

What role or relevance does a successful alignment of user and developer mental models play in the usability (or not) of skeuomorphic user interface designs?

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On mental models

A **mental model** is an explanation of someone's thought process about how something works in the real world. It is a representation of the surrounding world, the relationships between its various parts and a person's intuitive perception about his or her own acts and their consequences. **Mental models** can help shape behaviour and set an approach to solving problems (akin to a personal algorithm) and doing tasks.

On Usability

Since then, there has been much discussion and use of the idea in **human-computer interaction** and **usability** by researchers including Donald Norman and Steve Krug (in his book *Don't Make Me Think*). Walter Kintsch and Teun A. van Dijk, using the term *situation model* (in their book *Strategies of Discourse Comprehension*, 1983), showed the relevance of mental models for the production and comprehension of discourse.

Skeuomorph

A skeuomorph [/ˈskjuːəməɹf/](#) [[skyoo-uh-mawrf](#)], or skeuomorphism (Greek: skeuos—vessel or tool, morphe—shape) is when a product imitates design elements functionally necessary in the original product design, but that becomes ornamental in the new product design.[1]

Skeuomorphs may be deliberately employed to make the new look comfortably old and familiar,[2] for example when fabric upholstery is replaced with vinyl and includes simulated cloth stitching.[3] An alternative definition is "an element of design or structure that serves little or no purpose in the artifact fashioned from the new material but was essential to the object made from the original material".[4] This definition is narrower in scope and ties skeuomorphs to changes in materials.

Many computer programs have a **skeuomorphic** graphical user interface that emulates objects in the physical world.

What it is not?

<http://sachagreif.com/what-skeuomorphism-is-and-isnt/>

It is bad and misses the point of usability

<http://www.macrumors.com/2012/09/11/apples-designers-clashing-over-tacky-software-skeuomorphisms/>

More than necessary

<http://www.fastcodesign.com/1670760/will-apples-tacky-software-design-philosophy-cause-a-revolt>

Misses the point of good skeuomorphism

<http://www.imore.com/its-not-about-html-or-skeuomorphism-its-about-usability>

What is it ?

<http://sachagreif.com/what-skeuomorphism-is-and-isnt/>

Some good stuff

<http://www.neowin.net/news/skeuomorphic-design-apple-vs-good-ux>

Some more good stuff

<http://webdesign.tutsplus.com/articles/design-theory/skeuomorphism-in-interface-design/>

How can it become useful ?

<http://sachagreif.com/what-skeuomorphism-is-and-isnt/>

Another way Attractive vs Ugly and fun

<http://tobiasahlin.com/blog/skeuomorphism-and-storytelling/>

What to do with it?