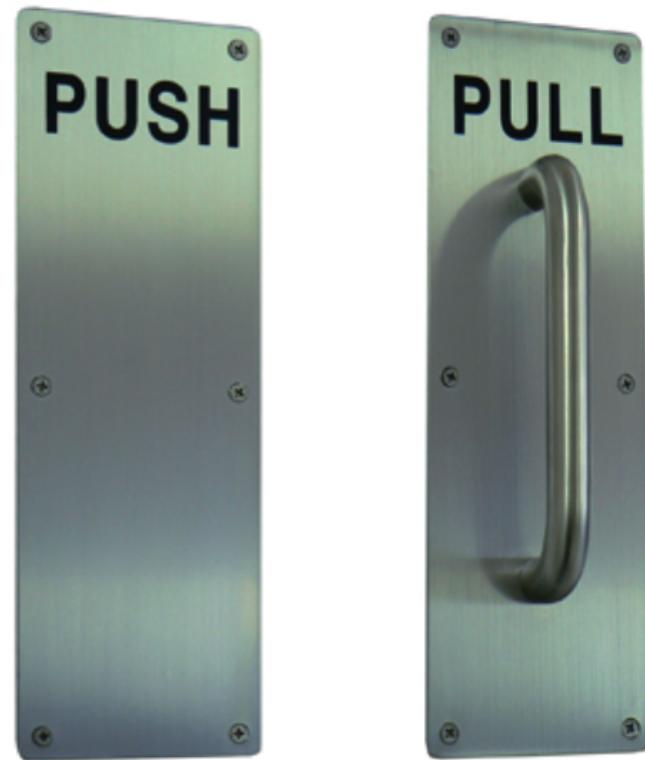


Hidden Affordance: the affordance is not too obvious.





Perceptible Affordances: an object's characteristics imply an action.



In-Class Activity

Metaphor & Affordance Deconstruction



Angle PRQ

$$\cos A = \frac{(9\sqrt{2})^2 + 13^2 - 5^2}{2(9\sqrt{2})(13)}$$

$$\cos A = 0.924$$

$$A = 22.38$$

6. $f(x) = x^2 + 8ax + 4a^2, x \geq 0$
 $g(x) = 6x - 2a, x \in \mathbb{R}$

(a) $f(g(x)) = f(6x - 2a)$

$$= (6x - 2a)^2 + 8a(6x - 2a) + 4a^2$$

$$= [36x^2 - 12ax - 12ax + 4a^2]$$

$$= [36x^2 - 24ax + 4a^2] + 48ax - 16a + 4a^2$$

$$= 36x^2 + 24ax - 8a^2$$

IF $a = 4$

(b) $f(g(2))$

$$= f(6(2) - 2(4))$$

$$= f(4)$$

$$= 4^2 + 8(4)(4) + 4(4)^2$$

$$= 208$$

(c) $f^{-1}(x) : x^2 + 8(4)x + 4(4)^2$

$$y = x^2 + 8(4)x + 4(4)^2$$

$$y = x^2 + 32x + 64$$

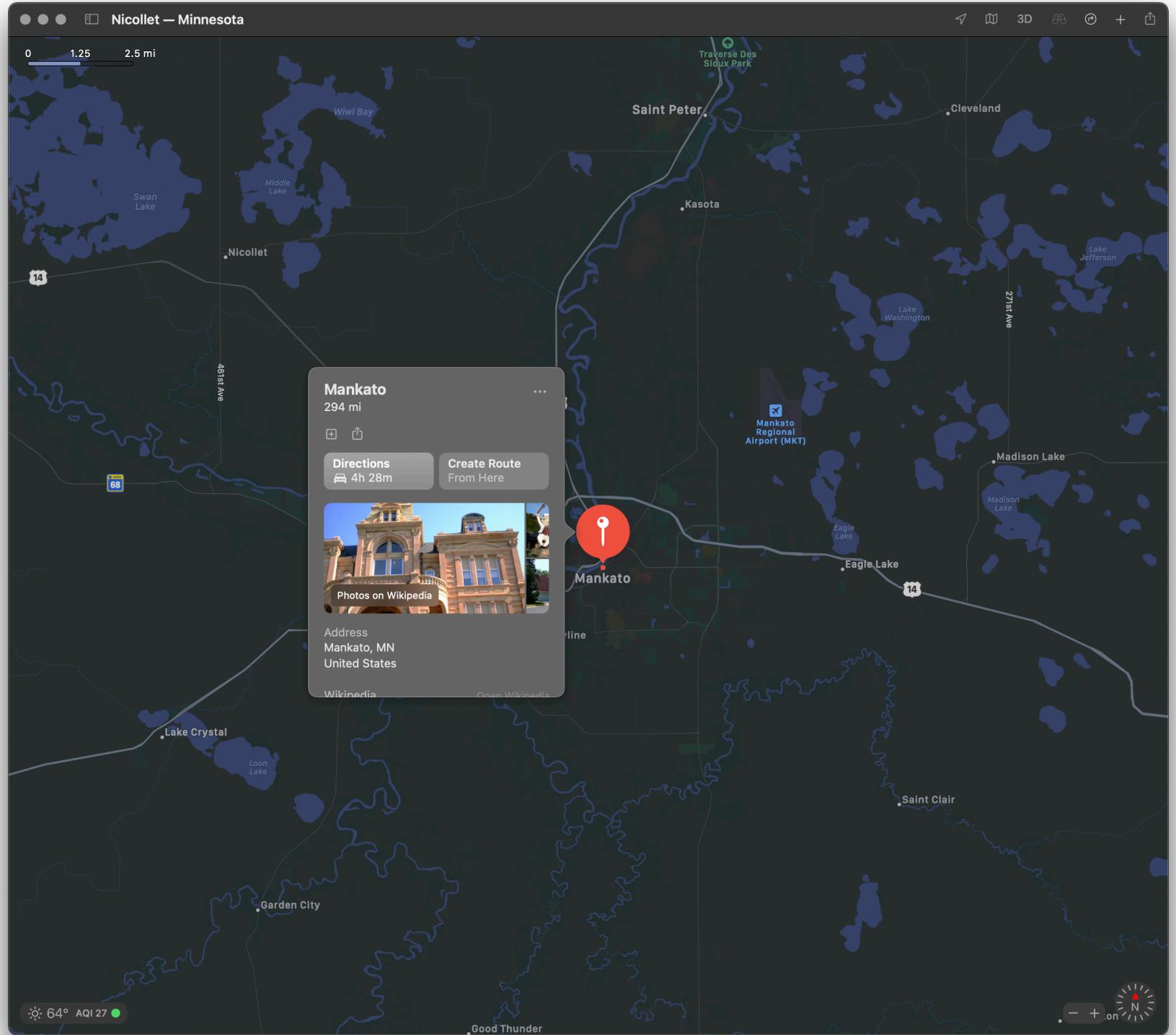
$$y = (x+16)^2 - 192$$

$$y + 192 = (x+16)^2$$

$$\sqrt{y+192} = x+16$$

$$-16 \pm \sqrt{y+192} = x$$

so $f(x) = -16 + \sqrt{x+192}$



Design Patterns

Design Patterns

Definition: A design pattern is a general, reusable solution to a commonly occurring problem within a given context.

