

Name Ideas for the Thesis

- Designing the Familiar
- Designing for Nostalgia
- Beyond the Metaphor
- Designing for the Past, Present, and Future
- Skeuomorphism Reconsidered
- Navigating the Familiar and the New
- Beyond the Desktop Metaphor

Abstract (W-I-P)

This Master Thesis examines the role of Skeuomorphism through history from the Xerox Alto to the Apple Vision Pro, and its impact on today's graphical user interface design.

Incorporating evidence from interviews, user tests and surveys, this study confirms that we actually never left skeuomorphism.

Preface

I've always been curious and interested of graphical user interfaces. At the age of 10, I remember using PowerPoint to design user interfaces for my old bulky HP laptop and later for my first smartphone (Samsung Galaxy Young).

At the age of 11, I began developing utilitarian software like web browsers, media players and file downloaders using the C# coding language on Windows, by following YouTube tutorials. I then started thinking about the design part of these apps, how can I make them pretty and usable? how can I make them interesting? how can I make them intuitive for their users? how can I make them stand out and be different from what the tech giants are making.

I also find it fascinating designing interfaces of operating systems, and the point of contact and connection between humans and machines. The portal to other apps, services, tools, while discreet have to be well designed.

Introduction

Appendix

CLI: Command Line Interface

GUIL: Graphical User Interface

UI: User Interface

UX: User Experience

CPU: Compute Processing Unit

GPU: Graphical Processing Unit

OEM: Original Equipment Manufacturer

OS: Operating System

WWW: World Wide Web

What is Skeuomorphism?

Way before screens, Skeuomorphism traces its roots from material objects and artistic movements like Art Nouveau, but it was only quoted on computers starting from the 1980s. Skeuomorphism is considered to be the use of metaphors of real life to mimic the real-world objects represented. In GUIs, skeuomorphism manifests itself where elements like buttons, icons, layouts and backgrounds mimic real-world counterparts by using textures, shadows, 3D effects and sounds to enhance realism. One of the most common example that is always given is "the iPhone's old visual interface".

Familiarity plays a big role with Skeuomorphism, as the GUIs leverage people's existing knowledge of physical objects, reducing the learning curve associated with new interfaces and allowing novice users to use without extensive instructions. There's also details we don't really talk about when discussing Skeuomorphism in UI design, and that is feedback either haptic or audible with animations or sound effects to help with user immersion.

Research Question

It's with that fascination in user interfaces that I wanted to revisit Skeuomorphism, maybe out of Nostalgia, but more importantly investigate the emotions of people who used these interfaces and what they think of them now. I'm also thinking about the future, as we're recently seeing a return to three dimension styling to user interfaces. So, how does the evolution of skeuomorphism influence our perception of graphical interfaces, and what role does accessibility and nostalgia play in the way we consider and design new interfaces?

Context

A small bit of History

In a small research lab down in Palo Alto, was an all-in-one desktop computer prototype that amazed anyone who had the chance to see it. The few who had the chance to meet this machine, took the main idea and ran with it to create a new generation of personal computers.

That computer was the Xerox Alto, imagined at Xerox's PARC, and considered by many the first computer to feature a GUI, a Graphical User Interface, that almost turned the world upside down.

Using common language, the portrait monitor displays text, small icons and allowed the use of multiple programs at the same time, in what was called the Desktop, just like the one at work, with items on it. The Alto is the first computer to use a WYSIWYG, What You See Is What You Get, text editor and bitmap display, meaning that you could print exactly what was displayed on the screen. Steve Jobs and Bill Gates both went to see this marvel and went on to copy the idea for their respective software, with Apple unveiling the Lisa in 1983 and the Macintosh in 1984. As for Microsoft, the first version of the Windows OS, operating system, was announced in 1983 as a GUI add-on for MS-DOS, but later came out as a standalone OS in 1985 and was licensed by PC manufacturers, mainly IBM.

In 1988, Apple filed a lawsuit against Microsoft and Hewlett-Packard for using visual GUI elements similar to Apple's Lisa and Macintosh OSs. Seeing this lawsuit, Xerox also filed one against Apple alleging that the Macintosh's GUI was heavily based on the Xerox Alto's OS.

After 4 years and an unsuccessful appeal to the Supreme Court, the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit dismissed. Claiming that "Apple cannot get patent-like protection for the idea of a graphical user interface, or the idea of a desktop metaphor which concededly came from Xerox. It can, and did, put those ideas together creatively with animation, overlapping windows, and well-designed icons; but it licensed the visual displays which resulted."

From that point on, GUIs kind of became open-source, in a way that nobody could copyright the famous desktop metaphor. This led to the popularisation of personal computers and the internet coming at the same time.

At the 2000 Macworld Conference and Expo in San Francisco, Steve Jobs announced a complete reengineering and redesign of MacOS calling it MacOS X (or 10). A new base and architecture, that comes with a new design language called Aqua. During the event, Jobs stated that "it's liquid, one of the design goals was when you saw it you wanted to lick it". Breaking up from the gray, pixelated and static design of the 1990s, Aqua was about droplet-like components, reflections, translucency, depth and life-like material textures.

This move started a new trend, for a new decade. Aqua was possible thanks to advancements in technologies like improved processor speeds and more importantly GPUs that allowed the display of life-like shadows, three dimension effects, animations and better anti-aliasing fonts. The 2000s saw the Apple UI design and MacOS X's versions evolve into more refined and less flashy visuals till the 2010s, with Microsoft also jumping into the same train in 2001 with Windows XP, followed by Windows Vista (and its development hell with Codename Longhorn) and finally Windows 7. At the same time, linux-based OSs were growing and more and more started incorporating Skeuomorphic elements like Ubuntu.

But before the 2010s ended, Apple unveiled it's most successful device after the Macintosh, based on MacOS X's design language; the iPhone. Although not being the first smartphone, it brought a lot of the desktop's Skeuomorphism language to the pocket, with a finger-friendly touch interface but also a rethinking of mobile phone interactions. In 2007, the landscape of mobile phones was pretty crowded. Many OEMs were fighting in a booming market with clunky, slow, unresponsive and not touch friendly phones, until Apple came and proposed a vision of what smartphones should be. This vision was later taken by multiple OEMs and made it their own for the years to come, leading to a wide spectrum of skeuomorphic mobile GUIs, from Google, Samsung, HTC, Motorola and others all creating different looks on top of the Android OS.

In 2006, Microsoft released the Zune, an mp3 player created to take on the Apple iPod. The Zune was different, and made use of lowercase typography, a grid and monochromatic font colors. But Microsoft only went full Flat Design on it's modern new mobile OS, Windows Phone 7, bringing a fresh take on mobile GUIs and differentiating themselves from the competition, fully breaking up from the Skeuomorphic 3D visual style they've called Windows Aero. Windows Phone 7 was considered a breathe of fresh air by people as the Skeuomorphism Spectrum was beginning to become crowded. That style was called Metro (before changing its name because of a lawsuit over the name). Metro is based on the design principles of the Swiss Design style; clear typography, large texts, simplicity and was considered more artistic in a way. The interactivity part was also important as motion played a bigger role, all while being simple.

In 2013, Apple announced its 7th major version of the iPhone OS, iOS 7, that completely strips away the Skeuomorphic Design Language for a more Flat and Flashy Design Philosophy, with other OEMs following on the trend.

Flat Design became the norm, providing clear, simple and efficient design to designers and app developers. It was a breath of fresh air in general, and everything that came out using a skeuomorphic visual style at the time was considered out of date. Apple followed for MacOS X on 2014 by incorporating flat design elements from iOS 7.

