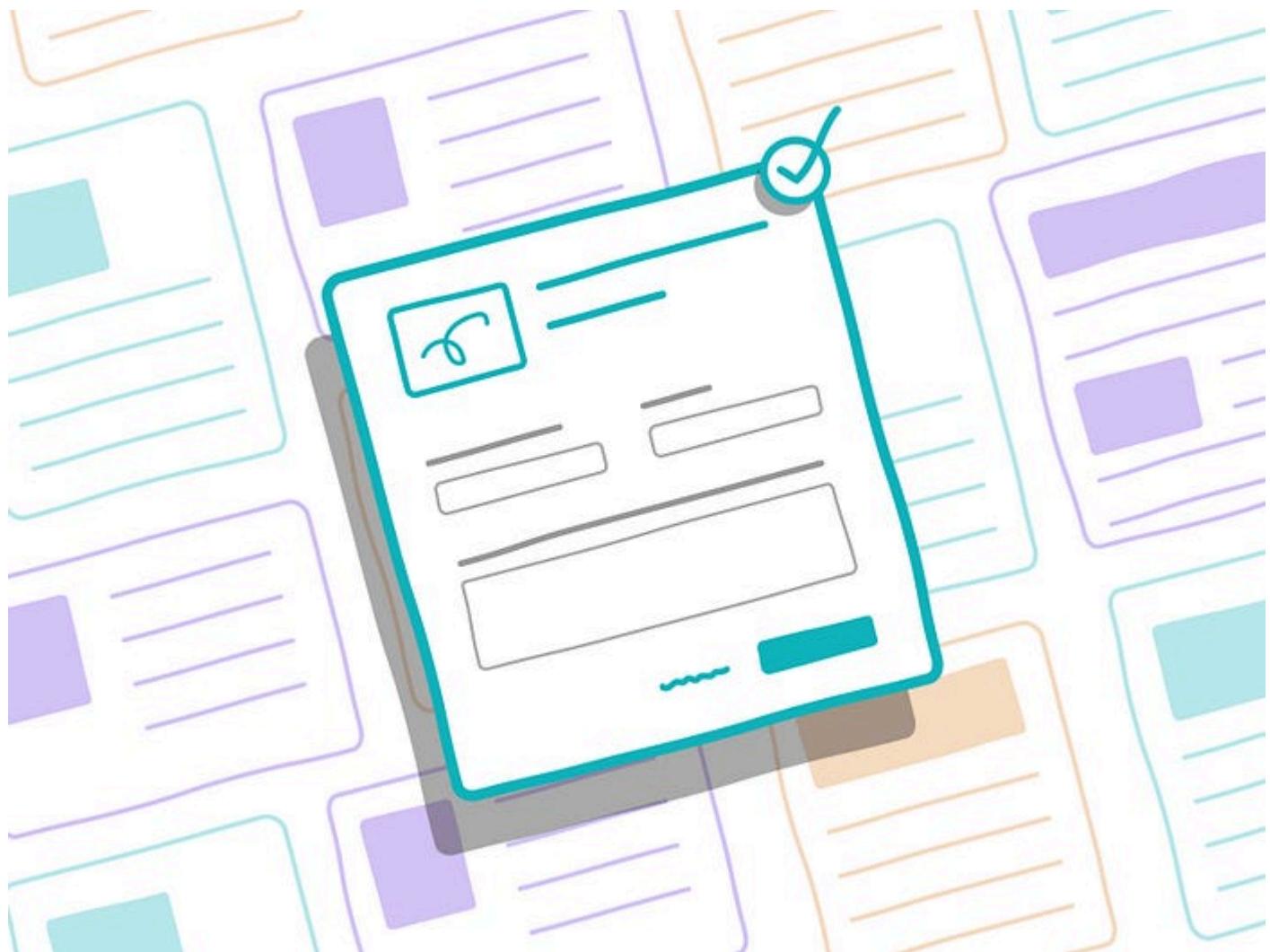


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# The UX behind designing better forms

Forms are omnipresent on the internet these days. We all come across them, be it before purchasing items, signing up for subscriptions...