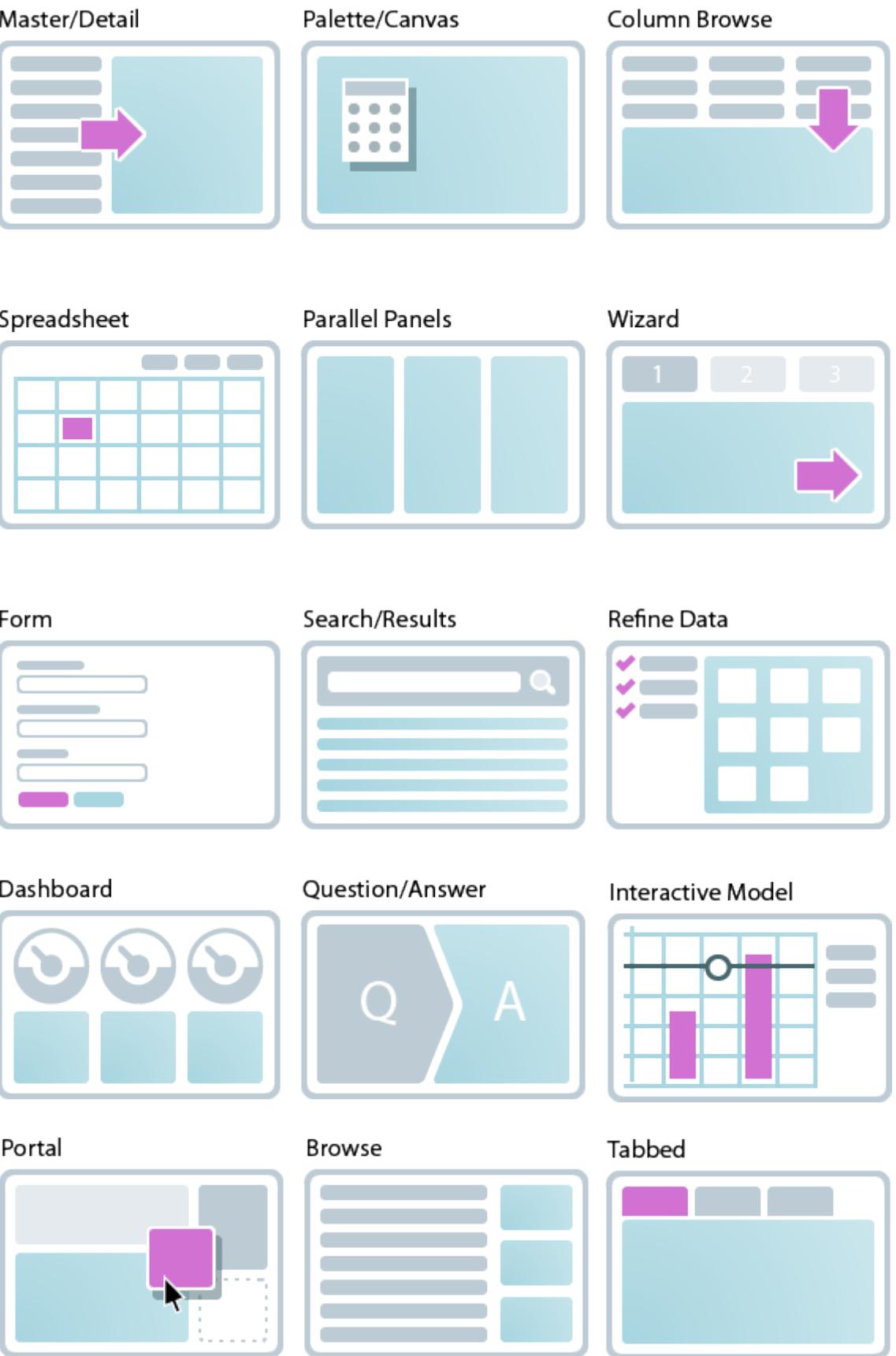
Originally developed by Christopher Alexander (1977; *A Pattern Language*) to address problems in architecture and city planning.¹⁵



¹⁵ [Smart Cities Dive](#)

