Additional design considerations

In addition to the visual design principles of typography, iconography, and color, there are a few more design features you should know about as you begin to create mockups. In this reading, you'll learn about elements like hyperlinks, buttons, and inputs, which can help you design easy-to-use products.

Hyperlinked text

A **hyperlink** is a link from one page or file to another, usually activated by clicking on a blue, underlined word or image. Hyperlinks allow people to easily navigate digital products, and a standard stylization makes links instantly recognizable when the text is blue and underlined.
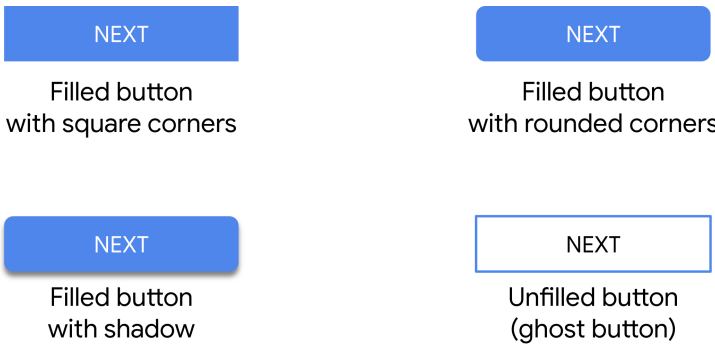
Here are a few things to keep in mind when adding hyperlinks to your mockups:

1. An uncluttered page is easier to read. Hyperlinks can keep your designs organized, making it easy for users to navigate your product. However, adding lots of hyperlinks can reduce readability and impact usability. Choose hyperlinks thoughtfully so you don't overwhelm and distract your users with too much blue text.

2. Meet user expectations. If text is underlined and blue, it should always be a link! Don't confuse your users by ignoring common conventions.

3. Not all links look the same. As UX design has evolved, so has the way that links are represented in digital products. Sometimes, a company's brand standards mean their links won't be blue. Images can also be hyperlinks. For example, many users now expect the logo on a company's website to link to the homepage. Even without underlined text, users expect the logo to work like a link.

4. Use descriptive links. Hyperlinked text should give users an accurate idea of where it will take them. Avoid hyperlinking the word "here," and use a descriptive phrase instead, like "French Quarter Reservation Confirmation." Descriptive language allows users to make informed choices.

Buttons

Buttons let users take specific actions, like "Cancel" or "Save." Here are a few best practices to follow when using buttons in your mockups.

1. Make buttons look like buttons. Buttons should be easily recognizable as buttons through their shape, size, and color. Most buttons are rectangles or circles, so a star- or heart-shaped button could confuse users. Here are four of the most common button styles:

Filled button
with square corners

Filled button
with rounded corners

Filled button
with shadow

Unfilled button
(ghost button)

- Filled button with square corners
- Filled button with rounded corners
- Filled button (square or rounded) with shadow
- Unfilled button with a solid outline (also known as a ghost button)

2. Be consistent. Use the same type of button consistently throughout your product. For example, if you use a ghost button on your app's homepage, you should use that same style on every screen. Consistency helps users recognize which elements are buttons.

3. Include negative space. Leave negative (or white) space around buttons so that users can easily tap or click them. UX designers often add padding to buttons, which is extra negative space that keeps the screen from becoming too cluttered. Padding also makes it less likely that users will accidentally tap a neighboring button.

To find out more about adding buttons to your mockups, check out Material Design's comprehensive guide to buttons ⬈ or UX Planet's 7 Basic Rules For Button Design ⬈.

Inputs

Inputs are text fields where users enter information. It should be clear what information belongs in an input. It should also be big enough to fit the information to be added.. Consider the following best practices when adding inputs to your mockups:

1. **Use visual cues.** Most inputs are open-ended, which means users can type anything into the field. But they also require specific information from users, like a phone number or an email address. To help your users enter the right information (and avoid error messages), give them visual cues.

For example, you can use ghost text (also called hint text), which models the information an input requires. Ghost text is often lighter than the rest of the words on a screen, and it disappears once users enter their information. The designs below include a few different examples of ghost text, like indicating the correct format for the date ("mm/dd/yy").
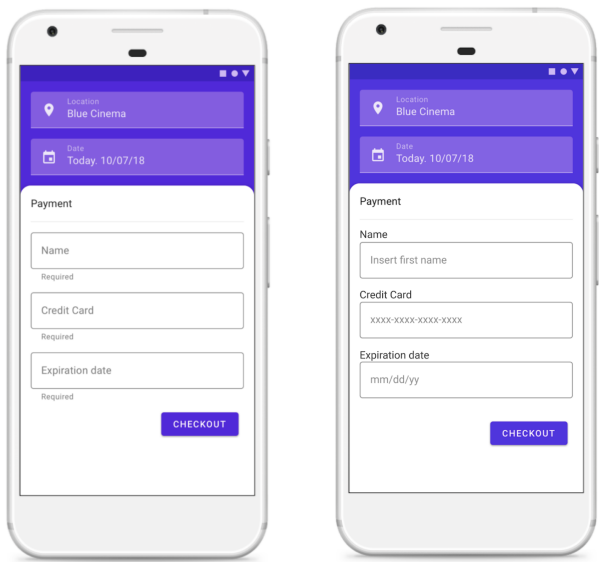
Group inputs using subcategories. When adding more than six inputs to a page, it's best to group them into categories. For example, you could make a "Personal Information" category that includes inputs for the user's first name, last name, date of birth, gender, and so on. Similarly, a "Contact Information'' category could include inputs for an email address, phone number, street address, city, and so on. Grouping inputs makes it easier for users to know what information is needed and visualize their progress.

To learn more about adding inputs to your designs, check out Material Design's guide to text fields ⬈ or UX Planet's The Anatomy of Input Field ⬈.

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