**Charmie Kapoor**[Follow](#)

 UX Collective a11y-light ~7 min read · May 5, 2018 (Updated: June 26, 2018) · Free: Yes

Forms are omnipresent on the internet these days. We all come across them, be it before purchasing items, signing up for subscriptions, social networking or joining a discussion forum. It's hardly an overstatement that they're an indispensable element for information sharing today.

complicated and sometimes get too personal.

Well, let's see how this humdrum experience can be made more intuitive and effortless for the users.

*Before we dive in, I should caveat that while most of these guidelines are based on experiments and statistically valid data, they shouldn't be considered as the ultimate truth. Forms are highly-contextual design elements and depend on more than just these guidelines to increase conversions. With that said, let's jump in.*

We'll be working on revamping this rudimentary TV subscription form in the next 10 steps 

Start your TV Show subscription

!!! Form could not be submitted. There is one error in the form !!!

Please input name	<input type="text"/> Write name and surname	(compulsory)	Some of my favorite TV shows
I am a	<input type="text"/> Gender	(compulsory)	<input type="text"/>
Write email id	<input type="text"/>	(compulsory)	
Type it again	<input type="text"/>	(compulsory)	
My password is	<input type="text"/>	(compulsory)	
Write your Date of birth	<input type="text"/>	(compulsory)	
Email id again	<input type="text"/>	(compulsory)	Phone no. <input type="text"/>
			Mobile No. <input type="text"/>

Ok     Cancel

Sample form design

## 1. Align the sections

efficient, effective scanning and limiting errors or missed fields.

Various approaches can be taken to organise content, but let's look into just the text arrangements. Have a look at these 4 options which have center, left , right and top-left aligned elements.

Please input name	<input type="text"/> Write name and surname (compulsory)	Please input name	<input type="text"/> Write name and surname (compulsory)
I am a	<input type="text"/> Gender (compulsory)	I am a	<input type="text"/> Gender (compulsory)
Write email id	<input type="text"/> (compulsory)	Write email id	<input type="text"/> (compulsory)
Type it again	<input type="text"/> (compulsory)	Type it again	<input type="text"/> (compulsory)
My password is	<input type="text"/> (compulsory)	My password is	<input type="text"/> (compulsory)
Write your Date of birth	<input type="text"/> (compulsory)	Write your Date of birth	<input type="text"/> (compulsory)
Email id again	<input type="text"/> (compulsory)	Email id again	<input type="text"/> (compulsory)

Please input name	<input type="text"/> Write name and surname (compulsory)	Please input name	<input type="text"/> Write name and surname (compulsory)
I am a	<input type="text"/> Gender (compulsory)	I am a	<input type="text"/> Gender (compulsory)
Write email id	<input type="text"/> (compulsory)	Write email id	<input type="text"/> (compulsory)
Type it again	<input type="text"/> (compulsory)	Type it again	<input type="text"/> (compulsory)
My password is	<input type="text"/> (compulsory)	My password is	<input type="text"/> (compulsory)
Write your Date of birth	<input type="text"/> (compulsory)	Write your Date of birth	<input type="text"/> (compulsory)
Email id again	<input type="text"/> (compulsory)	Email id again	<input type="text"/> (compulsory)

Basically, having the label text as close to the input field makes the grouping more relatable. It is easier to associate them due to their proximity. So the top-left aligned labels work pretty well in this case. It has upper edge as it required fewer '*visual fixations*', helping the viewer scan the form in one go.



<https://www.ventureharbour.com/form-design-best-practices/>

## 2. Group related fields

Grouping information into chunks is an easy way to highlight association. If the form has more than six fields, it is recommended to group them into logical sections. These steps are even more emphasised if each section is given their respective header, and are neatly arranged in a top-down order.