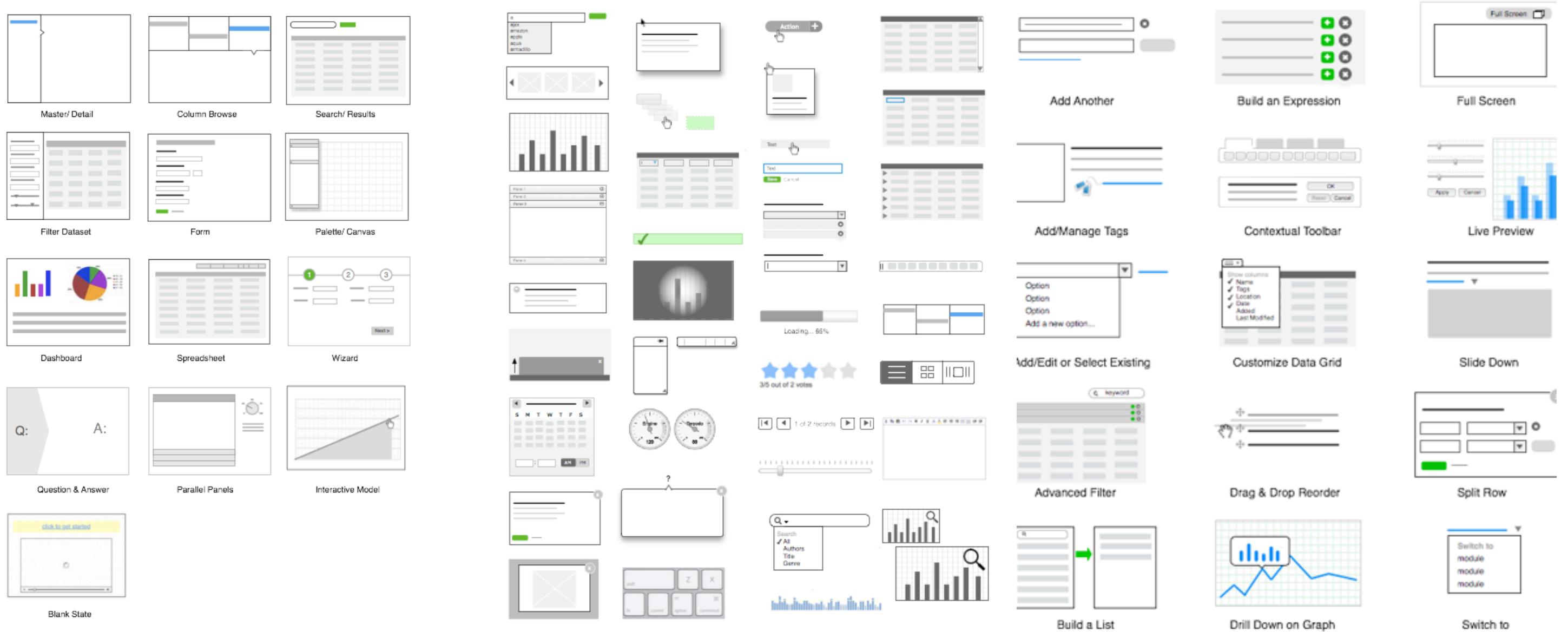
Design Patterns in UX

In the last decade, designers have also developed and refined patterns for overall structure and organization, components and controls.¹⁶



¹⁶ Neil, 2010, 12 Standard Screen Patterns

Source¹⁷



¹⁷ Neil, 2010, 12 Standard Screen Patterns

Pros & Cons of Design Patterns

Pros:

1. Reducing design time and effort
2. Improving the quality of design solutions
3. Establishing familiarity across systems
4. Providing a baseline or state of the art

Cons:

1. Not every design problem will warrant a pattern
2. Patterns may not exist for new design spaces

Design Languages

The Problem with Patterns

Problem 1. Can I piece together different patterns to make a complete design? **No**, as this eclectic design would lack coherence.

Problem 2. How do I choose which pattern to use? Are patterns interchangeable? **No**, there has to be a *principle* to the selection of patterns.

Problem 3: Pattern languages help you create a design that is consistent vertically. How do we create a system that is consistent *horizontally*? I.e., how do we achieve visual and behavioral consistency in designs?

The solution: Design languages!

Enter Pattern Languages

Define: A complete and hierarchical collection of patterns for a family of design problems.

Patterns are *words* (e.g., a component) that are connected with grammar rules to make *sentences* (e.g., a screen) and eventually *language* (e.g., user experience).¹⁸

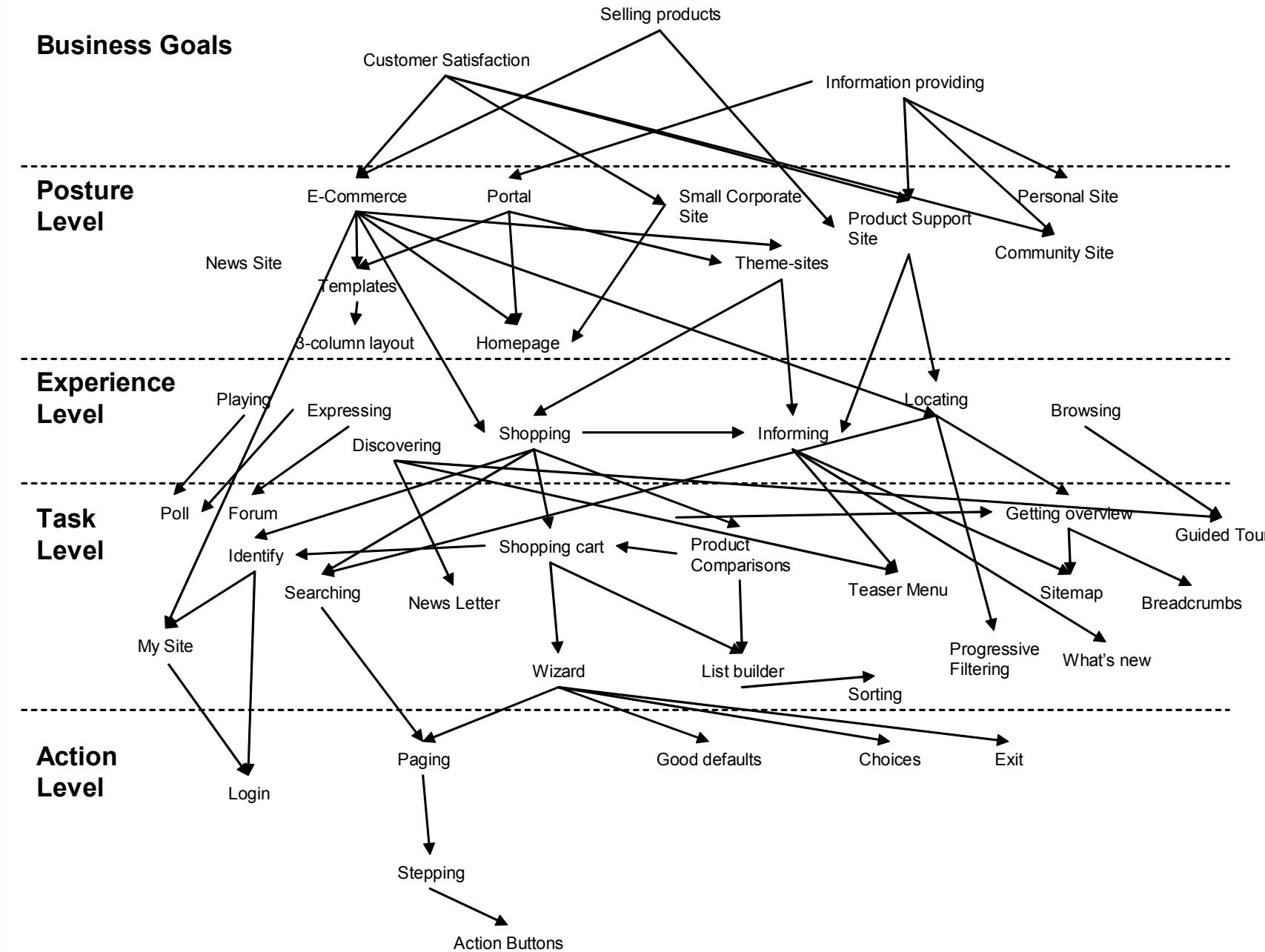
The pattern language can be thought of as patterns being applied at different *levels*. Let's see an example.

