

Usability for the Web

Making Your Sites More Awesomer

by Jen Riehle

What is usability?

Usability is the absence of frustration.

The user can use the product to do what they want, the way they want, without hinderance, hesitation or questions.



Elements of Usability

- Usefulness
- Effectiveness
- Learnability (...and Memorability)
- Satisfaction

What usability isn't

Accessibility

Accessibility is having access to the things one needs to complete tasks.

Accessibility helps facilitate usability.

What usability isn't

webpagesthatsuck.com; 2009

- <http://www.belladesoto.us/>
- <http://www.georgehutchins.com/>
- <http://www.historianofthefuture.com/>

Usability Testing: Early Development

- Parallel Design with rapid prototyping
- Task Analysis
- Activity Analysis
- Tree-testing and card-sorting

Usability Testing: Mid-Development

- Focus Groups or subjects-in-tandem
- Questionnaires/ Surveys
- Advanced Usability Testing

Usability Testing: Late Development

- Cognitive walkthrough
- Benchmarking
- Questionnaires/ Surveys

More Testing Tips

- Test your users
- Test the right pages, not the easy pages
- Get the most accurate results possible
- Don't take too long
- Don't judge the user
- You don't have to test 100's of people!

Benefits

- Reduced long-term development costs
- Reduced support costs
- Increased user efficiency
- Increased user satisfaction

Let's give it a shot...

Let's try a five-second
usability test, shall we?

See what you can remember about this
website after 5 seconds.



1 5 4 5 0 7

Designers happy

Be a pal, do a random test and provide valuable feedback!

[do a test](#)

Simple, instant feedback on your designs.

Five second tests help you easily identify the most prominent elements of your user interfaces.

[+ create a new test](#)or [learn more](#)

Recent tests



Free to use

While you need to purchase tokens to unlock some premium test features, you can create and run as many tests as you like for free.

Easy to run

Creating a new test only takes a few seconds, registration is optional and we provide multiple ways of viewing and organising your results.

Super duper fast

Five second tests get you feedback on your designs fast, so they're ideal for running as part of your design workflow.

Highly flexible

People use five second test to locate calls to action, optimize landing pages, and run A/B tests. You can use them for whatever you like.



From the blog

- Even BETTER value for paid tests
- Questions, Answers and the "Karma" system
- A dollar more, but more results for you!
- New test options, huzzah!

[follow us on twitter](#)

Five Second Test

What did you see?

General impressions?

<http://fivesecondtest.com/>

Why is pretty > usable?

If design were ruled by aesthetics the world would be prettier but less comfortable; if ruled by usability it would be simple but boring.

- ➊ Perception that prettier things are easier to use and better quality
- ➋ Simple design does not mean simple to use

Why is pretty > usable?

- “pretty” wins awards
- Designers like “pretty”
- Clients like “pretty”
- “pretty” makes us happy and we want to come back

What do the studies say?