The form is divided into three main sections:

- 1. Personal Information** (top left):
  - Please input first name
  - Please input last name
  - I am a
  - Write your Date of birth
- 3. Interests** (center):
  - Some of my favorite TV shows
- 1. Personal Information** (top right):
  - Please input first name (compulsory)
  - Please input last name (compulsory)
  - I am a Gender (compulsory)
  - Write your Date of birth (compulsory)
- 2. Contact Information** (bottom left):
  - Write email id
  - My password is (compulsory)
- 2. Contact Information** (bottom right):
  - Phone no.
  - Mobile No.
- 3. Interests** (bottom center):
  - Some of my favorite TV shows

At the bottom right are two buttons: a red **X DON'T** button and a green **✓ DO** button.

### ⚠ Tip

Don't forget to provide a good amount of breathing space (padding/ distance) between the individual sections to distinguish them.

### 3. Write clear labels

Using succinct and crisp labels. It helps the user understand what information is required in one glance. Avoid using complete sentences to explain simple questions, just one or two words generally suffice.

The image shows two side-by-side registration forms for comparison.

**Left Form (DON'T):**

- 1. Personal Information:**
  - My first name is  (compulsory)
  - My last name is  (compulsory)
  - I am a  Gender  (compulsory)
  - My date of birth is  (compulsory)
- 2. Contact Information:**
  - My email id is  (compulsory)
  - My password is  (compulsory)
  - My phone no. is  (compulsory)
  - My mobile No. is
- 3. Interests:**
  - Some of my favorite TV shows

**X DON'T**

**Right Form (DO):**

- 1. Personal Information:**
  - First Name  (compulsory)
  - Last Name  (compulsory)
  - Gender  Gender  (compulsory)
  - Date of birth  (compulsory)
- 2. Contact Information:**
  - Email id  (compulsory)
  - Password  (compulsory)
  - Phone no.  (compulsory)
  - Mobile No.
- 3. Interests:**
  - Pick your favorite TV shows

**✓ DO**

### 4. Input field format

Don't make the user guess the input the information format. It's considered a good practice to design the input fields in a customised manner, which explicitly shows how the information is to be fed in. Even short help messages (like password setting guidelines) mentioned clearly next to the input box reduce errors while form filling.

The image shows two side-by-side registration forms for comparison.

**Left Form (DON'T):**

- 1. Personal Information:**
  - First Name  (compulsory)
  - Last Name  (compulsory)
  - Gender  (compulsory)
  - Date of birth  (compulsory)
- 2. Contact Information:**
  - Email id  (compulsory)
  - Password  (compulsory)
  - Phone no.  (compulsory)
  - Mobile No.
- 3. Interests:**
  - Favorite TV shows

**X DON'T**

**Right Form (DO):**

- 1. Personal Information:**
  - First Name  (compulsory)
  - Last Name  (compulsory)
  - Gender  Male  Female  Other (compulsory)
  - Date of birth  DD / MM / YYYY (compulsory)
- 2. Contact Information:**
  - Email id  (compulsory)
  - Password  (compulsory)
  - Phone no.  (compulsory)
  - Mobile No.  +91
- 3. Interests:**
  - Favorite TV shows

**✓ DO**

solid white while the borders are made subtler.

Email id

(compulsory)

Email id

(compulsory)

Phone no.

(compulsory)

Phone no.

(compulsory)

BEFORE
AFTER

## 5. Adding visual cues

Generally users find it tough to answer questions in which they have to manually type in the input. Giving a few suggestions upfront is a good way to get their thoughts running. And representing these options with additional visual cues can turn out to be even better, as it requires minimal cognitive load and provides a direction of thought.

**1. Personal Information**

First Name  (compulsory)

Last Name  (compulsory)

Gender  Male  Female  Other (compulsory)

Date of birth  (compulsory)

**1. Personal Information**

First Name  (compulsory)

Last Name  (compulsory)

Gender  Male  Female  Other (compulsory)

Date of birth  (compulsory)

**2. Contact Information**

Email id  (compulsory)

Password  (compulsory)

Mobile No.  +91

**2. Contact Information**

Email id  (compulsory)

Password  (compulsory)

Mobile No.  +91

**3. Interests**

Favorite TV shows

Game of thrones, Suits, Riverdale etc.

**3. Interests**

Pick your favorite TV shows

Not enough options? Tell us what you love..