That is until the 2017 when Microsoft revived the movement announcing the Fluent Design System focusing on five key principles; Light, Depth, Motion, Material and Scale. But at the time, it was only an evolution of Microsoft's flat design that was also pushed by the release of their mixed-reality headset, Hololens. Interacting in space has to feel 3D, and flat design was just not made for that.

In 2020, Apple announced a new version for its Mac OS (Big Sur), reconciling with Skeuomorphism or a smart part of it by launching new icons and interfaces. Recently in 2024, iOS also received small hints of Skeuomorphism through some parts of the OS and its apps. Microsoft followed with Windows 11 by bringing a rounder and fresher design.

In 2023, Apple announced a mixed-reality headset called the Vision Pro and claiming "The era of spatial computing is here". Using codes of the desktop metaphor, you could interact with your hands just like any other VR or AR headset.

Methodology

Mixing qualitative and quantitative surveys and interviews, I wanted to know how ordinary people think of Skeuomorphism in user interfaces. I started interviewing people (ordinary people and designers) for an hour, where we went back in time and used old technologies from more than ten years ago! Apart from that, I went on to post a survey on some Reddit groups to gather insights on people but also references.

The interviews I first conducted consisted of asking people about their knowledge of Skeuomorphism, explaining it, comparing it to Flat Design, asking their opinion on both design styles and finally enquire them about their ideas for future GUIs or UIs in general.

On the table in front of them, multiple diverse electronic devices that best represent the tech era. The devices were composed of two laptops and three smartphones, displaying a range of skeuomorphic GUIs of what I call *The Spectrum of Skeuomorphic GUIs*.

The next step was to make them choose one device from the table, turn it on and use it until they want to go to another one. While they're using it, I'm asking questions and guiding them to open apps like Calendar, Notes, Media Player, etc. All while prompting them for reactions and emotions.

Cases

In this chapter, I will analyze different operating systems that mark the 2010s era, especially the last remnants of what we call Skeuomorphism and what can be considered peak Skeuomorphism.

For each case, I will describe and analyze Visuals, Acoustics and Motion settings of each, and will also describe how people used these interfaces.

Visual

Glossy Elements, Textiles, Metal, Wood, Paper, ...

Visually, Skeuomorphic GUIs stand out a lot.

Acoustics

Sound Effects.