¹⁸ Kruschitz & Hitz, 2009

Source¹⁹

The screenshot shows the homepage of orange tree imports.com. At the top left is a logo of an orange tree in a pot. The top navigation bar includes links for SHOP, COOKING SCHOOL/EVENTS, WEDDING REGISTRY, ABOUT OTI, a shopping cart icon, and a user profile icon. A search bar with the placeholder "search products" and a magnifying glass icon is located at the top right. The main visual features three smiling plastic spoons (red, white, and green) arranged vertically. Below them is the slogan "Fun, Functional, Fantastic" in a large, stylized, cursive font. A welcome message in the center text area reads: "Welcome to Madison's favorite specialty shop! Here you'll find ideas for fun gifts, seasonal delights, and functional tools to make your kitchen a happy place. Whether you're visiting us in person in Madison, Wisconsin or online, our friendly staff looks forward to making your shopping experience fantastic." Another message at the bottom states: "We are now able to have a limited customers at a time come into the store to shop from 11:00-5:30, Monday-Saturday. Please note that we require that staff and shoppers wear face covering, and use hand sanitizer. We want everyone to stay well!"

¹⁹van Welie & van der Veer, 2003



Posture-Level Patterns

Definition: The *structure* that an application follows, i.e., what *type* of application it is, e.g., "an e-commerce app," "a social media app," or "a personal homepage site."

Elements of a Posture-level Pattern

Once we determine the posture of an application, it gives us guidance on:

- Structure
- Components
- User experience
- Alternatives/competitors

Structure: Central canvas with supporting panels²²

Components: Canvas, dashboard, score panel, data summary

UX: Measurement during the activity, review later

Competitors: Strava, RunKeeper



²² [Image source](#)

Experience-Level Patterns

Definition: The *user goals* that make up the *user experience* that the application supports, e.g., activity tracking, coaching, and reviewing.

Experience-level patterns can also capture the *quality* of the user experience, e.g., *motivational* coaching.

Source²³



²³ Image source

Elements of an Experience-Level Pattern²⁴

- Primary goals, e.g., activity tracking
- Secondary goals, e.g., community building



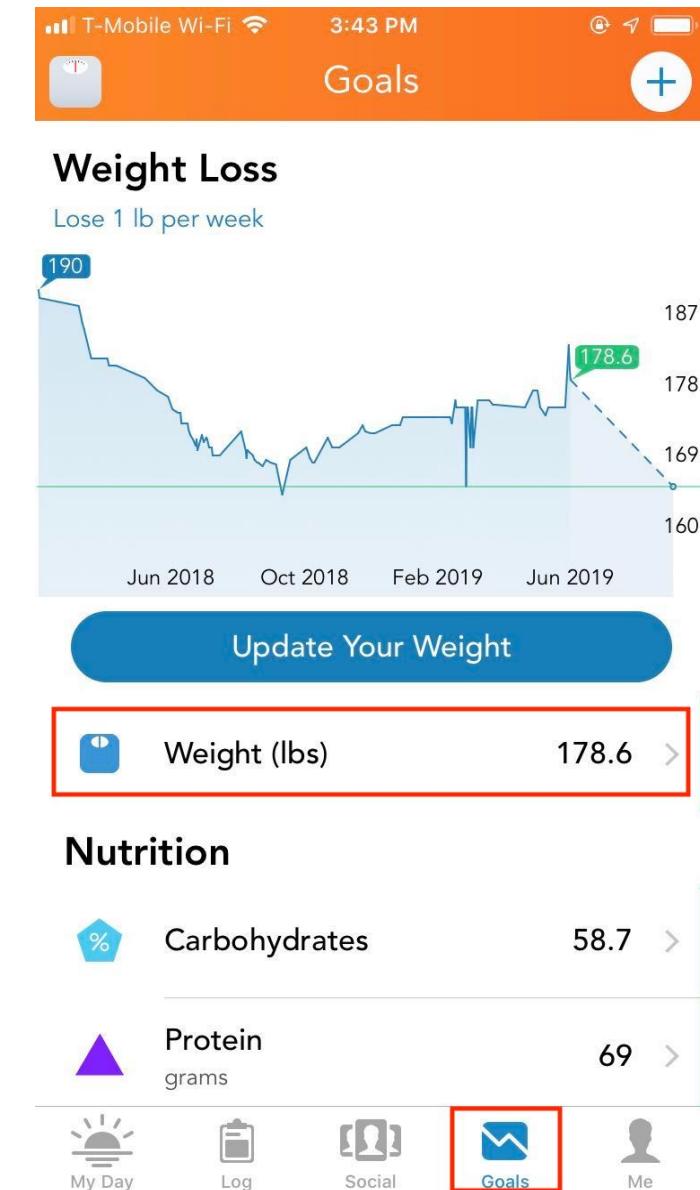
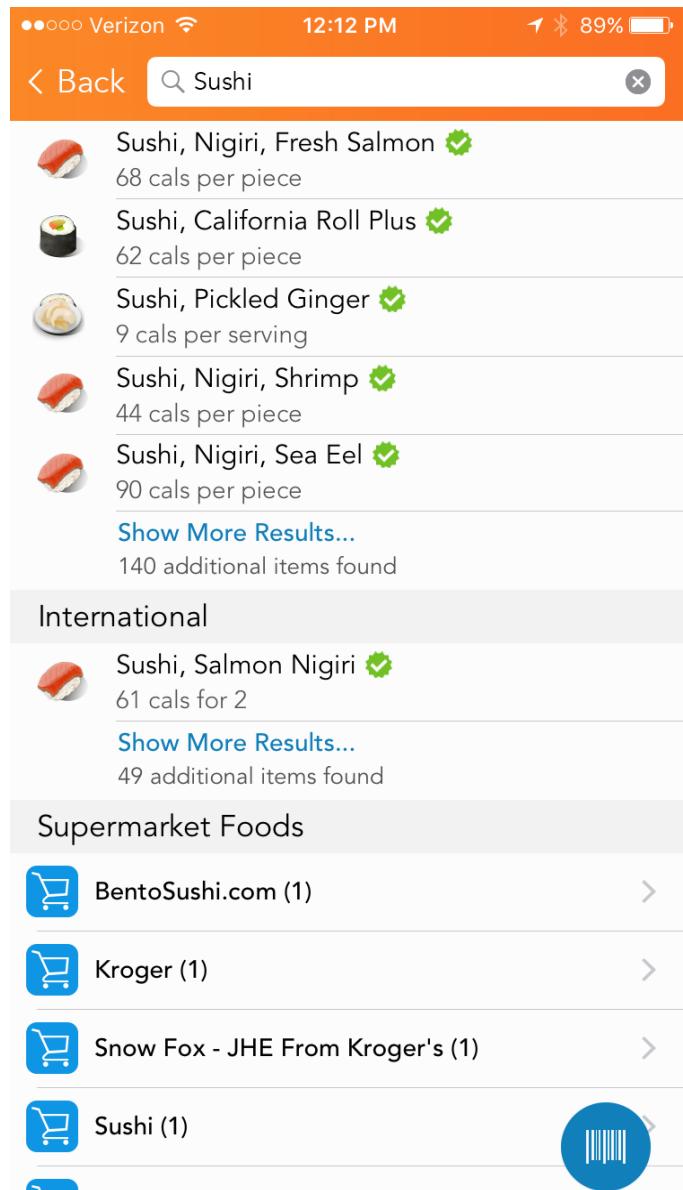
²⁴ [Image source](#)

Task-Level Patterns

Definition: Design solutions that help users accomplish sequences of actions that make up user tasks, e.g., logging a meal, capturing a run, or completing a workout.