X DON'T ✓ DO

## 6. Optional vs compulsory

ones in words. Also, make sure to align this text next to the top label, and not the input field.

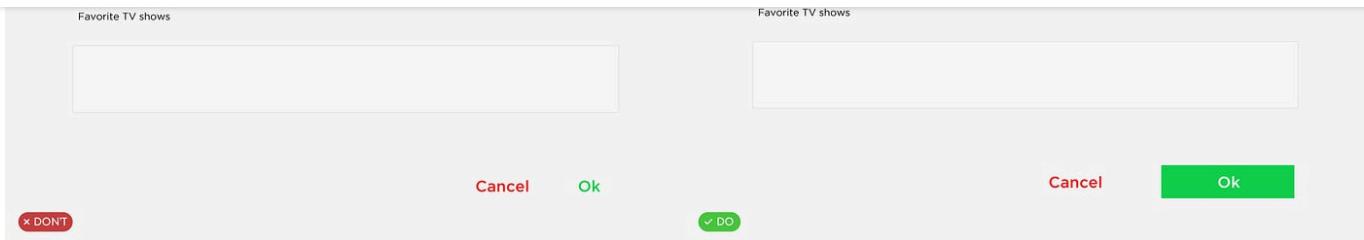
The image displays two versions of a user registration form. Both versions include sections for Personal Information, Contact Information, and Interests. In the 'DON'T' version (left), labels are positioned above the input fields, and there is a red 'X DONT' button at the bottom. In the 'DO' version (right), labels are placed directly next to their respective input fields, and there is a green checkmark 'DO' button at the bottom. The 'Interests' section contains a list of TV show icons for users to select from.

## 7. CTA conversion

Now that the form looks pretty neat, let's concentrate on the call to actions. Most forms will have at least two call to actions — proceed and cancel. Here, submitting the form is definitely more important, hence it is the primary CTA, whereas cancel the Secondary one. Prominence must be given to these accordingly depending on their significance.

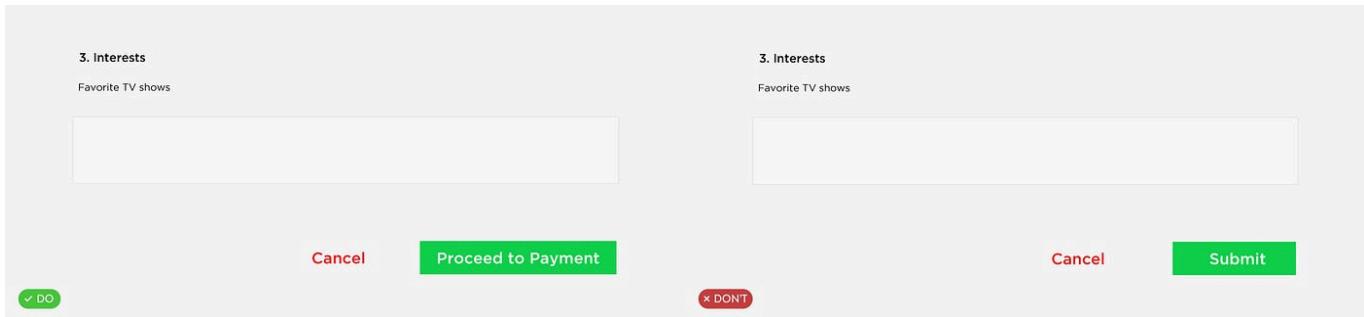
CTAs can either look like a solid rectangular button, or a text link. Depending on your use case, make sure that only ONE of them is the prominent one.

The image shows two versions of a modal dialog box. Both versions have a '3. Interests' header and a 'Favorite TV shows' label. The left version has a small red 'Cancel' button and a larger green 'Ok' button. The right version has a large red 'Cancel' button and a small green 'Ok' button. A red 'X DONT' button is located at the bottom left of the dialog box.



## 8. Tailor your CTA

The most effective CTAs work because they offer a clear value proposition. They exactly mention what's going to happen once you hit on the button. This clarity is essential for great CTAs, and can go a long way in making the design more compelling and trustworthy.