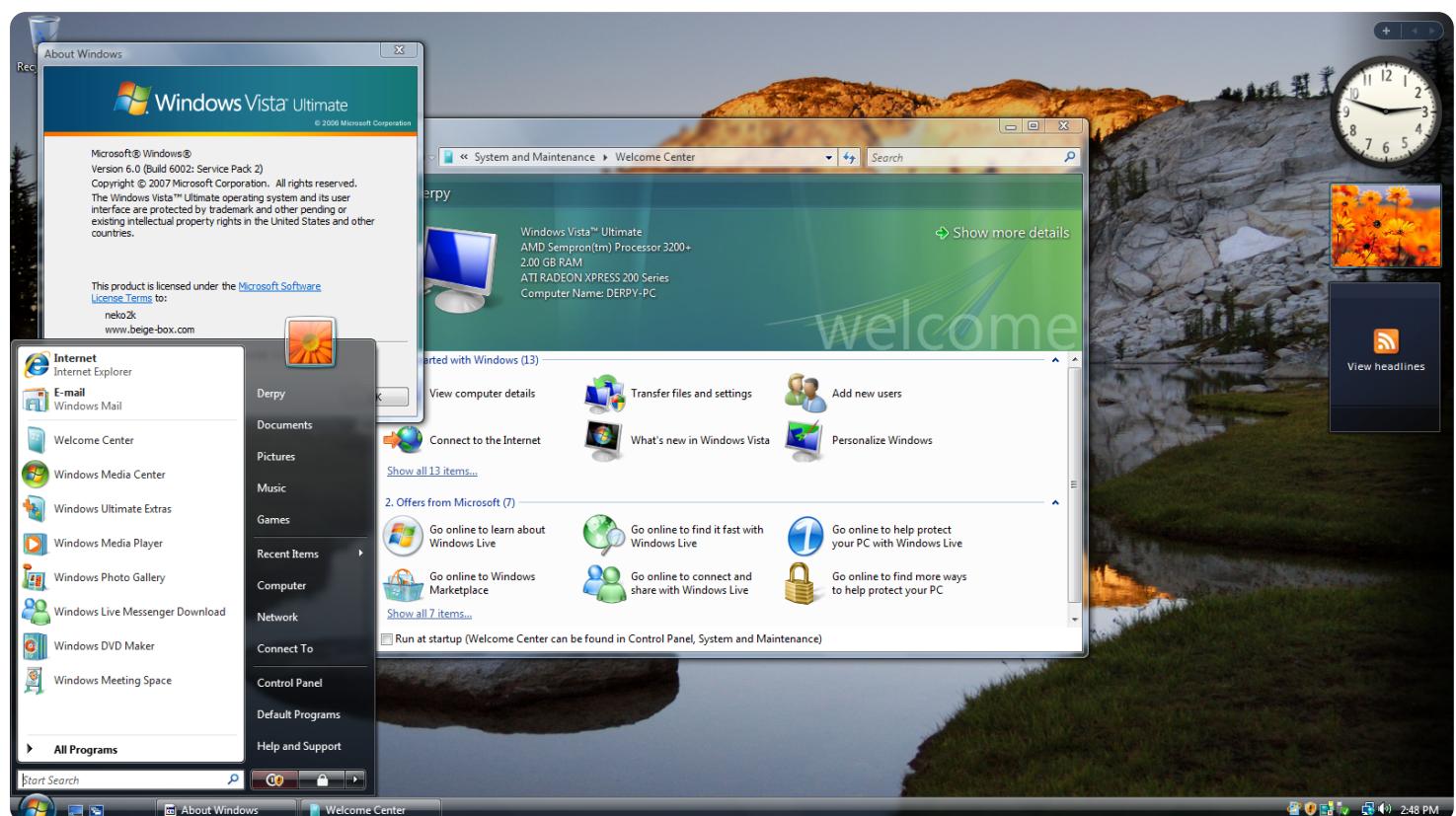
Motion

Movement and animations

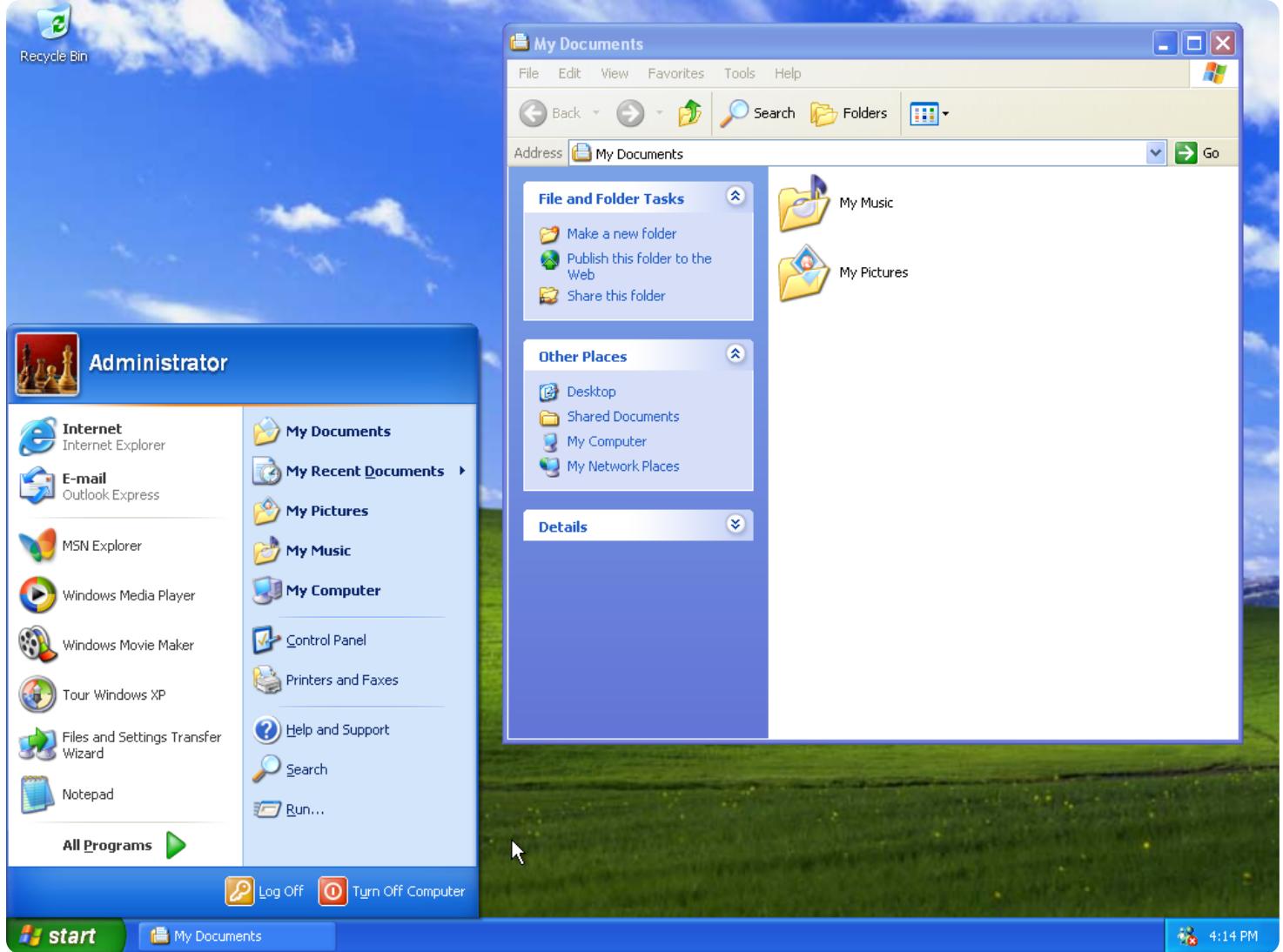
Windows Aero

Developer: Microsoft

Period: 2005-2012



Introduced with Windows Vista in 2005, Aero was a complete redesign of the Windows interface, replacing Windows XP's Luna theme. According to Microsoft, Aero stands for "Authentic, Energetic, Reflective and Open" and goes way beyond what Luna achieved, in terms of visuals, performance and animations.



Visuals

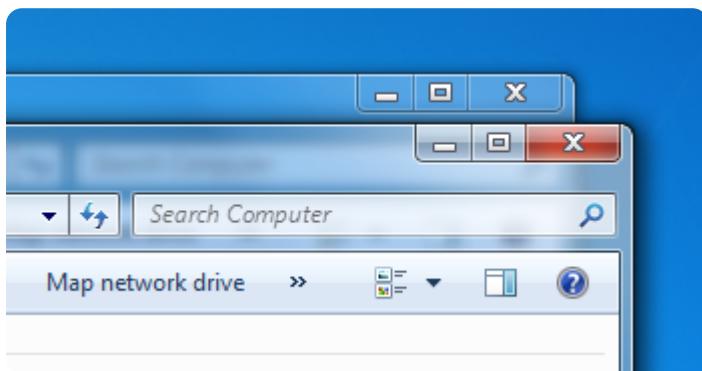
People who used this OS, felt it was so glossy and looked shiny. They felt that the glossy and transparency elements gave the UI a light look to it. The most visible element on a desktop OS is the wallpaper, and the default wallpaper that comes with Vista references the northern lights. This can be considered skeuomorphism, in a way, of employees view of auroras from Microsoft's headquarters in Redmond, USA (ref. Jenny Lam). And then comes the Desktop UI elements like the taskbar at the bottom, the icons all over the wallpaper and the widgets on the right.

The taskbar looks shiny with its dark and glossy look. The Windows button all the way to the left has this glow to it that resembles a real button. And when you press it, it glows brighter signaling a feedback to the user, just like a real button.



When opening windows and programs, most of the time the title bar is translucent, giving the impression that windows are slabs of glass. Putting windows on top of other windows shows the translucency and blur that is happening. Just like putting many slabs of glass on top of each other, visually mimicking house windows.

Shadows also play an important role in adding depth to windows and make them appear floating on the desktop. Today, we take that for granted, but shadows were heavy on performance, as with the blur and translucency effect. This is eventually what led to the hate of Windows Vista, as it had problems running on computers of the time.



With this new visual style came a new typography that was designed especially for this new era. Developed by Steve Matteson at Monotype, Segoe replaces Franklin Gothic and Tahoma that Microsoft was using for its branding and UI. This new typeface characterizes itself as a humanist font family (Based on the VoxATypI classification). Segoe also worked great on the brand new LCD displays at the time.

Segoe UI

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm

Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

1234567890 .,!#%&*&@;:

Penultimate

The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak

SCHADENFREUDE

3964 Elm Street and 1370 Rt. 21

<https://fonts-online.ru> info@fonts-online.ru

Acoustics

Outside of the trash bin sound when it's emptied, Aero brings many high quality sounds. From the startup sound to the email notification sound. The audio cues of the new sounds are more softer than Windows XP's literal ones.

These new sounds sound more synthetic, magical, glassy and dreamy, immersing the users into the magical world of personal computing.

Motion

The Windows OS has been very static throughout its early years, and with this new design language came a new way of animating interface elements. Opening programs and closing them was animated with a fade in and fade out for example, things we take for granted today.