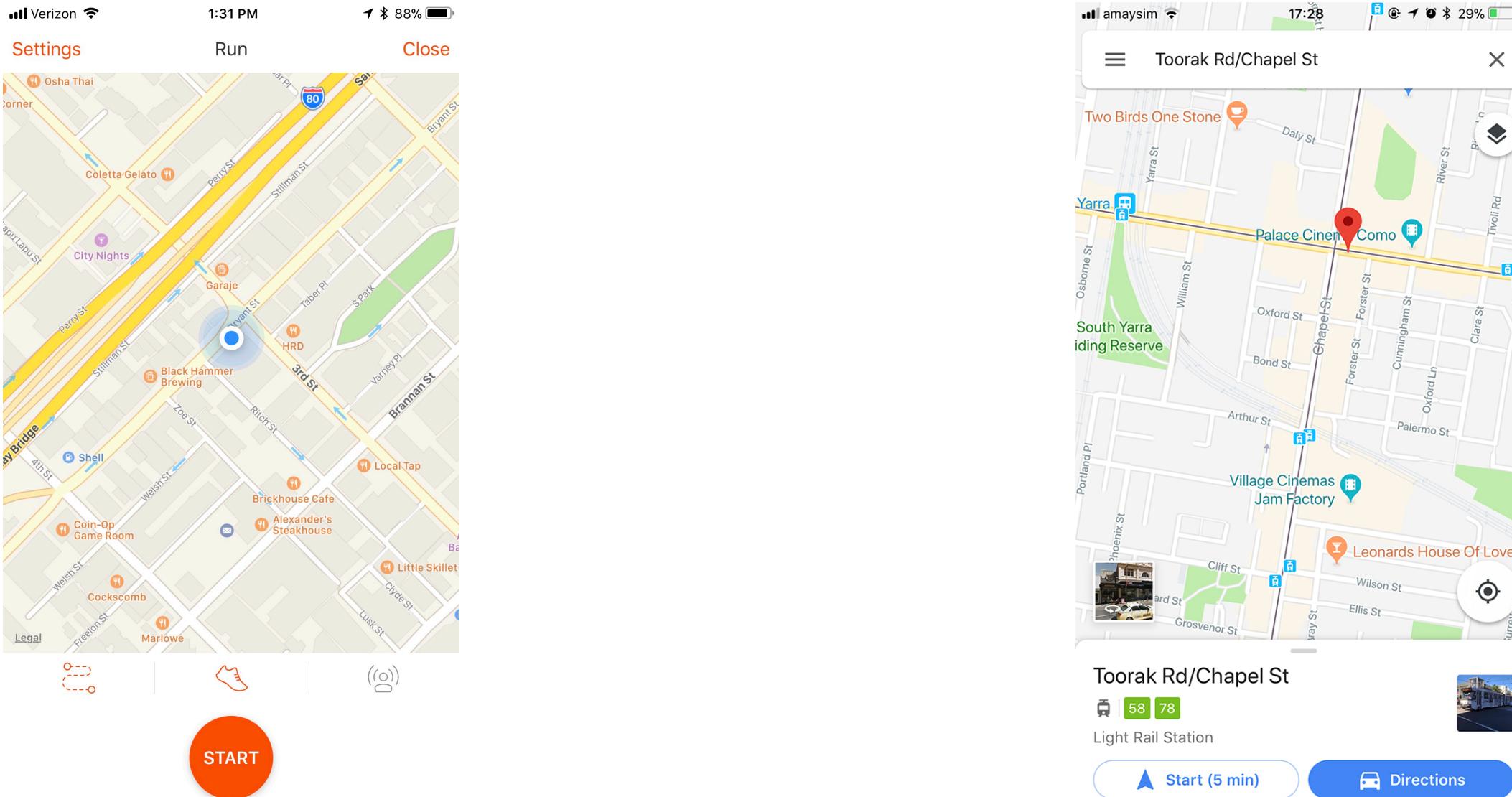
Tasks point to specific layout patterns. E.g., meal logging can be done through a "search-and-results" pattern, capturing a run can be done through a "dashboard" pattern.

Source²⁵



²⁵ Image sources: [left](#), [right](#)

Task-level patterns can be domain independent. Business goals and posture-level patterns set the context for these patterns.²⁶



