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Week 3 Writeup – Physical Object Redux: Mugs

A revisit of two contrasting mugs, the Zen mug and the Target mug. While demonstrating contrasting design ideals the Zen mug has a better design in multiple categories compared to the Target mug. The Zen mug displayed better physical feedback on the body of the mug and its handle demonstrating affordances and mapping better than the Target mug.   
 When inspecting the mugs the handles are the biggest difference. The Zen mug’s handle mimics the shape of a door handle, inviting a person to grasp it. With the angle of which the handle is detached from the body of the mug and the length of the handle it allows for a sturdy secure grip. This ensures the users control over the mug and the contents inside. The Target mug in contrast features a circular ring shape handle which mimics the shape of a keyring. While the handle is detached from the body of the mug, indicating that it is a handle, the shape of the handle itself implies that something should be threaded through it.

Due to the size of the Target mugs handle there is not a designated location mapped out for the fingers to go. The inner diameter of the handle does not allow more than just one average size finger to be able to loop though. Additionally, above and below the handle there is no space for the excess fingers to rest. To fix this issue the body of the mug across from the handle should have finger like indents to indicate that there is a location for the fingers to rest and that the handle is for a thumb. But due to there being no such marking where the hand is set to go it is up to the user to wrap their head around. On the other hand, the Zen mugs mapping of the handle is a significant improvement. Because of the handles’ cylindrical shape at the top of the handle there has been a designated location for the thumb to go by an indent indication. There is also enough space between the body of the mug and the mug’s handle that allows for any number of fingers to rest there, with room above the handle as well. The user’s fingers and hands were put into more consideration with the Zen mugs handle compared to that of the Target mugs handle.

Handling a mug is its whole purpose, the hold and to be handled. Communicating to the user that they are utilizing the product correctly and giving clear feedback is important when designing said product. The tactile feedback when handling the Target mug is insecure, smooth finishing on the mug allows the mug to slip out of hands, and the location of the handle ruins its center of gravity allowing drinks to spill out when grabbed. The Zen mugs body provides secure tactile feedback with its textured body and a secure sense when holding it by the handle due to the leverage given by the handle.