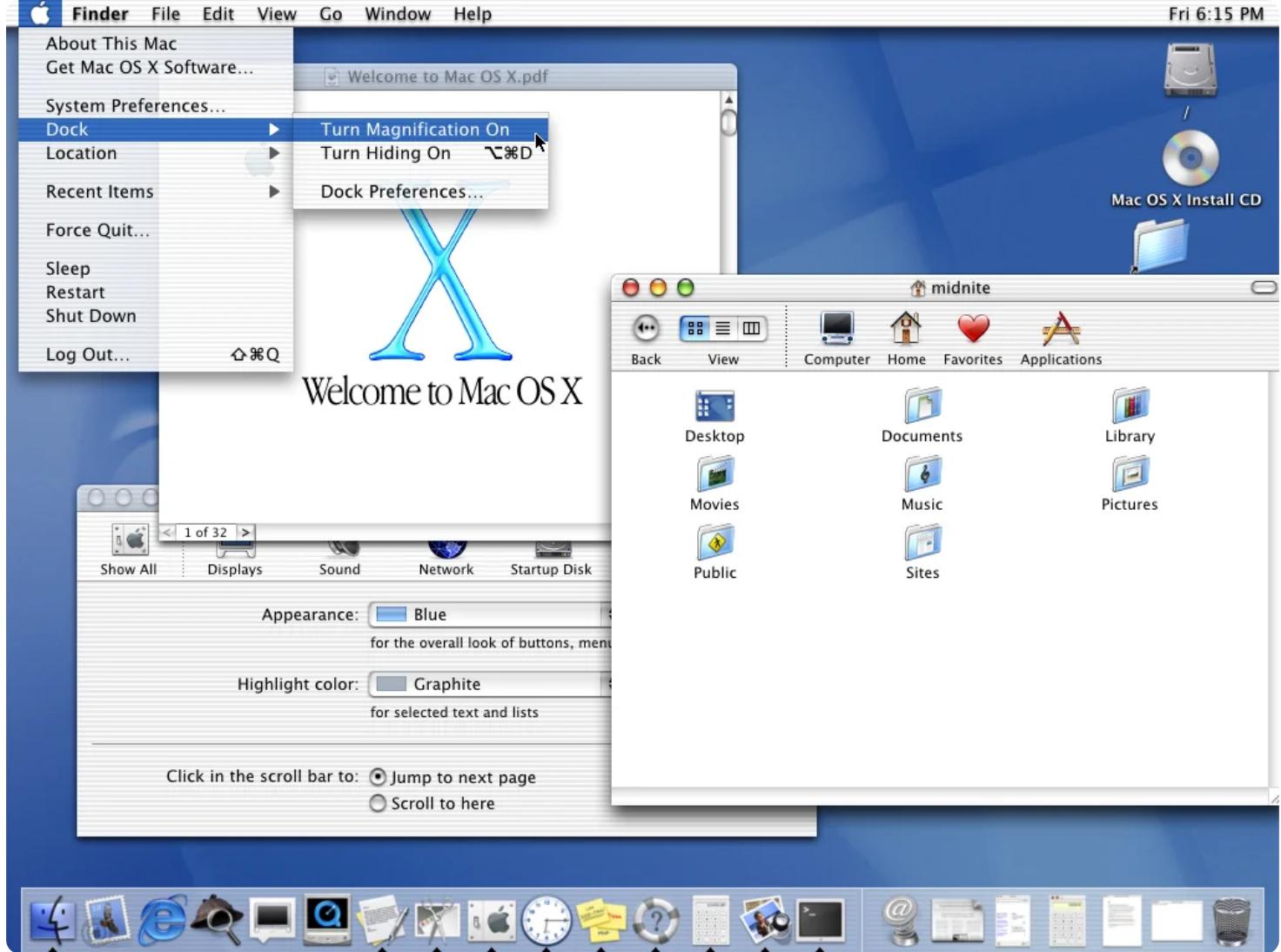
There also was a new feature called 3D Flip that allowed you to see and switch from your open apps by showing them in a 3D way, giving a sci-fi/holographic way of seeing the desktop with an impression of control and power over the computer.



MacOS Aqua

Developer: Apple Computer

Period: 2000-2020



Introduced with the tenth version of Mac OS in 2000, Aqua was also a complete redesign of the Mac OS interface. It was originally based on water and evolved into a more discreet visual style. The first version of Mac OS X was all blue and was later toned down.



Visuals

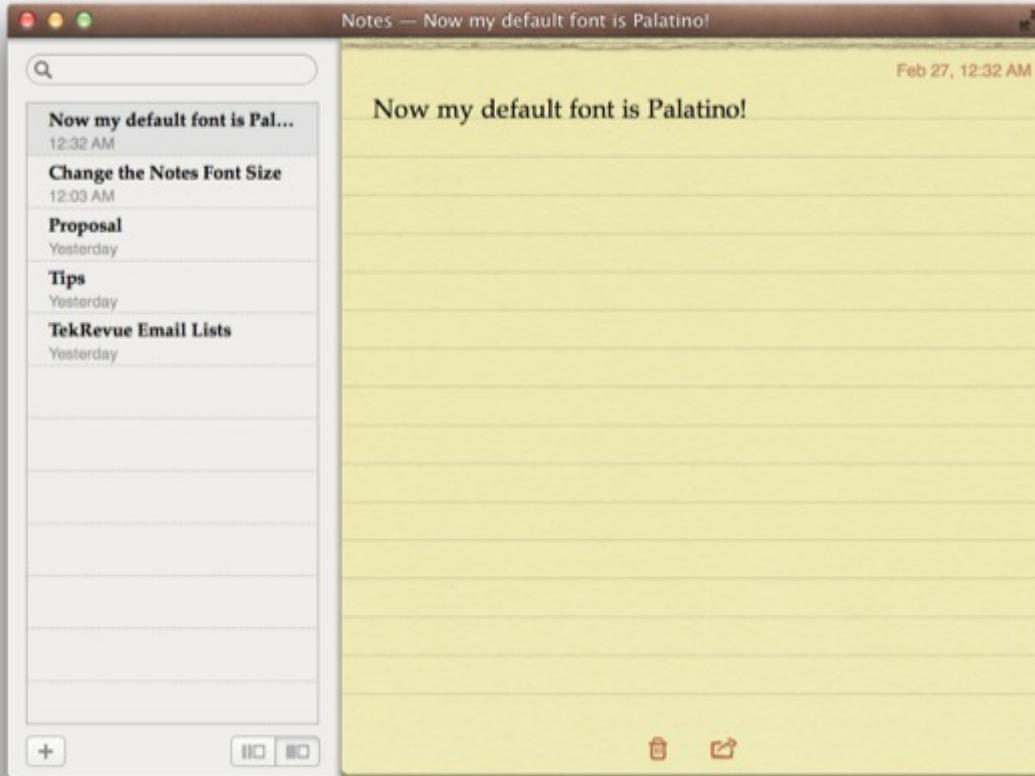
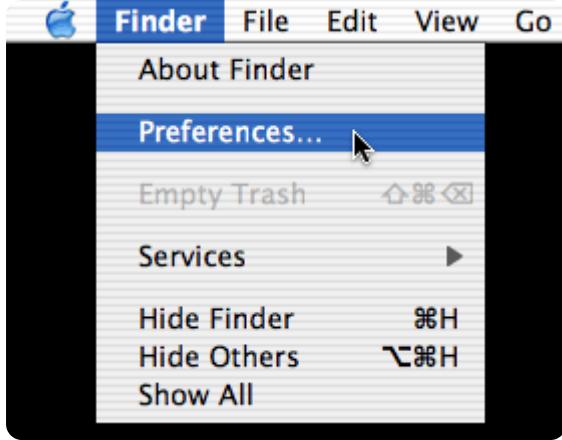
During the announcement of this new version of Mac OS, Steve Jobs promised "killer graphics". Aqua featured new icons that looked just like real-life objects, that were different from what was already seen. The Mail app icon was a postage stamp, the Settings app icon was a switch on a board (before moving to gears, a metaphor of machinery and engineering), etc. Nothing really new from what icons looked like before, but this was the first time that icons were in high definition and looked 3D, compared to illustrations or vectors. There was a big work on shapes, lightning and textures.