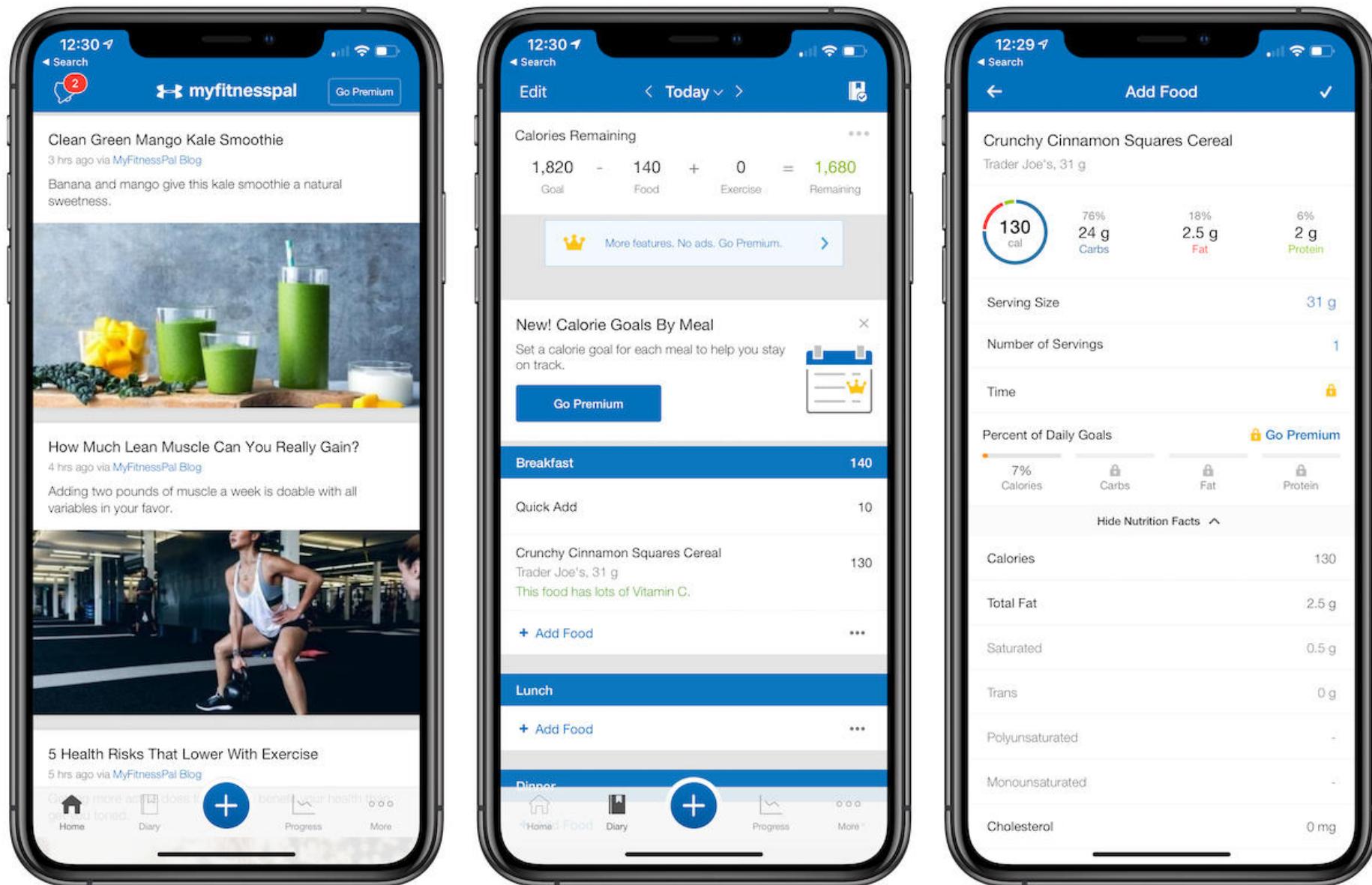
²⁶ Image sources: [left](#), [right](#)

Action-Level Patterns

Definition: Design solutions that support the actions taken to complete the steps(s) of the user's task, e.g., a "start" button to initiate activity tracking, a selectable list entry for a food item.

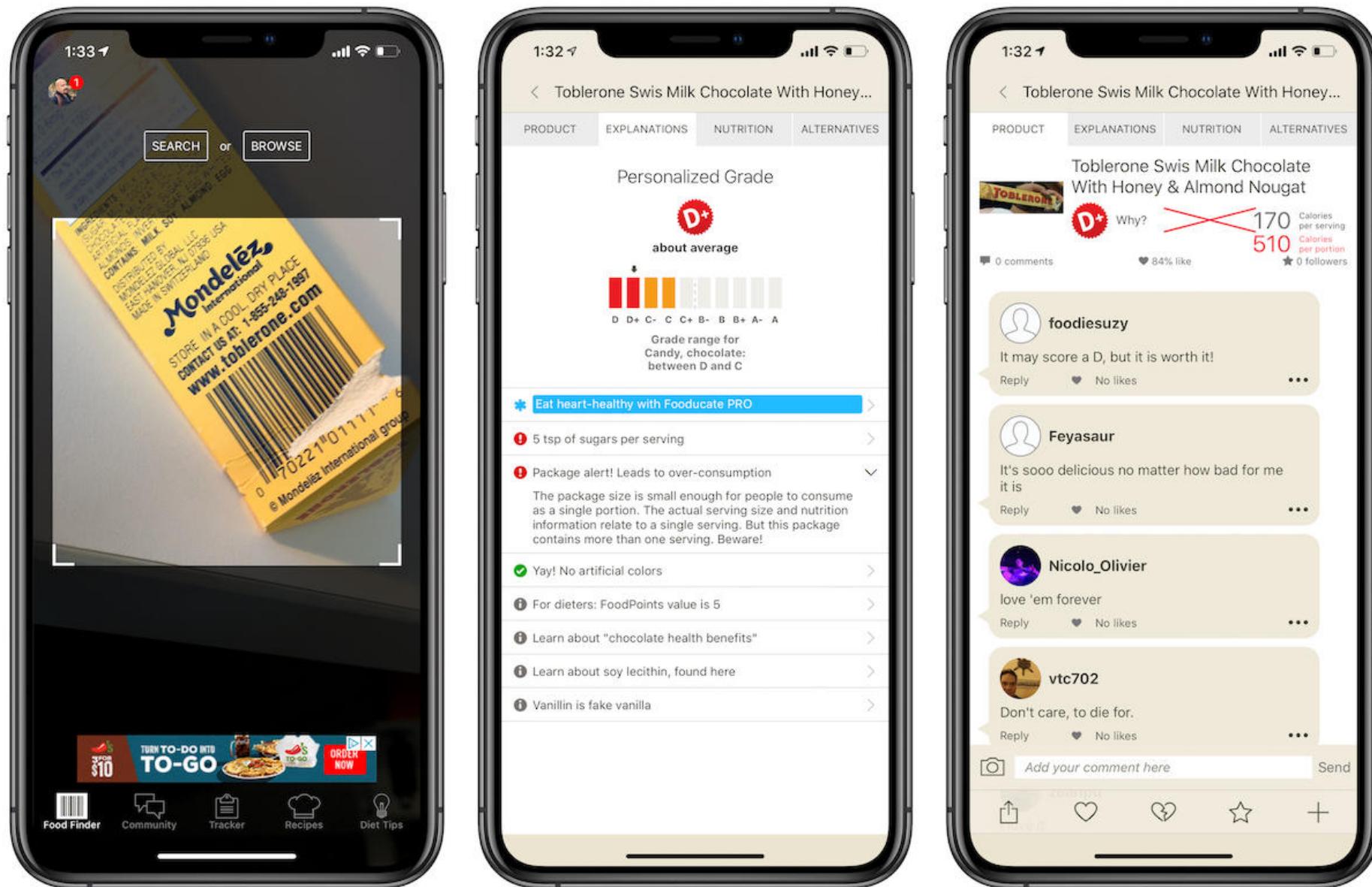
Action-level patterns are the lowest level of building blocks for a design. They are often called *widgets* or *components* (as in React).