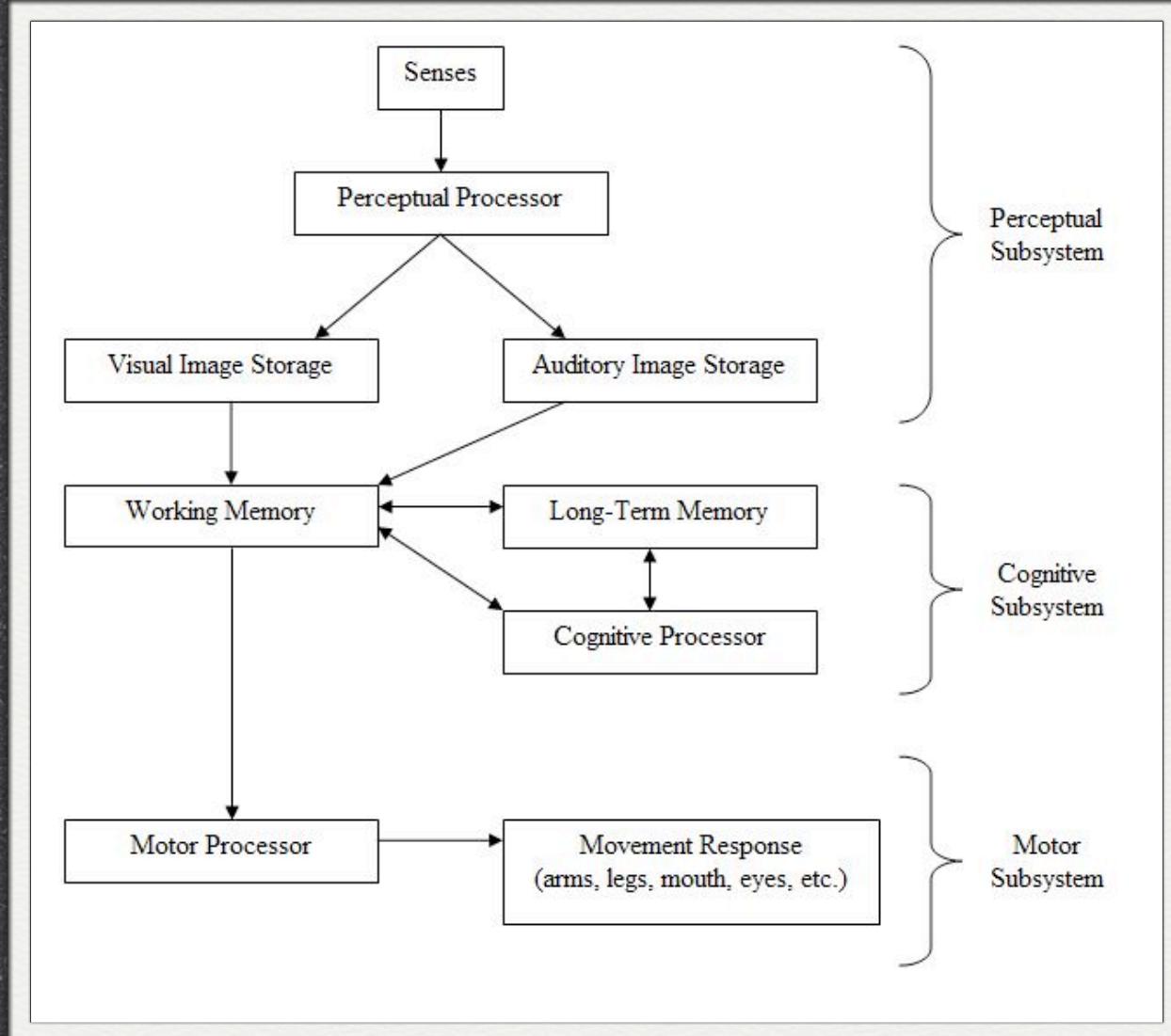
- Fitt's Law: model of human movement- don't make 'em move too far to get to those links
- Inverted Pyramid: Put the conclusion at the beginning of the content- let people know what you're writing about

What do the studies say?

- 3-Click Rule: new sites get three clicks to find content
- 2-Second Rule: response time expected of a click
- 7+/-2 Principle

