

Interaction Design Principles For Web Apps

Idiomatic Design

Idiomatic Design Paradigm

Based on Idiom.

(Based on idea that one simply learns how to operate the UI without being able to deduce how it works).

Idiom

“kicked the bucket” or “bought the farm”

To a native English person it means “to have died”

To a non-native English person it means “to kick over a bucket” or “to purchase a farm”

Idioms are figurative expressions that mean something other than their literal meaning

They must be learned, they cannot be inferred

Idiom

Examples:

“kicked the bucket”

“bought the farm”

“lion’s share”

“pulling my leg”

“out to lunch”

“up the creek without a paddle”

Idiom

Examples:

“beard the lion in his den”

“shame about the boat race”

Idiom

Idioms **cannot** be inferred or intuited.

They only have meaning within the culture that uses them.

They are learned without necessarily understanding the reasoning behind them.

But: claim is that they are easily learned and retained well.

Idiomatic Paradigm

Named after human ability to learn idioms:

“beat around the bush”

Most idioms are not metaphoric –there is no bush
and no-one is beating anything

Example key-stroke and UI gesture Idioms

cntl-alt-del

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double click

right-click

click and drag

resize

Hypertext link is an idiom

Hypertext

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

"Metatext" redirects here. For the literary concept, see [Metafiction](#).

Hypertext is text displayed on a [computer](#) or other electronic device with references ([hyperlinks](#)) to other text that immediately access, usually by a mouse click or keypress sequence. Apart from running text, hypertext may contain other presentational devices. Hypertext is the underlying concept defining the structure of the [World Wide Web](#), a flexible format to share information over the [Internet](#).^[1]

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Newer Multi-touch Idioms

Pinch-zoom

Double-tap

Two-finger-drag

Right Margin Swipe

What new Idioms will touch screen OS's introduce

Right Margin Swipe (e.g. "charms" in Windows 8)

Top to Bottom drag (to close app in Windows 8)

Idioms Easy To Learn

Seems people learn idioms **very quickly** and retain them well.

The easy recognition of idiom is the basis of much product branding.

Was it metaphor that made the Mac trash can easy to learn or was it really just a good idiom?

Idiomatic GUI Strength

Window close boxes, resizable windows, infinitely nested file folders, clicking and dragging...

Proves the power and potential of idioms.

Above examples often miss-labeled as metaphors –but don't have a real world counterpart

The Future

Was Microsoft Window's 8 Interface signaling the end of the “Window” and “Desktop” metaphor?

Where they intentionally trying to abandon the methaphor



Window's 10 brought it back?

Windows 8

Gone:

- Overlapping documents on a desk –instead apps that take over the whole screen
- Not Closing app –instead simply go on to the next app
- Will this become a dangerous metaphor for "real life"?



Idiomatic Design

Idiomatic Design suggests we make web apps with controls that are **easy to learn**, and not necessarily worry about whether they can be intuited.

The controls don't have to resemble something we are familiar with.

Suggests the power lies in our ability to learn and retain well.