Action-level patterns for a *food tracking app*:²⁷



²⁷ Image source: [My Fitness Pal](#)

Action-level patterns for a *food education* app:²⁸



²⁸ Image source: [Fooducate](#)

In-Class Activity

Pattern Language Deconstruction

Source³⁶

The screenshot shows the Cronometer website homepage with an orange header. The header includes the Cronometer logo, navigation links for HOME, BLOG, FORUMS, EMAIL, and a green LOGIN button. Below the header, a large orange banner features the text "Track Your Nutrition, Fitness, & Health Data" and "Log your Diet, Exercise, Biometrics and Notes". A green "SIGN UP FOR FREE" button is centered below the banner. At the bottom of the page, there is a screenshot of the Cronometer mobile app interface showing a diary entry for April 19, 2016, with various food and exercise logs.



³⁶ Image sources: [left](#), [right](#)

Business Goals

Mission of the application

Posture Level

"Type" of application

Experience Level

User goals

Task Level

Task sequences

Action Level

User actions

Track Your Nutrition, Fitness, & Health Data

Log your Diet, Exercise, Biometrics and Notes

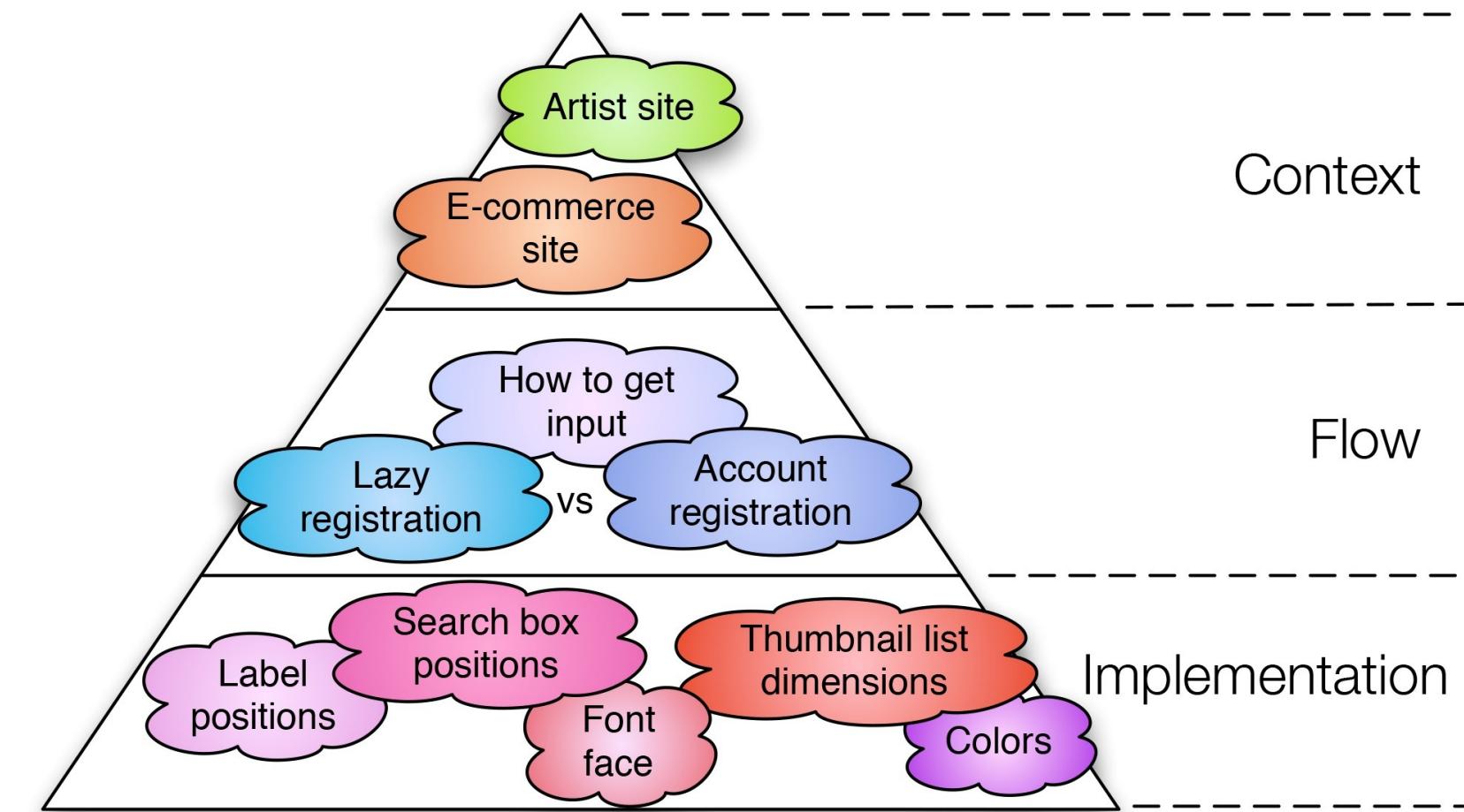
SIGN UP FOR FREE



A Simplified Model²⁹ ³⁰

Three-levels of patterns:

1. **Context:** Type of app
2. **Flow:** Components that support specific functions
3. **Implementation:** The visual/behavioral elements that implement the functions



²⁹ [Anders Toxboe](#)

³⁰ [More on the three-levels of patterns by Jerry Cao](#)

How do we use patterns?

Common practice: Patterns in the higher levels are defined informally, and the task- and action-level patterns are adopted through experimentation and trial and error.

The problem: Ineffective (e.g., lack of coherence across different levels) and inefficient (wasted effort in experimentation).

The solution: Defining patterns top to bottom will "generate" the design when patterns are available across all levels.³¹

³¹ van Welie & van der Veer, 2003

Where do we find patterns?³²

Task- and action-level patterns are organized into catalogues/collections based on functional similarity.

User Interface Design Patterns

Getting input	Navigation	Dealing with data	Social
Forms WYSIWYG Password Strength Meter Input Feedback Captcha Calendar Picker Structured Format Fill in the Blanks Expandable Input Keyboard Shortcuts Input Prompt Drag and drop Autosave Forgiving Format Morphing Controls Inplace Editor Good Defaults Preview Undo Settings Explaining the process Wizard Steps Left Completeness meter Inline Help Box Community driven Vote To Promote Pay To Promote Wiki Rate Content Flagging & Reporting	Tabs Navigation Tabs Module Tabs Jumping in hierarchy Notifications Breadcrumbs Modal Fat Footer Home Link Shortcut Dropdown Menus Vertical Dropdown Menu Horizontal Dropdown Menu Accordion Menu Content Carousel Tag Cloud Progressive Disclosure Cards Event Calendar Adaptable View Article List Continuous Scrolling Archive Categorization Tagging Thumbnail Favorites Pagination Gestures Pull to refresh	Tables Table Filter Alternating Row Colors Sort By Column Formatting data Dashboard Copy Box Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Images Slideshow Gallery Image Zoom Search Autocomplete Search Filters	Reputation Collectible Achievements Leaderboard Testimonials Social interactions Friend list [Mini] Activity Stream Follow Auto-sharing [Mini] Chat Friend Reaction Invite friends
			Miscellaneous Shopping Product page Pricing table Coupon Shopping Cart Increasing frequency Tip A Friend
			Onboarding Guidance Walkthrough Blank Slate Playthrough Coachmarks Guided Tour Inline Hints Registration Lazy Registration Account Registration Paywall

³² [Image source](#)

Online Pattern Libraries

- [UIPatterns.io](#)
- [UI-Patterns](#)
- [Mobbin](#)
- [UI Garage](#)
- [Welie](#)

Design Style Guides

Definition: A vocabulary of design elements that are repeatedly applied to interaction design problems. These are task- and action-level interface components that follow a consistent look and feel in appearance and behavior.