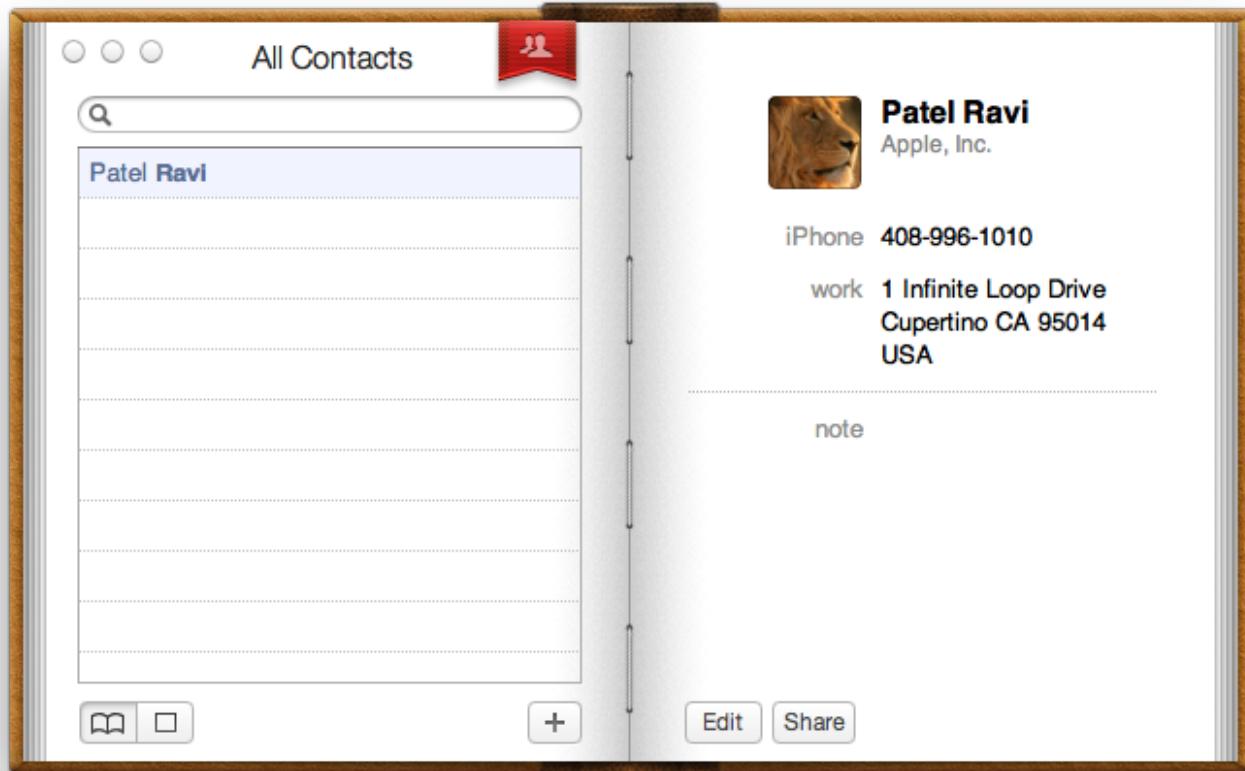
Some apps's backgrounds use metallic textures, like the QuickTime 5 video player. It uses a brushed aluminum texture all around, that later pushed itself to the entire operating system and later the iPhone.



Speaking of texture, early versions of Mac OS X had a pinstripe texture that can be seen throughout the entire OS. Each new version will bring more and more skeuomorphic design elements.



Some of the most famous ones were the Notes app with its yellow paper and torn paper at the top below the title bar, the Contacts app with it's book sized window and visible binding.
Real-life objects making their way to GUIs and being serious about them wasn't really frequent.



The new iMac G4 came out in 2002 with this new version of the Mac OS. It featured a clean design that let the UI speak for itself, compared to the previous generation that had a colourful range. And the UI being that texture, gave the illusion that people were interacting with real object and materials, erasing the fact that the computer was an electric device computing zeros and ones.



Acoustics

Speaking of sounds, Aqua brings so many new high quality sounds, from the start chime to the UI sounds.

Motion

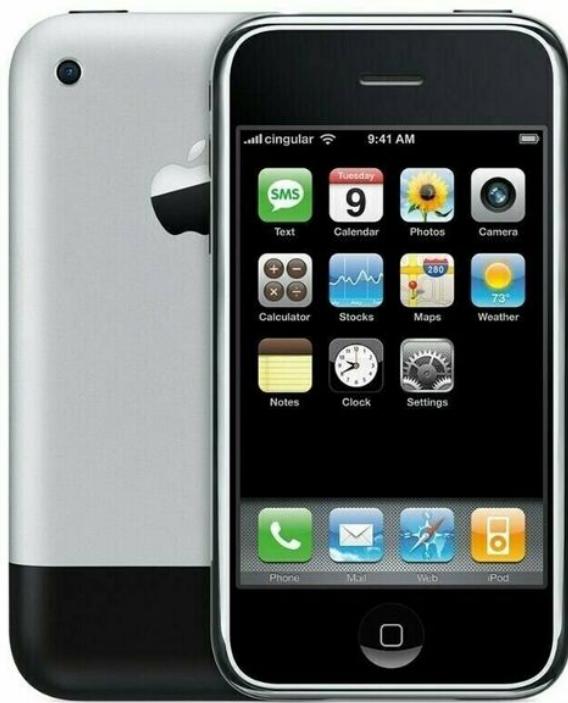
Aqua brings so many new system wide animations. Icons bounce when loading from the dock, windows are squeezed into the app icon's on the dock when minimized and reopened (Genie Effect, that is still present to this day!), Magnification of the dock, ...



iPhoneOS

Developer: Apple Computer

Period: 2007-2013



In 2007, Apple shook the world by announcing their take on the mobile phone. The iPhone had a distinct industrial style; it looked simple, minimalist and fancy compared to other mobiles at the same time. It brought a distinctive design that was about to inspire many other companies for the years to come.

Visuals

Based on Mac OS X, iOS (initially known as iPhoneOS) used lots of design cues from its desktop counterpart, all while having its own aesthetic and user experience. The iPhone was the first device that embraced many skeuomorphic principles in its user interface. The GUI used a grid of 4 by 4 icons to display apps on the home screen. Swiping left or right revealed the next page of installed apps.

Apps looked sharp and kind of out of this world, but at the same time replicating real-world elements. The giant display made it so that the GUI stands for itself. The homescreen layout with apps on a grid was something really new. With each icon having a detailed symbolization of its functionality. When opening apps, they literally open by scaling up its icon, something that other mobile phones didn't do and user no transitions because of how software and hardware heavy they were.

Apple's Notes app on the iPhone looked like its macOS counterpart, although the later came in 2012, way after the iPhone when Apple implemented cues of its iOS into macOS. When the iPad came, the app took advantage of the whole display.

Notes

Skeuomorphism



Today

Jan 14 4:35 PM

**Skeuomorphism
everywhere!**





The app UI featured leather, stiches, paper textures that made the iPad look like a notebook. The icons looked handdrawn, and when selecting a note, a red circle was drawn on the note's title in the side bar.

Other apps featured similar metaphors like the Voice Memo app, having a big detailed microphone at the center of the screen. The camera app featured the look and feel of digital cameras. The Compass app really looked like a sailor's compass. Finally, Game Center, although being a social app for connecting players in iOS games, had a poker table texture.

Acoustics

One of the most known iPhone ringtone is Marimba, xylophones playing a chime. The sounds also feel really material, from the ringtones to the system effects, it feels like real instruments or noise-making devices play the sounds.

Motion

Because of how new this type of multitouch interface was, Apple had to make animations for people to understand what was happening in the palm of their hand. When you tap an app, it scales to the screen to reveal the app, and when you close it the UI gets smaller and scales back to the app icon. Today, that kind of interaction feels normal, but back then the majority of phones didn't use transitions because it was gimmicky and took too much power. Apple's animations on the first iPhone were slow, just to show first time users how apps "open" at the touch of their icon, compared to opening apps with a capacitive display or T9 keys.

Android Skins

Developer: Google, Samsung, HTC, etc.

Period: 2007-2013

It wasn't until 2008 that the first third-party OEM, HTC, announced their first Android powered mobile phone. After that, many other OEMs felt the need to jump on the smartphone train and take their part of the cake. Android is an open-source software, and OEMs can develop their own look and feel. So naturally, not every Android phone has the same IUI design. For this case, I will analyze Android Skins in general and not specific to each OEM.

