

Observation Report on Good and Bad Designs

Usability and User-Centered Insights

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This report presents real-life examples of good and bad designs observed in daily environments, analyzing their usability and user impact, and suggesting improvements through the lens of human-centered design.

Key Areas Covered:

- Bad Design Examples & Solutions
- Good Design Analysis
- Jugaad Innovations
- Feedback Mechanisms
- Design Constraints



Bad Design

"Design that frustrates instead of helping"



Source: Hotel Room Doors

Problem: Key card slots have no visual indication of which way to insert the card (magnetic strip up/down, front/back).

Why It's Bad: Guests repeatedly try different orientations, causing frustration and potential card damage.

Improvement: Add clear directional arrows or a visual guide showing correct card orientation.

Source: Shopping Malls and Office Buildings

Problem: Completely transparent glass doors without visible handles or markings cause people to walk into them.

Why It's Bad: Creates safety hazards and embarrassing situations for users.

Improvement: Add frosted strips, visible handles, or decorative elements at eye level.





Source: Home Entertainment System

Problem: Multiple identical power adapters make it unclear which plug belongs to which device.

Why It's Bad: Users waste time tracing cables and risk unplugging the wrong device.

Improvement: Use color-coded plugs or provide attachable labels.

Source: Public Restrooms

Problem: Automatic soap dispensers with poor sensors that don't detect hands or dispense soap inconsistently.

Why It's Bad: Forces users to wave hands frantically, causing hygiene concerns and frustration.

Improvement: Use reliable sensors with clear activation zones and backup manual operation.





Source: Smartphones / Electronics

Problem: Charging cables are too short to use devices comfortably while plugged in.

Why It's Bad: Forces awkward placements, increasing risk of falls and cable damage.

Improvement: Provide longer cables (1.5–2 meters) for safer, more flexible use.

Good Design

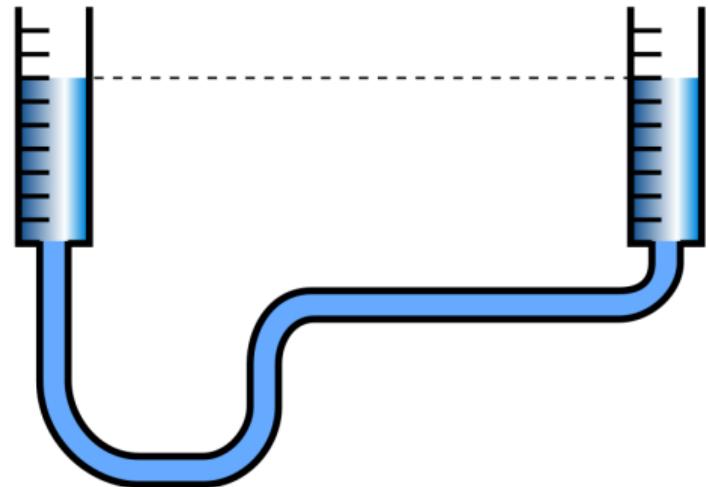
"Design that Makes Life Easy"

Source: Kitchen Appliance

Feature: Clear window shows exact water level with cup markings.

Why It's Good: Prevents overfilling and saves time and energy.

Inspiration: Efficient, user-friendly design.





Source: Modern Payment Terminals

Feature: Clear visual indicators and raised surfaces showing exactly where to tap contactless cards.

Why It's Good: Eliminates guesswork, speeds up transactions, and works consistently across different terminal designs.

Inspiration: Intuitive physical affordances that guide user behavior.

Source: Parks and Public Spaces

Feature: Armrests provide support and maintain personal space.

Why It's Good: Helps elderly or disabled users sit and stand safely.

Inspiration: Inclusive public furniture design.





Source: Modern Grocery Stores

Feature: Built-in phone holder on shopping cart handle with adjustable angle.

Why It's Good: Keeps shopping lists accessible while freeing hands for product selection.

Inspiration: Integration of digital and physical shopping experience.

Source: Footpaths, Railway Platforms

Feature: Textured paving indicates hazards or directions.

Why It's Good: Provides safe navigation for visually impaired users.

Inspiration: Inclusive, accessibility-focused urban design.



Key Takeaway

Observing good and bad designs in daily life reveals how thoughtful design significantly impacts usability. Bad designs create confusion, frustration, and safety concerns, while good designs enhance accessibility, efficiency, and user satisfaction through user-centered thinking and inclusive design principles.

What do you understand by "Jugaad"?

"Jugaad" is a term used in India and South Asia for clever, resourceful solutions using minimal resources. It means improvising quick, frugal fixes for everyday challenges. These fixes are smart and cost-effective, but may lack durability.