Non-digital example: NASA Graphics Standard Manual.³³



³³ NASA

NASA Uniform Patches

Personnel identification is an important facet of the NASA identification program. An embroidered patch incorporating the logotype is available for application on a wide variety of uniforms and clothing. Two patch designs, shown to the right, are available.

For general personnel, a white patch with a NASA Red logotype is available. This achieves the simplest and most effective identification on various types and colors of clothing that may include other badges or name tags. The patch is applied on the right front side of the garment approximately 1½" (3.8 cm) directly above the breast pocket or in a comparable position on garments without pockets. On a blazer (fig. e), the top edge of the patch aligns with the left breast pocket.

A few specific color recommendations are made for NASA uniforms: royal blue for flight suits; white for lab coats, hardhats, and helmets. A 7" wide (17.8 cm) logotype may be embroidered in NASA Red centered on the back of a white lab coat (fig. d). On a white hardhat or helmet, a 5" wide (12.7 cm) NASA Red decal of the logotype may be centered on the front (fig. g).

To distinguish emergency/security personnel (security guards, firemen, etc.) a distinctive NASA Red patch with a white border, white logotype and the installation identification in black is available. The name of the emergency/security service (i.e. Fire Department) appears in white centered within a smaller black patch that is positioned ¾" (.9 cm) under the red patch. This configuration is worn on both shoulders of the uniform, on both shirts (fig. f) and outer-jackets. A light blue shirt and hat with dark blue trousers or skirt is recommended.

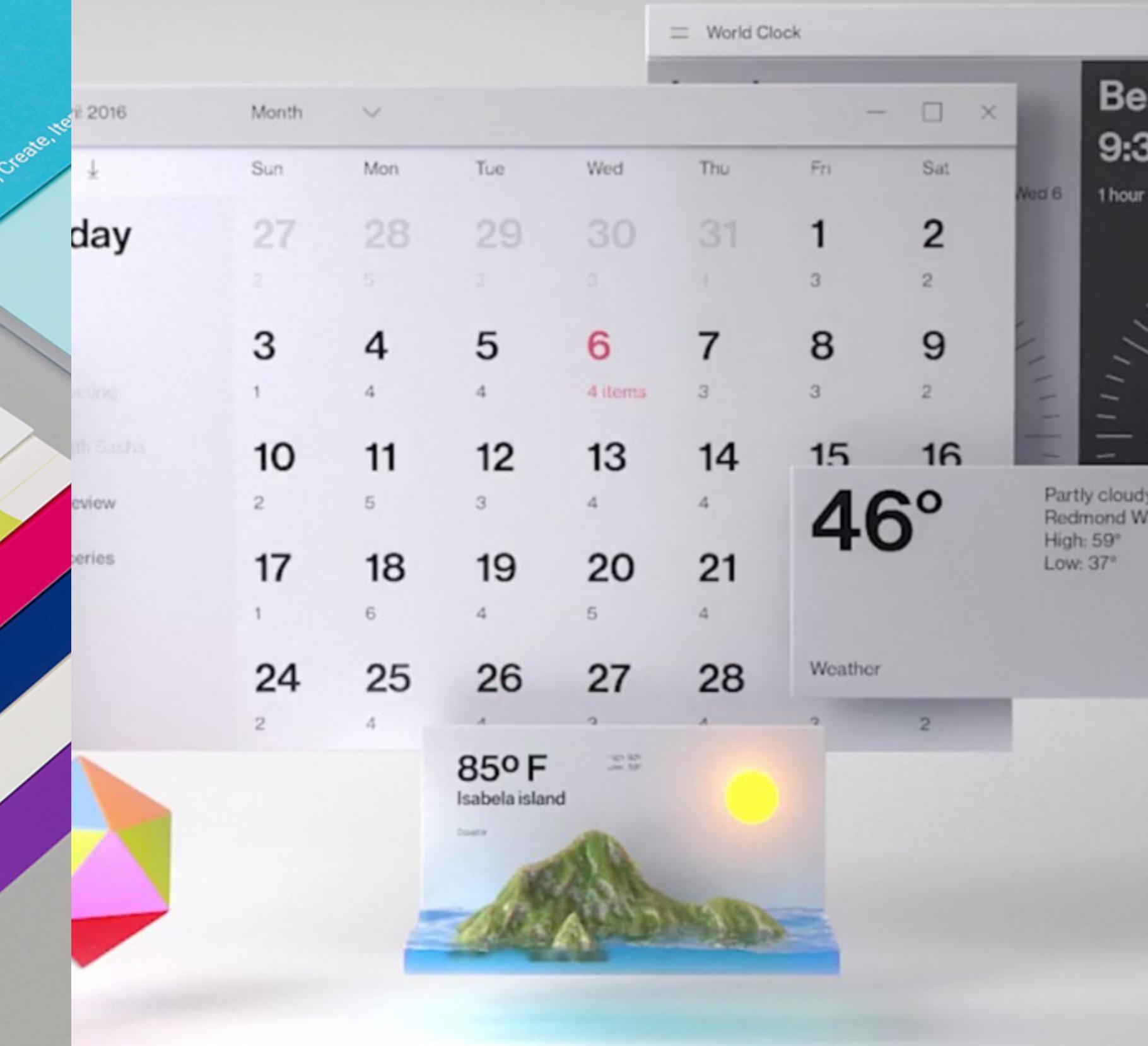


Source³⁴³⁵



³⁴ Left: Google Material Design

³⁵ Right: Microsoft Fluent Design System



Commonly Used Design Style Guides²⁰

- Material Design
- Fluent Design System
- Materialize
- Ant Design
- Grommet
- Flat Remix



²⁰ Image source

Case Studies of Design Language Use

- Material studies examples
- Fluent design case studies

What did we learn today?

- Design paradigms
- Design patterns
- Design languages