Knowledge

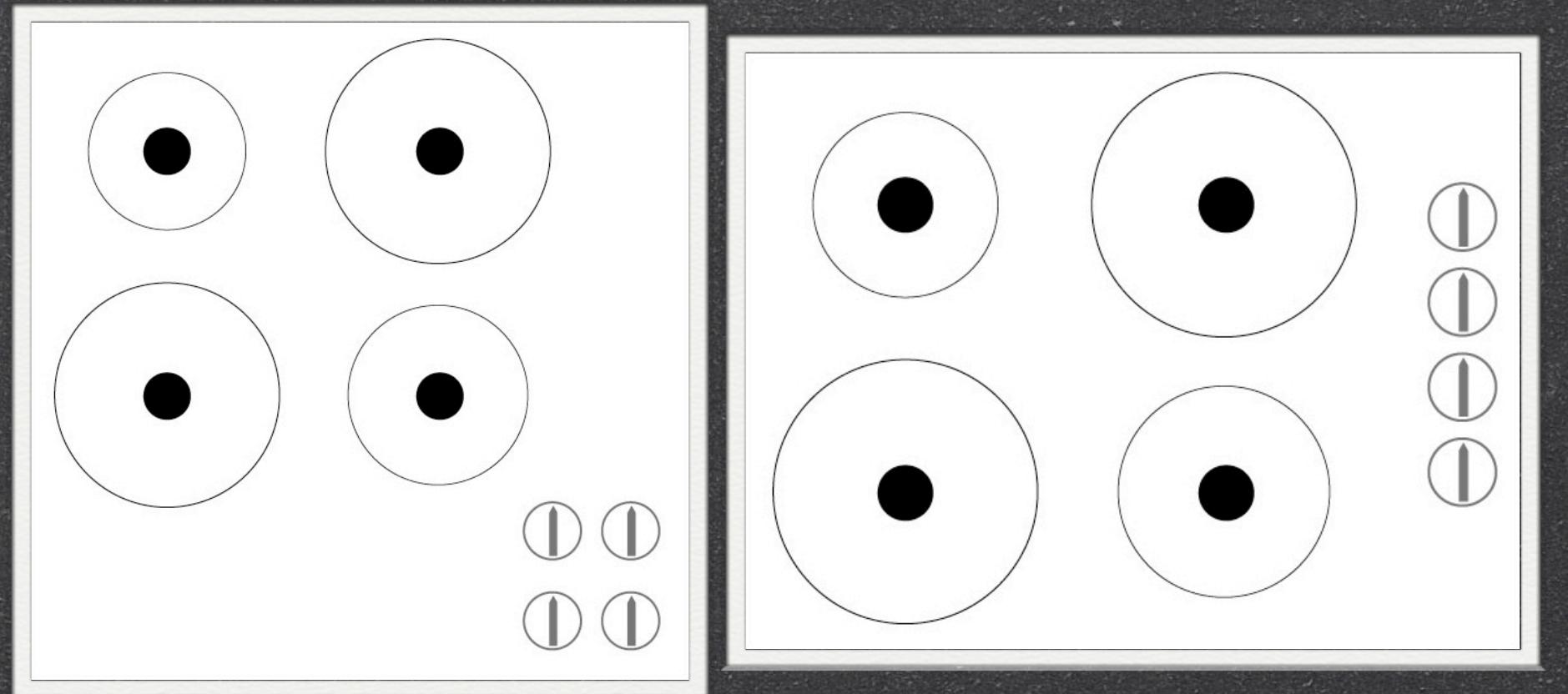
- Knowledge in the world
- Knowledge in the head



Knowledge in the head

- Natural mapping
- Visual connections
- Constraints
- Affordances

Natural Mapping

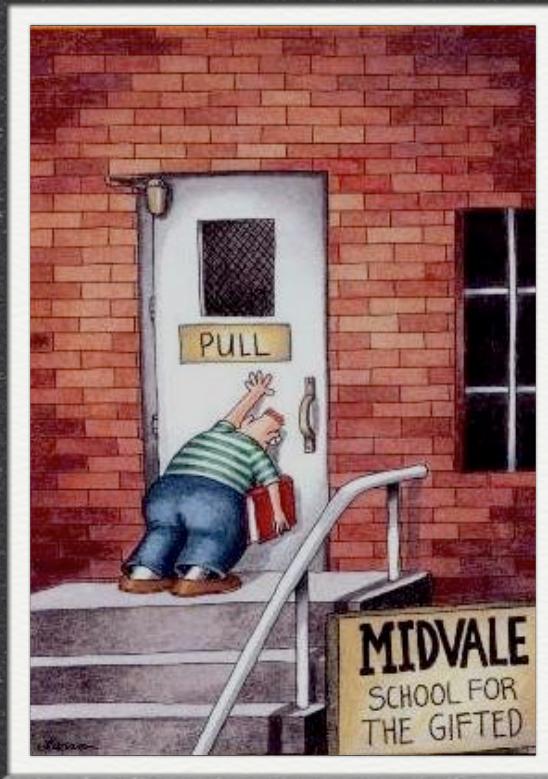


Visual Connections



Constraints

Limitations or restrictions we must work with to complete our tasks



Constraints

- Industry-imposed (design standards)
- Client-imposed (“I like rainbows”)
- University-imposed (campus branding)
- And many others...