Examples:

- Using newspaper as streak-free window cleaner
- Repurposing tennis balls for muscle massage therapy



Solution:

- Folded cardboard supports your phone for hands-free viewing
- Quick DIY using waste material
- Lightweight, easy to recreate anytime





Solution:

- Wrap multiple rubber bands around your phone case to create a finger grip
- Prevents phone drops and enables one-handed operation
- Adjustable and removable based on user preference

Solution:

- A large bottle cap can hold a toothbrush upright
- Prevents brushes from touching surfaces
- Hygienic and reusable idea





Solution:

- Cut a large plastic bottle to make a scoop for grains or pet food
- Reduces plastic waste
- Convenient, no-cost household tool

Solution:

- Use clean old socks to cover computer monitors, TVs, or keyboards when not in use
- Protects from dust accumulation without spending on custom covers
- Soft material prevents scratches while providing complete coverage



What do you understand by Feedback Mechanism?

Feedback means giving or receiving signals about actions taken. It helps people know what's happening and what to do next. It helps in:

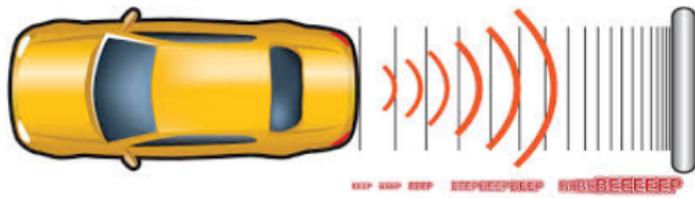
- Guiding user actions
- Confirming inputs
- Reducing errors
- Improving satisfaction



Mechanism:

- A phone vibrates when set to silent mode
- Confirms that silent mode is active
- Prevents missed calls due to no ringtone





Mechanism:

- Many cars beep when in reverse
- Alerts pedestrians and the driver
- Enhances safety while parking

Mechanism:

- Laptops show a charging light when plugged in
- Confirms that power is being received
- Prevents surprises when battery runs low





Mechanism:

- Printers alert when ink is low
- Lets users refill before running out
- Prevents incomplete print jobs

Mechanism:

- Many websites show a meter while creating passwords
- Indicates strength from weak to strong
- Encourages users to choose secure passwords



What do you understand by Constraints?

Constraints limit how things can be used or done. They can be:

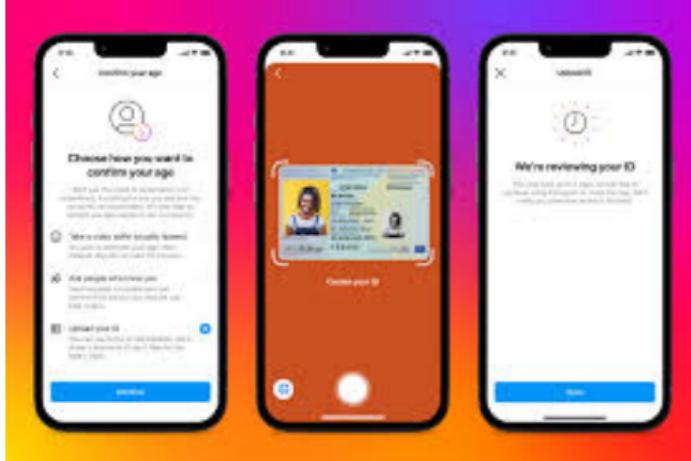
- Physical (shape, size, material)
- Logical (rules, order of steps)
- Cultural (norms, colors, symbols)
- Environmental (light, noise, weather)



Constraint Type: Physical

- USB ports only fit one way
- Prevents damage to connectors
- Makes plugging straightforward



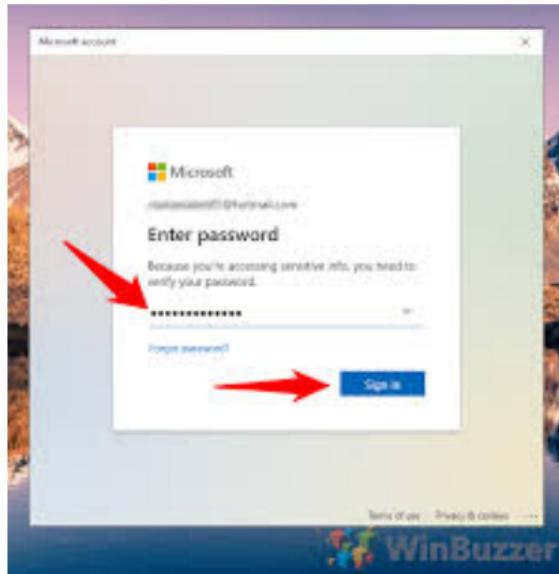


Constraint Type: Logical

- Apps with mature content require age verification before download
- Creates a logical barrier based on user's declared age
- Protects minors from inappropriate content

Constraint Type: Logical

- Must enter PIN before accessing account
- Ensures correct order of steps
- Adds security to transactions





Cinema halls can prohibit outside food, beverages but hygienic drinking water must be free: SC

Constraint Type: Economic

- Cinemas prohibit outside food and drinks to protect concession sales
- Creates economic constraint that drives revenue from high-margin snacks
- Enforced through bag checks and posted signage at entrances

Constraint Type: Social/Cultural

- Libraries designate specific areas where talking and phone calls are prohibited
- Creates social constraint that maintains study environment for all users
- Enforced through signage, social norms, and staff intervention



Thank You!

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