# **Chapter 1: Don’t make me think!**

Krug’s FIRST law of usability is “Don’t Make Me Think”:

* + What it is and how to use it should be self-evident. Obvious. Self-explanatory.
  + Users should be able to “get it” without having to put effort into thinking.
  + Goal is to make each page self-evident, so that just by looking at it, the average user will know what it is and how to use it.

The more you make users think:

* + You’re adding more workload to user’s brain.
  + Distract user’s attention from the task at hand.
  + No one likes feeling like they’re not sure of what to do.

But not everything can be make self-evident, but it can be self-explanatory:

* + If you’re doing original or ground-breaking or something very complicated – settle for *self-explanatory.*
  + Self-explanatory means it will take little thought to “get it” but only a little.
  + When a user is stuck, they’re likely to blame themselves and sit through to figure it out rather than leaving.

Why self-evident?

* It makes everything better, it always better to use a site effortlessly than having to puzzle through everything.
* Users don’t spend much time looking at a page as we might think.

# **Chapter 2: How we really use the Web**

We don’t read pages – we scan them:

* + We spend very little time *reading* most Web pages. Instead, we scan for the first *reasonable option* - or *satisficing*
  + We’re usually in a hurry
  + We know we don’t need to read everything
  + We’re good at scanning, we do it on daily basis reading things, and we know it works

We don’t make Optimal choices:

* Most of the time, we *don’t* choose the best option – we choose the *first reasonable option* (satisficing)

We don’t figure out how things work:

* We muddle through without reading instructions
* While mudding through is efficient and may work sometimes, it is error-prone. User may continue muddling through your site until someone builds one that’s better than yours and make user feel smarter using it.

# **Chapter 3: Billboard Design 101**

Create a clear visual hierarchy:

* + The more important something is, the more prominent it is – should be distinctive, outstanding
  + Things that are related logically are also related visually
  + Things are “nested” visually to show what’s part of what.

Stick to conventions:

* + Unless you know you have a better idea and everyone you show it to agrees.
  + They’re very useful – conventions only become conventions if they work
  + Designers are often reluctant to take advantage of them.

Break up pages:

* + Break up pages into clearly defined areas
  + Make obvious what is clickable on a page

Keep the noise down:

* + Keep visual busy-ness, clamoring elements, and background noise to a minimum.

# **Chapter 4: Animal, vegetable, or mineral?**

Krug’s SECOND law of usability:

* + It doesn’t matter how many times we have to click, as long as each is an easy choice.
  + Continued confidence that they’re on the right track is key.

# **Chapter 5: Omit ~~needless~~ words**

Krug’s THIRD law of usability:

* Get rid of half the words on each page, then get rid of half of what’s left
* Remove happy talk – the introductory text that is sociable but content-free
* Eliminate the need for instructions, instead, aim for self-explanatory

# **Chapter 6: Street signs and Breadcrumbs**

People won’t use your web site if they can’t find their way around it

Web Navigation 101:

* + You’re usually trying to find something
  + You decide whether to ask first or browse first:
    - Search is the equivalent of asking – these users will look for a search box immediately
    - If you choose to brose, you make your way through a hierarchy, using signs to guide you
  + If you can’t find what you’re looking for, you’ll leave.

The Web Experience:

* + NO sense of **scale**:
    - unless the site is small, we tend to have very little sense of how big it is
  + NO sense of **direction:**
    - there’s no left and right, no up and down. You may move up and down in the hierarchy – to a more general or more specific level.
  + NO sense of **location**:
    - Unlike physical space, you cannot move around and accumulate knowledge about the site and try to find a shortcut to things.
    - When we want to something on a website, we have to remember where it is in the conceptual hierarchy and retrace our steps
    - Because of this, HOME pages are so important, they act as a fixed place (like a North Star). Being able to click home give you a fresh start.