Affordances

Possibilities which are perceivable by a user based on their goals, beliefs, values and past experiences.

What do you expect out of your webpages?

Affordances

- Search
- Footer
- Header links home
- Something underlined is a link
- Login link in the upper right-hand corner

The Facts of Life

- ➊ We want a search tool
- ➋ We ignore banners and ads
- ➌ We don't read pages, we scan them
- ➍ We don't read instructions, we muddle through
- ➎ We don't choose best option, we choose the first one

Designing for Error

- ➊ Minimize the common causes of error
- ➋ Make it easy to discover errors early
- ➌ Make it possible to undo errors - easily
- ➍ 404 page... or a 301 redirect

Common Web Application Mistakes

- Inconsistent icons, controls, naming conventions, etc.
- No perceived affordances
- No feedback
- No default values
- Unhelpful error messages

Common Info Architecture Mistakes

- ➊ Search and site structure not integrated
- ➋ Too many top-level links
- ➌ Missing category landing pages
- ➍ Made up Menu Options (mystery-meat)

Common Mobile Website Mistakes

- Not having one
- Not designing for the mobile platform
- Not testing on multiple devices
- Missing the point of the audience
- Over-complicating things

Common Form Mistakes

- Using the wrong input for the task
- Not enough room to type
- Looooong forms
- Convoluted information handling
- Non-descriptive or poorly-placed labels

Common Web Design Mistakes

- No search/ bad search
- Not changing the colors of visited links
- Non-scannable text
- Fixed font size
- Violating design affordances

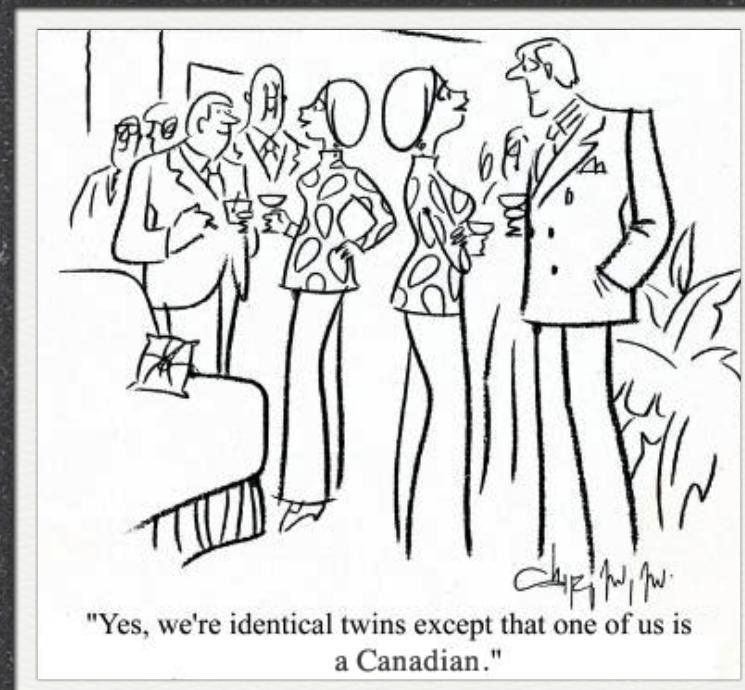
Usability Maxims

Know the user. You are not the user.



Usability Maxims

Things that look the same should act the same.



Usability Maxims

Make the information available in simple, natural, logical ways.