Visuals

Phone manufacturers were all making smartphones before, but when Apple unveiled the clean and minimalist UI of the iPhone, they really started taking notes on how they can make their interfaces more skeuomorphic, especially on touch screens. By using Android, OEMs also had extensive skinning possibilities to match their respective branding and styles.

htc

10:08 AM

10
AM

08

Barcelona
Mostly Sunny



Tue, Feb 16

12° H: 16°
L: 10°



Messages



Mail



Internet



Camera



Phone







3:00 PM

03:00

PM

Wed.

08/24

103°F 104°/81°

Tucson
Sunny

AccuWeather.com

08/24 2:12 PM



Speed Test



Twitter



Camera



Maps

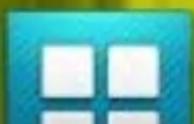


Market



Gmail

1



Phone

Internet

Messaging

Applications

Samsung who was already making phones jumped on Android and designed their Look and Feel UI called TouchWiz. And in 2011, they were sued by Apple over patent infringement, in one of the most known intellectual property and patent fights in tech history. Apple and other OEMs fought on multiple patents, but the Apple vs Samsung is the most known one, as multiple documents were published and shared to the public.

Samsung Smartphones BEFORE iPhone	Apple's iPhone (announced Jan. 2007)	Samsung Smartphones AFTER iPhone
		



The trial concerned three things: the front and rear look of the iPhone and finally the GUI showing the layout of apps on its homescreen. Apple argued that Samsung stole the home screen design of Apple's iOS.

Acoustics

Same as the iPhone.

Motion

Extravagant animations compared to the iPhone.

Windows Phone

Developer: Microsoft

Period: 2010-2020

Honorable mention: I wanted to talk about Windows Phone, the forgotten mobile operating system that "didn't have apps". Windows Phone was a modern successor of Windows Mobile (2000-2013), that positioned itself as an alternative to the two other mobiles OSs already on the market, iOS and Android, by bringing a fresh and different UI and UX to the small screen. Windows Phone 7 marked the first move to flat design in UI design.

Inspired by the Swiss Design Style, Metro was smooth; the GUI felt fluid and responsive to the finger's touch. The home screen differed from iOS and Android with the use of squares as apps, on a grid of two horizontally, and you could scroll vertically, up or down to see the rest (and not horizontally like the other mobiles OSs). Icons were monochrome, and the main color on the screen was your chosen color. Windows

Phone was so personalizable, it went the opposite way of what GUIs were like; minimalism, frutiger-like fonts, monochrome, focus on typography...



Usability and Accessibility

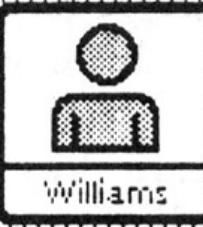
Metaphors

In the 1980 and 1990s, metaphors were being discussed in Human Computer Interaction as a way of democratizing computers by using words everyone knew, mainly in business environments; Desktop, Folder, File, Trash Bin, ... A reason for that was that computers were initially work equipment, but at the same time these were also words everyone already got the concept of.

Metaphors also benefit from mimeticism, as lots of icons and layouts mimic their real life counterparts. The icons designed for the Xerox Alto give a really bold business setting through its UI, with cabinet files, mail baskets, folders, ... because computers were business machines.

Tested Icon Sets

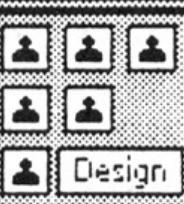
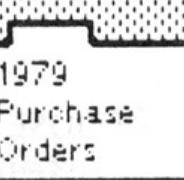
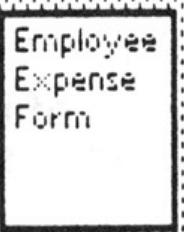
Set 1



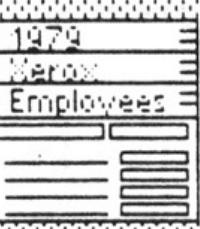
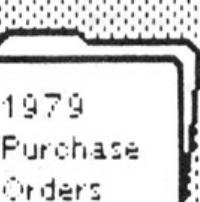
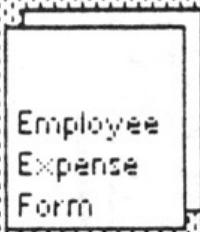
Set 2



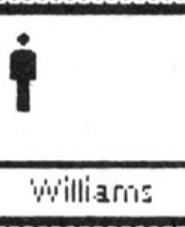
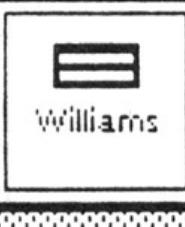
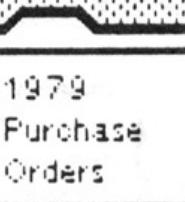
Set 3

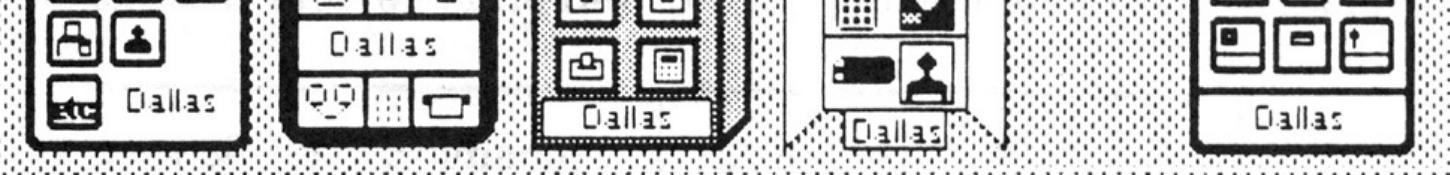


Set 4

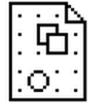
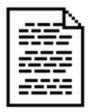


Final versions
of chosen set





Apple won't ask Susan Kare to design icons for the first Apple computer with a GUI (Apple Lisa), but will ask her to design icons and typefaces for the upcoming Macintosh. Kare will kick start the icon design job, by illustrating programs and tools by an image. The icons ditched the mega-business style for a more friendly and more appealing visual style.



Chicago

Aa Ee Qq

Rr Ss Tt

a
a

Insert disk

a b c d e f g h i j k l m
n o p q r s t u v w x y z

0123456789

Although these icons were relatively new and user friendly, people sometime mistook them for other messages, like the dialog that shows up when any program crashes. People saw a bomb and kept calling Apple complaining that their computer was about to explode.



Sorry, a system error occurred.

Restart

Today, it seems like we're still living in the 1970s original desktop metaphor; the wallpaper, paper bin, icons, etc. When user testing computer GUIs to people, one of the most recurring phrase was that the can easily navigate the old machines because of how the interfaces barely changed. Visually, a lot has changed but in terms of user experience it's still the same. It feels like we're stuck in that metaphor, that kind of works, but the personal computer wasn't only used to do work related stuff since the WWW's creation.

Can we reinvent the personal computer GUI? Microsoft tried in 1995 by releasing Microsoft Bob, a software program designed to replace the desktop of Windows 3.1 and 95 with the goal of offering a more user-friendly and easy-to-understand cartoonish interface than what Windows came with. Its goal was to make Windows more accessible to everyone.



A more contemporary project can be the MercuryOS, a GUI project by Jason Yuan, playing with a speculative vision of the operating system ditching the traditional desktop metaphor.

Mobile-wise, by incorporating metaphors on the iPhone, Apple wanted to make the first experience of the device as easy and seamless as possible for people who never used a phone.

Some courageous people also ditch the GUI entirely by only using the CLI on their computers.

Affordances

"See that door handle? How do you know you have to pull it?"