The purposes of navigation:

* + To help us find what we’re looking for
  + To tell us where we are in the site
  + It gives us something to hold on to – like a handrail, a map
  + It tells us what’s here – it tells us what the site contains
  + It tells us how to use the site – if done right, the navigation will tell you implicitly where to begin and what your options are, or better, it could be all the instructions you need.
  + It gives us confidence in the people who built it

About Navigation:

* + Persistent navigation
    - A set of navigation elements that appear on every page, except the home page and forms.
    - Don’t put more than five utilities – links to important elements not part of the content hierarchy
  + Navigation Tabs
    - An active tab should be a different color and physically connect with space below it so it “pops” to the front
    - Have a tab selected when the user enters the website
  + Every web page needs a name that matches the words clicked to get there
  + Every site should have a clearly identifiable site ID, page name, sections, local navigation, “you are here” indicator, and search box
  + Always avoid stacking underlined text links, as they are hard to read

About Search box:

* No fancy wording, just use “search”
* Make the search box a simple box with no options, but allow limiting the scope of the search on the page of results
* If scoping a search, add the word “for” so it reads like a sentence: “Search \_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_.”

Breadcrumbs:

* Make them small and at the very of a page
* Use “>” between levels as separator, “:” and “/” also work, but “>” seems most self-explanatory
* Boldface the last item
* Should not interfere with the primary navigation
* Don’t use them instead of a page name

# **Chapter 7: The Big Bang Theory of Web Design**

A home should answer:

* What is this?
* What do they have here?
* What can I do here?
* Why should be/stay here?

A Home should show:

* Site hierarchy
  + Give an overview what the site has to offer – both content and features
  + How it’s organized
  + Usually handled by the persistent navigation
* Search – a search box should be display in the homepage
* Teases – hints of the goods inside
* Content promos – highlight the best, or most popular pieces of content
* Feature promos – additional sections of the site or try out features
* Timely content
  + Frequently updated content / most recently updated piece of item
  + Most beneficial for sites that relies on users to constantly check back
  + Shows that site’s is not abandoned if does not rely on users visit
* Deals
* Shortcuts – most frequently requested pieces of content should have their own link
* Registration – if site uses registration, home page must have this for new user
* In addition to the items above, some other objectives that Home should meet are:
  + Show me what I’m looking for
  + Show me what I’m not looking for
  + Show me where to start
  + Establish credibility and trusts
  + Be a business card

Home page navigation and persistent navigation must have the same section names

Consider static lists over pulldown menus, which don’t allow formatting for readability and require scrolling

Use a tagline next to the site ID and a welcome blurb to introduce your site

Welcome blurb:

* A terse description of site
* Displayed in prominent block on the home page, usually at the top left or center of content space
* Should be the first thing that catches your eyes
* Don’t use a corporate mission statement

Tagline:

* Conveys a value proposition, explain exactly what the site does
* Should not be too long, usually 6 to 8 words
* Good tagline is one that no one else in the world could use except you, bad ones will sound generic
* Placed next to site ID
* Some sites don’t need tagline
  + Sites that very famous
  + Sites that are well known from the offline origins

# **Chapter 8: “The Farmer and the Cowman Should Be Friends”**

The cultures:

* Culture of hype:
  + Upper management, marketing and business development
  + Focused on making promises that must be delivered by culture of craft
* Culture of craft:
  + Designers and programmers

The “Average User”:

* Is a myth – DNE
* Don’t design for this person – what works is good, integrated design that fulfill a need

Usability Testing:

* Moves the discussion of what’s right or wrong to what works or what doesn’t work

# **Chapter 9: Usability testing on 10 cents a day**

Focus groups are not usability tests:

* In a focus group:
  + a small group of people (5-8 usually) sit and react to ideas and designs that are shown to them
  + value comes from participants reacting to each other’s opinions
  + good for quickly getting a sampling of users’ opinions and feelings about things
* in a usability test:
  + one user at a time is shown something
  + user is then asked to either:
    1. figure out what it is
    2. try to use it to do a typical task

Truth about testing:

* If you want a great site, you’ve got to test
* Testing one user is 100% better than testing none
* Testing one user early in the project is better than testing 50 near the end
* Recruiting representative users is overrated – “Recruit loosely, and grade on a curve”
* The point of testing is not to prove or disprove something, but to inform your judgement
* Testing is an iterative process
* Nothing beats a live audience reaction

During user test:

* Where?
  + Anywhere that has two chairs and a device to test with
  + Have a camcorder (or screen recorder) to easily share and review the test process
* Who should do the testing?
  + Choose someone who tends to be patient, calm, empathetic, a good listener, and inherently fair.
* Who should observe?
  + It’s a good idea to have everyone – team members, people from market and business development, and any other stakeholders to attend
* What do you test, and when do you test it?
  + Start testing early and test often
  + Before begin designing your site, you should test comparable sites
  + Two types testing:
    1. “Get it” testing: she if users understand the purpose of the site, how it’s organized, etc.
    2. Key task testing: ask user to do something, they watch how well they can do it

Review results:

* Triage:
  + Reviewing the problems people saw and deciding which ones need to be fixed
  + Ignore “Kayak problems” – where user goes astray but gets back on track immediately without any help
  + Resist the impulse to add things
  + Take “new feature” requests lightly
* Don’t agonize over find the perfect solutions – try something else and iterate
* When fixing problem, make sure not to introduce new ones

User test one morning a month

# **Chapter 10: Mobile: It’s not just a city in Alabama anymore**

Mobile web:

* Start considering it
* Handheld or pocket computers that you can carry anywhere and look up anything at anytime
* Has to be as efficient as the site on a desktop
* Phone screens are getting bigger and apps are running more smoothly

Mobile web content:

* Limits the size of web page due to size = less information can fit the whole mobile screen
* Must consists of the main contents
* Trade off – consider which information to leave out from the normal webpage to the mobile web
* Hover is not an option – clue is needed to indicate the affordances

# **Chapter 11: Usability as common courtesy**

Reservoir of Goodwill:

* Think of users as having a reservoir of goodwill
* The reservoir is limited, if you deplete it, users might leave and may not return

About the reservoir:

* It’s idiosyncratic – some people have large reservoir, while others have small
* It’s situational
* You can refill it – if you did something bad to diminish their good will, you can still make it up
* Sometimes a single mistake can empty it

Things that diminish goodwill:

* Hiding information that I want
* Punishing me for not doing things your way
* Asking me for information you don’t really need
* Shucking and jiving me
* Putting sizzle in my way
* Your site looks amateurish

Things that increase goodwill:

* Know the main things that people want to do on your site and make them obvious and easy
* Tell me what I want to know
* Save me steps wherever you can
* Put effort into it
* Know what questions I’m likely to have, and answer them
* Provide me with creature comforts like printer-friendly pages
* Make it easy to recover from errors
* When in doubt, apologize

# **Chapter 12: Accessibility and you**

Design webs not only for average users, but also for people with disabilities

Users with disabilities:

* Design webs not only for the average users, but also for people with disabilities
* If it confuses the average users, it’s almost certain to confuse users with accessibility issues

What designers and developers fear?

* More work
* Compromised design

Five things you can do right now:

* Fix the usability problems that confuse everyone
* Read an article
* Read a book
* Start using CSS
  + Infinitely greater control of formatting
  + Flexible
  + Consistency among browsers
  + Serialize your content
  + Allow your text to resize
* Put your site main content in the order that a screen reader should read it, and use CSS to adjusts its position
* Go for the low-hanging fruit
  + Add appropriate alt text to every image
  + Make your forms work with screen readers
  + Create a “Skip to Main Content” link at the beginning of each page
  + Make all content accessible by keyboard
  + Don’t use JS without a good reason
  + Use client-side (not server-side) image maps

# **Chapter 13: Guide for the perplexed**

Asking for too much personal data can attract false data, or drive people away from submitting anything

“Sizzle” on a web site can get in the way, cause long load times, or just too tacky