## 9. Validate the form

Generally speaking there are three important messages that a good form validation should convey to the user:

- **An error has occurred.** Display clearly that there is an error in the form, preferably using a red color signal to attract attention
- **Where the error occurred:** Highlighting the fields that caused the error
- **How the error can be repaired:** Provide information on what needs to be different in order for the field to validate

All these have one clear goal: to avoid confusion. To minimise drop-outs, make sure to create validation that eliminates any risk of customers being confused.

The image shows a comparison between two UI designs for a user registration form. The left design, labeled 'DON'T', has a dark background and uses red for error highlighting. The right design, labeled 'DO', has a light background and uses green for success highlights. Both designs include fields for First Name, Last Name, Gender, Date of Birth, Email address, Password, Telephone, and Mobile number. The 'Interests' section features a grid of TV show icons for selection.

## 10. Use colors efficiently

Colors can be cleverly used to direct the user's attention, and add an aesthetic appeal to the design. The trick is to stick to not more than 2 main colors in the page. Just make sure to use them wisely, keeping the main goal of the form in mind.

The image shows a comparison between two UI designs for a payment form. The left design, labeled 'DON'T', has a dark background and uses red for error highlighting. The right design, labeled 'DO', has a light background and uses green for success highlights. Both designs include fields for First Name, Last Name, Gender, Date of Birth, Email address, Password, Telephone, and Mobile number. The 'Interests' section features a grid of TV show icons for selection. At the bottom, there are 'Cancel' and 'Proceed to payment' buttons, along with a 'DON'T' and 'DO' comparison bar.

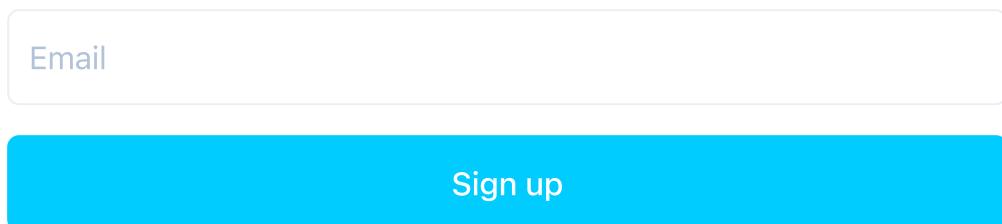
**Alright then! We've come to the end of this form revamp.**

Using the most basic of design principles, a simple form can easily be made more engaging, aesthetic and usable. Do have a look at the drastic difference between the before and after. 😲

The form could not be submitted. There is one error in the form.

Please input name	<input type="text"/> Write name and surname <span>(compulsory)</span>	Some of my favorite TV shows	<input type="text"/>
I am a	<input type="text"/> Gender <span>(compulsory)</span>	First Name	
Write email id	<input type="text"/> <span>(compulsory)</span>	<input type="text"/> Charmie	Last Name
Type it again	<input type="text"/> <span>(compulsory)</span>	<input type="radio"/> Male <input checked="" type="radio"/> Female <input type="radio"/> Other	
My password is	<input type="text"/> <span>(compulsory)</span>	Date of Birth	
Write your Date of birth	<input type="text"/> <span>(compulsory)</span>	30/05/1995 <input type="button" value=""/>	
Email id again	<input type="text"/> <span>(compulsory)</span>	2. Contact Information	
Phone no.	<input type="text"/> <span>(compulsory)</span>	* Email address	<input type="text"/> charmie@gmail.com
Mobile No.	<input type="text"/>	* Telephone	<input type="text"/> 040-11119999
<input type="button" value="Ok"/> <input type="button" value="Cancel"/>		* Password	<input type="text"/> <small>(Should contain / symbol)</small>
		Mobile <small>(optional)</small>	<input type="text"/> +91
		3. Interests	
		Pick your favorite shows	
		Suits	
		<input type="button" value="Cancel"/>	<input type="button" value="Proceed to payment"/>

Thanks for reading guys! Hope this was helpful. 😊 Also, do let me know if there are any particular elements or patterns you'd like to learn about.



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