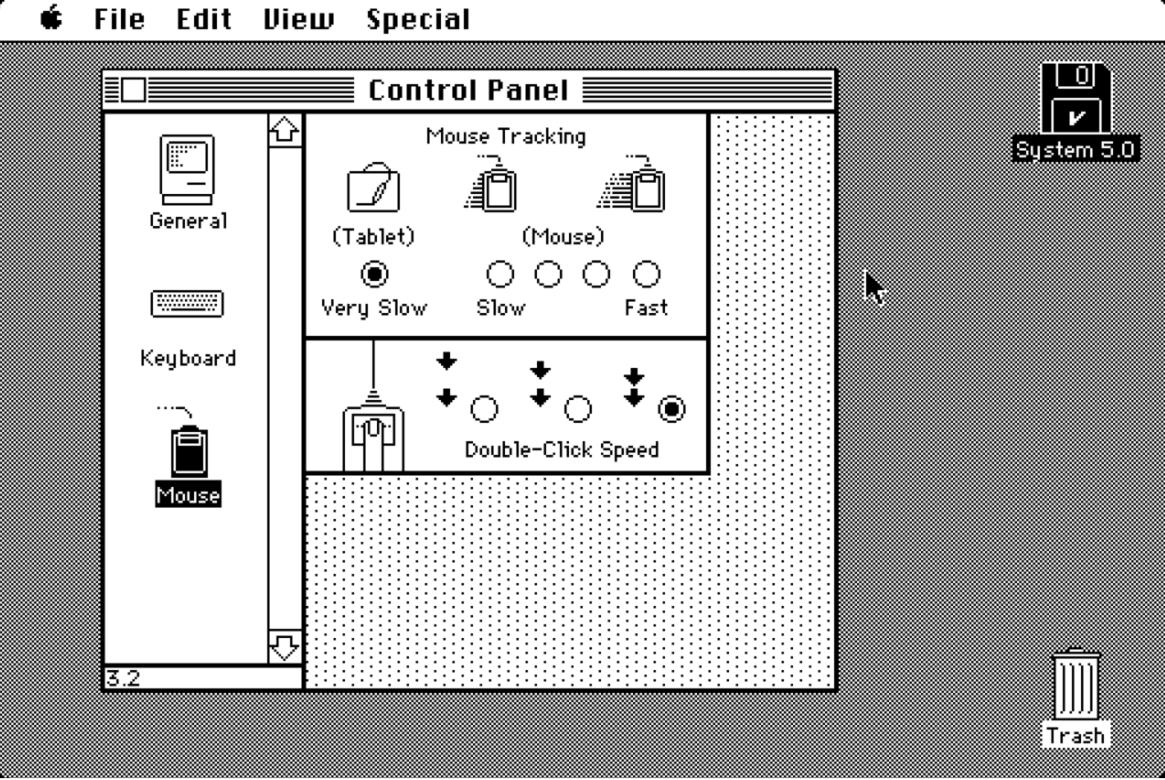
"Do you see the button on the blind's remote? How do you know you have to press it?"

After explaining the concept of Affordances to the people I interviewed, many attested, without me asking, that phones and computers they use today have lost some affordances in their respective user interfaces. I couldn't disagree with them as multiple studies show that Skeuomorphism was winning in terms of accessibility.

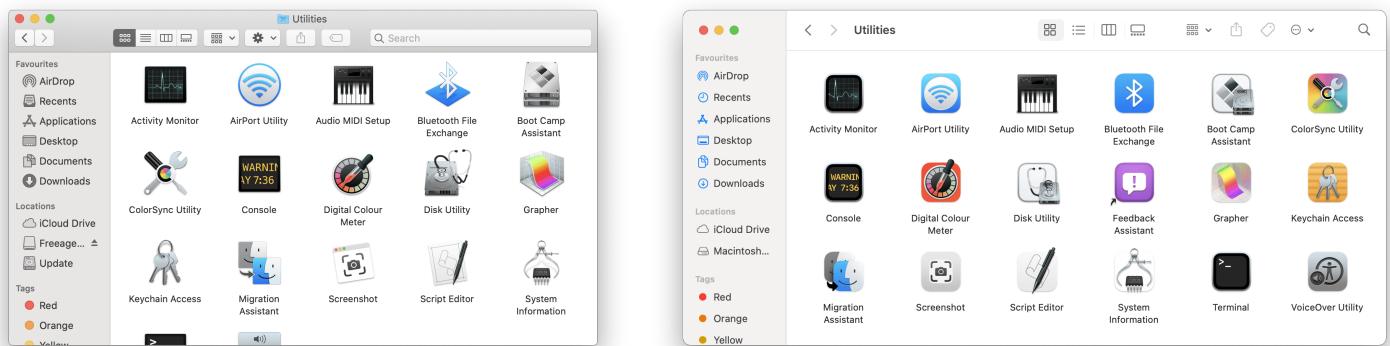
Shadows are another element that is deemed important in the perception of affordances. Giving small shadows to a button makes it afford pressing and not moving acting as a unitary object.



But giving a long shadow to a bigger object like a window makes it look like its floating on the desktop, and makes it afford moving. Of course, that affordance is the result of the title bar affordance. In the first Macintosh OS, the title bar had a pinstripe texture that afforded grabbing in order to move the window.



Today, we don't see this big title bar difference in texture from the window because of how this interaction gesture became the norm and people got used to clicking and dragging the top of any window.



But, same question as for the metaphors, how do you make current user interfaces intuitive when "everyone gets it now"? how do new generations tackle interactions with tech devices?

Scroll bars are also interesting, William Gaver also talks and compares the early Macintosh GUI to the Xerox Smalltalk GUI where he says that "dragging is a natural progression of grabbing". We see less and less of wrong affordances in today's UIs.

here I talk about sequential affordances

here about audible affordances (conveying information about an affordance that can't be seen)

When emptying my mac's bin, I was actually surprised to hear a clear sound of the throwing trash sound effect. I deleted some files again to reheat the sound, and was really impressed by the high quality and fidelity of the sound composition. When deleting a file, the sound of crushing paper is played, and when you empty the recycle bin, the sound of crushing paper and the metallic door closing is heard. This is not new as it started towards the end of the 1990s when computers got better soundcards, but what surprised me was that this sound is still present on computers to this day! Sounds that mimic their real life counterparts are interesting, as they make interactions feel physical, just as user interfaces, but with the use of sound effects,

mimicking real life sounds and objects. Sending an email triggers the whoosh sound, so you feel like your letter literally travels by air to their recipient.

But in recent years, GUIs became silent leaving some place to smartphones. Tapping keys, receiving a call, sending an SMS, mobile phones always had sounds that each OEM conceived to fit their branding. The iPhone brought high quality sounds that felt material and you're directly confronted with that when you unlock the phone, triggering an lock opening sound that makes you think the phone was in fact really locked! Plugging your charger also makes a sound that kind of says "Your phone is plugged, the electricity is flowing". That theme could be another thesis by its own, as people can also have different views and perceptions to the sounds.

To end this chapter, let's not forget that the actual perception of affordances will be determined in part by the observer's culture, social setting, experience and intentions. (ref. William Gaver). Designing user interfaces for a Western market is so different than designing user interfaces for the Japanese market for example. When looking at Japanese user interfaces, westerners can see cluttered interfaces that feel overwhelming.

The screenshot shows the Yahoo! Japan homepage. At the top, there are links for LYP (Premium), Auction, Shopping, Travel, Cards, and Mail. The main search bar has dropdown options for Web, Images, Videos, etc. Below the search bar, there are news headlines and a large advertisement for Paroxysmal Nocturnal Hemoglobinuria (PNH) featuring a bird and the text "PNH という病気のコト、知っていますか?". The bottom section shows a login form, weather information for November 5, 2024, and other user interface elements.