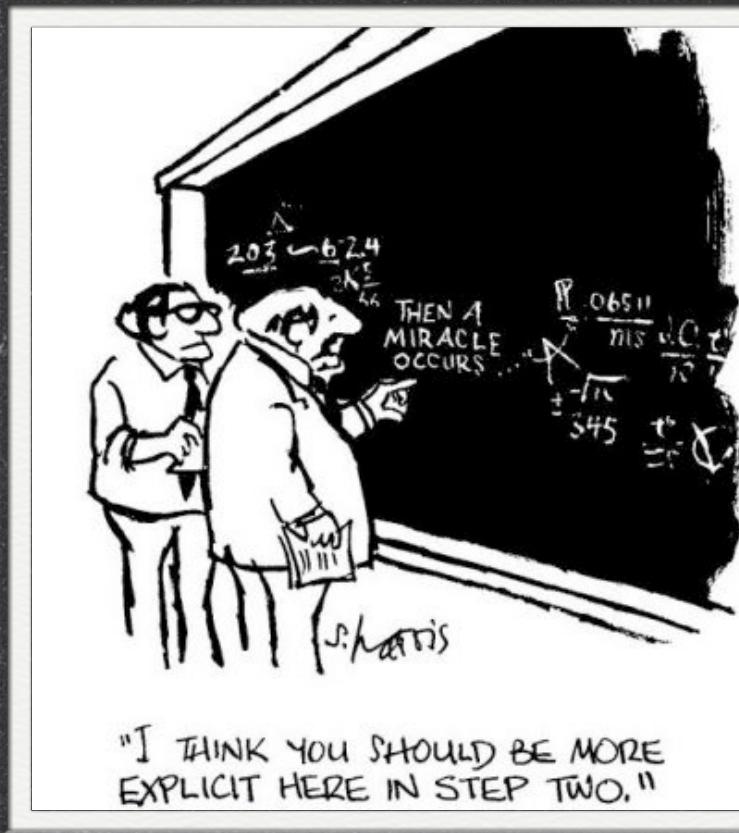
Usability Maxims

Everyone makes mistakes so every mistake should be fixable. Quickly.



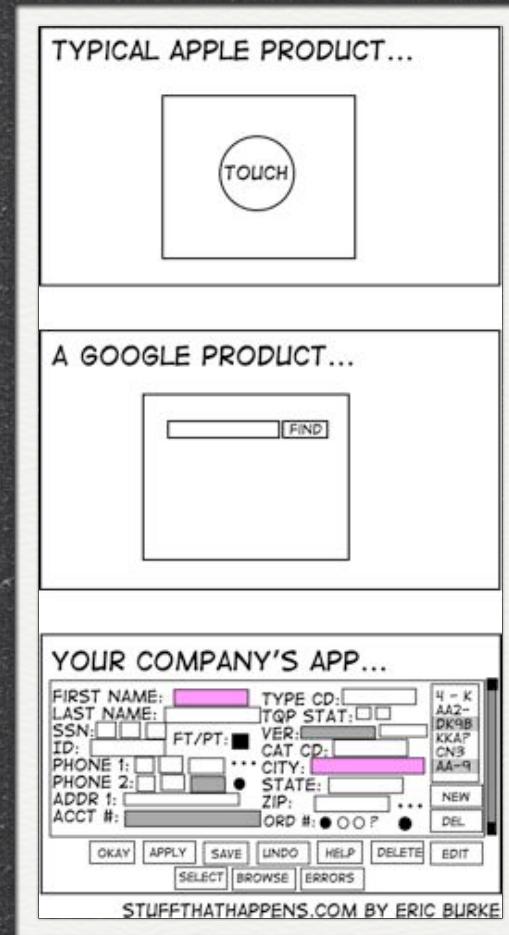
Usability Maxims

The user should always know what's happening.



Usability Maxims

Keep it simple. Don't overload the users' buffers.



Usability Maxims

Eliminate unnecessary decisions and illuminate the rest.

Questions?

Thanks!