Yahoo! BB | きっず版 | アプリ版 | ヘルプ

LYP
プレミアム

オークション

ショッピング

YAHOO!
JAPAN

トラベル

カード

メール

ウェブ 画像 動画 知恵袋 地図 リアルタイム 一覧▼

Q 検索

» 条件を満たすと11/16、17の買い物で最大23.5% » 真剣な表情がたまらない「猫の証明写真」撮れました » 5のつく日の購入で+4%お得

ショッピング

オークション

フリマ

ZOZOTOWN

LOHACO

トラベル

一休.com

一休.comレストラン

PayPayグルメ

出前館

ニュース

天気・災害

スポーツナビ

ファイナンス

番組表

知恵袋

LINE MUSIC

ゲーム

Yahoo!モバゲー

ebookjapan

LINE 占い

マップ

路線情報

主要 経済 エンタメ スポーツ 国内 国際 IT 科学 地域

11/4(月) 23:38更新

- 米大統領選 両氏の支持率は横一線 NEW ▷262
- 石破内閣支持率が急落 産経FNN ▷2056
- 年収の壁見直し 財務省の本音は ▷2473
- 同友会新浪氏が訪中 ビザ巡り要望 NEW ▷263
- 自転車の中学生 車にはねられ重体 NEW ▷495
- 上田綺世が年内欠場 森保Jも痛手 ▷238
- 成宮寛貴「8年ぶりに俳優を再開」 ▷1726
- DISH//矢部昌輝、活動再開へ NEW ▷9

鋭い眼光

11/4(月) 21:37
丹波新聞

もっと見る トピックス一覧

あれ？藤田ニコル 披露宴でエスコートした父が意外な大俳優だった！「一緒に歩いてる時に胸がぎゅっと」実の父は3歳で離婚
デイリースポーツ

千葉県、東京都、神奈川県で最大震度2の地震 千葉県・千葉若葉区、東京都・東京大田区、東京渋谷区
TBS NEWS DIG Powered by JNN

【全文】「心が折れた」登録者448万人 YouTuberメンバー長期活動休止発表「全く笑えなくなっちゃった」理由も吐露
デイリースポーツ

globe・KEIKO 超久々のマスクなしアップ写真にファン歓喜「素敵な笑顔をありがとうございます」「お元気な姿嬉しいです」
デイリースポーツ

おじえて
PNHのコト
Paroxysmal Nocturnal Hemoglobinuria

広告 ×

ログイン [ID新規取得] 登録情報

毎日1回 宝箱くじ PayPay残高確認

2024年11月5日(火) 港区▼

今日の天気 20°C 14°C 30% 明日の天気 20°C 13°C 30%

雨雲レーダー

地域情報 くらしの手続きや自治体情報など

運行情報 事故・遅延情報はありません (2:34)

お知らせ 新着があります▼

Nostalgia

Simpler Times

We tend to think that "Before, things were always better", can that be true in the case of UI design? During my user tests, a person I interviewed found the iPhone 5's Settings app to be so uncluttered and simple compared to today's version, that it felt empty. It seems that user interfaces have gotten so complicated with time, all while getting flatter visually; "An abstract thing like software was just more easier when everything resembled real world objects". Unlocking my iPhone and opening the settings app, I found myself overwhelmed by the amount of settings, colors and texts. Although we have so many functionalities because of these OSs age and improvements that came with it, we probably have too much choice and features that we probably don't fully utilize.

Operating systems became so complex with a multitude of features and functions that creating a new operating system and specific GUI from scratch today equals digging your own grave.

Legacy

We've been through Skeuomorphism and switched to Flat Design because of how cluttered and kitsch everyday user interfaces became, but also because of the explosion of app marketplaces with developers all bringing their apps with their own style and take on skeuomorphism which led to visual saturation. Flat Design seemed like a solution to that problem, by stripping away all details, textures, 3D effects, and any other visual "pollution".

Recently, the resurgence of 3D in UI design really challenged our Flat Design saturation by bringing something new, breaking away from the flat and minimalist looks but maintaining a sense of restraint on exaggeration.

One attempt at that was Neumorphism, that focused on introducing subtle skeuomorphic elements. This style had big problems like having low contrasts and bad clickability detection causing bad reception; this style never made it mainstream and was just fancy/another good looking concept that is not applicable to real-world usage.

But this new Glassmorphism or whatever we should call it is interesting. It brings back depth to the interfaces, breaking up with flat design principles like flat surfaces, or minimalist icons to cite a few. Skeuomorphism as we knew it lives on as this

Some designers even design UIs that are not made to be functional but are more reinterpretation works of art, devoted to waking emotions and feelings up from people.

Finally, skeuomorphism's legacy can also be considered sociological thanks to one of the most fascinating design styles of the 2000s and its naming; Frutiger Aero.

An Unrealized Future

Frutiger Aero is a broad design style and aesthetic attributed to the post Y2K era, that can be found in advertising, media, technology. Invented by Sofi Lee, the name Frutiger Aero is named after the famous typeface designer Adrian Frutiger (creator of the famous and copied Frutiger humanist typeface) and Windows Aero (the GUI of Windows Vista and 7). And according to the Aesthetics Wiki, it is sometimes referenced as Web 2.0 Gloss, and contains many sub-aesthetics and related aesthetics like Frutiger Metro, Technozen, Frutiger Eco and Helvetica Aqua.



This categorization is pretty interesting as it puts a name and a period on a design style that is too soon to be named, compared to other historical design and art time periods. This style became viral in 2022 on social media, especially TikTok, and sparked a subreddit with nearly 70k members, at the time of writing.

According to people who fancy the style, they believe that Frutiger Aero is all about a bright, colorful and peaceful future that was promised to us but never delivered, especially as Gen Z people who grew up with all these graphics that merged nature elements, fluid shapes, floating elements and technology. Humans fantasizing on merging nature and technology expressed it through these designs of what we call Frutiger Aero today.

People I talked with on the internet said that Skeuomorphism can be considered a Frutiger Aero sub-style because they overlapped a lot during history, but they are not the same because of how some

I believe that Frutiger Aero is a direct result of nostalgia. As a Gen Z person, I do feel a bit nostalgic because I grew up with these colorful and dynamic design trends, that a big chunk of people from my generation experienced. And I kind of miss them, in a way.

Conclusion

What's Next?

The post COVID-19 era has been marked by the democratisation of AI in our everyday lives. Can we rethink the computers and mobiles that surround us? Talk about the hot question everyone is asking, what's after the iPhone?

AR? VR? Apple started incorporating some of its design elements from the Vision Pro OS into its mobile OS UI. Reusing 3D layouts, More shadows, ...

Can we finally make user interfaces that adapt to us and not the other way around, all while staying intuitive and easy to understand without friction?

Practical Project

Practical_Project_Ideas

- Use skeuomorphism as a tool for a hardware device.
- Build a Cyberdeck
- Make new user interfaces closer to humans.
- Make a new way of interaction for tech devices.
- Tabula rasa of the desktop metaphor for desktop operating system's UI and UX.
- Make an operating system that removes the "work & capitalist" metaphor.
- Because of a work already existing for reshaping the desktop metaphor, I can focus on the mobile interface, the grid.

References

- I. Alan F. Blackwell. 2006. The reification of metaphor as a design tool. ACM Trans. Comput.-Hum. Interact. 13, 4 (December 2006), 490–530. <https://doi.org/10.1145/1188816.1188820>