

Section 3 Action Summary

Section summary and checklist of the 4 action items

ONE-LINE SUMMARY OF THIS SECTION

Ensure there is adequate contrast between the color of every single information-bearing element and its background.

BEST PRACTICE

01



Determine which UI elements need which levels of color contrast by categorizing them into two groups: (1) information-bearing elements, and (2) decorative and disabled elements.

BEST PRACTICE

02



Exceed (or meet) the minimum color contrast requirements.



For Decorative and Disabled Elements: there is no color contrast requirement.



For Information-Bearing Elements: at least 4.5:1. An exception is made for some elements, and for these the minimum drops to 3:1. They include:

- **Large Text (or images of text):** 14pt bold+ or 18pt reg+
- **UI Controls:** any visual information provided that is necessary for a user to identify that a control is present and how to operate it. This includes (1) Non-text indicators such as the check in a checkbox, or an arrow icon indicating a dropdown menu, and (2) the control's various states (selected, focused, etc.), except for the disabled state.
- **Graphical Objects:** parts of graphics required to understand the content.

Advice: Don't aim for the minimums, aim to exceed them.

BEST PRACTICE

03



Avoid problematic color combinations, such as:

- Red & Green (the biggest one to avoid)
- Green & Brown
- Green & Blue
- Green & Gray
- Green & Black
- Blue & Gray
- Blue & Purple

**BEST
PRACTICE**

04

- Or, if your design truly calls for using problematic colors next to each other, really make sure there is a high contrast ratio between the two. Darken one color and lighten the other to make the contrast more pronounced, or play with the saturation, or slide the hues a little one way or another.
-

- Check the contrast of your colors as you are designing, not once you're all done.
 - Manually checking the colors as you're picking them out will train your eye to recognize which colors pass and which don't, just by looking at a UI design.
 - And when you're in the habit of checking each new color you pick out, you're less likely to miss checking a color.

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Section 4 Action Summary

Section summary and checklist of the 10 action items

ONE-LINE SUMMARY OF THIS SECTION

Ensure that color is not used as the *only* visual means of conveying information, indicating an action, prompting a response, or distinguishing a visual element. You can still use color and color-coding, just not as the *sole* means of differentiating multiple things.

BEST PRACTICE

01

Check for color independence as you're designing, and do so by using the grayscale test.

Turn the design grayscale, then ask yourself and/or others with fresh eyes, "Is there anything that you can't identify, or tell the difference between, with the hues gone?".

Why? If you wait until the end of the project to check for color independence, you may run into a domino-effect that bloats the effort of fixing the issues, and/or it might be too late to make the needed changes and still meet the project deadline or stay within budget. The grayscale test simulates complete color-blindness (the worst form of a color deficiency in the vision) and allows you to design for that worst-case scenario from the beginning of your design process.

BEST PRACTICE

02

For error message styling: Indicate errors by adding/changing something structural (e.g. add an icon, indent/offset the field) as opposed to swapping a current color (e.g. gray field border changes to red).

- **Tip 1:** Work in black-and-white first (don't add any red until you're done). *Why? This will ensure we don't rely on color to visually convey that there is an error.*
- **Tip 2:** Use a thicker border around the field with an error. *Why? If the border is red, but not structurally different in any other way, the design will be reliant on color to convey meaning.*
- **Tip 3:** Place the error message and any helper text below the field label and above the input field (and ensure the error message includes instructions on HOW the user can fix/get out of the error). *Why? This way screen readers will read the error message or helper text before getting to the input field.*

- **Tip 4:** Use line, shape, or iconography to call visual attention to the area of the error message. *Why? We can't rely on color to make the error visually obvious, so we need to add something else to do the job.*

①

Signup

Email

An account is already associated with that email.

Password

Must be 8+ characters and include a number.

Sign Up



Signup

Email

An account is already associated with that email.

Password

Must be 8+ characters and include a number.

Sign Up

②

Signup

Email

⚠ An account is already associated with that email.

Password

Must be 8+ characters and include a number.

Sign Up

③

Signup

Email

⚠ An account is already associated with that email.
[Login here](#) or specify another email.

Password

Must be 8+ characters and include a number.

Sign Up

Put the error message and any helper text directly below the field label so screen readers will read them before getting to the corresponding input field.

④

Signup

Email
⚠ An account is already associated with that email.
[Login here](#) or specify another email.

Password
Must be 8+ characters and include a number.

Sign Up

Now the icon looks weird placed there.

⑤

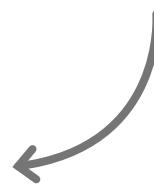
Signup

Email
An account is already associated with that email.
[Login here](#) or specify another email.

Password
Must be 8+ characters and include a number.

Sign Up

The icon was removed and a red vertical line was added.



Signup

Email
An account is already associated with that email.
[Login here](#) or specify another email.

Password
Must be 8+ characters and include a number.

Sign Up

Now when turned grayscale, we see the error state is now distinguishable even if you couldn't see color. This passes.

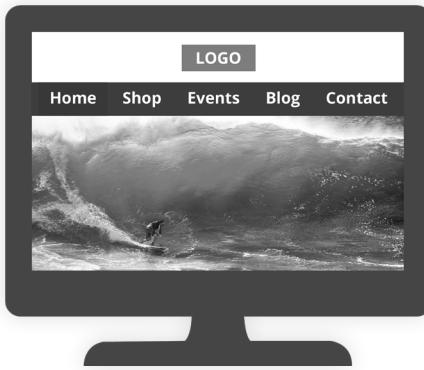
BEST
PRACTICE
O3

For current menu items (and other “selected” states): Style the currently selected menu item with a color independent indicator (not just a color change), or use relative luminance.

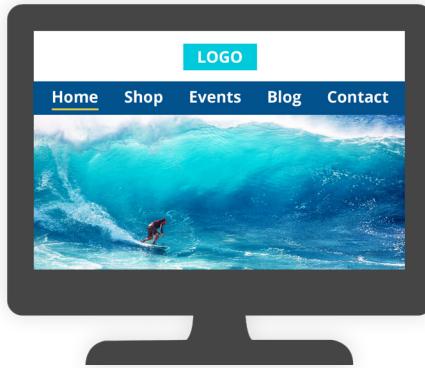
- **Tip:** Turn your design grayscale. Is the current menu item still as clearly distinguishable as before? It should be. *Why? Usability for all. The current/selected item should be distinguishable by everyone, even those with vision impairments.*
- **Preferred method:** Use a non-color indicator such as shape, line, text treatment, size, etc., instead of changing only its color. Note 1: This can be done *in addition* to a color change. Note 2: Single-pixel underlines are not sufficient. *Why? A non-color indicator creates a current state that's visible by all and more usable for all.*
- **Alternative method:** Use relative luminance (where the currently selected state has a minimum 3:1 contrast ratio with the non-selected state of the other menu items). *Why? This heightened contrast between the currently selected and not-selected items will make their difference more visible, even in grayscale.*



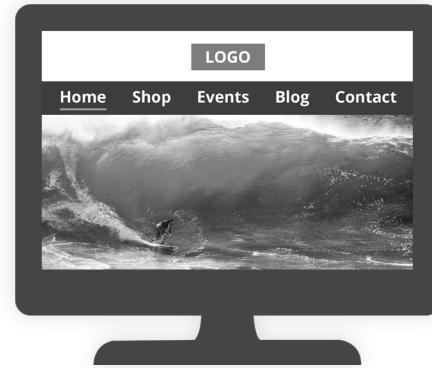
Fail (in color).



Fail (in grayscale).



Pass (in color).

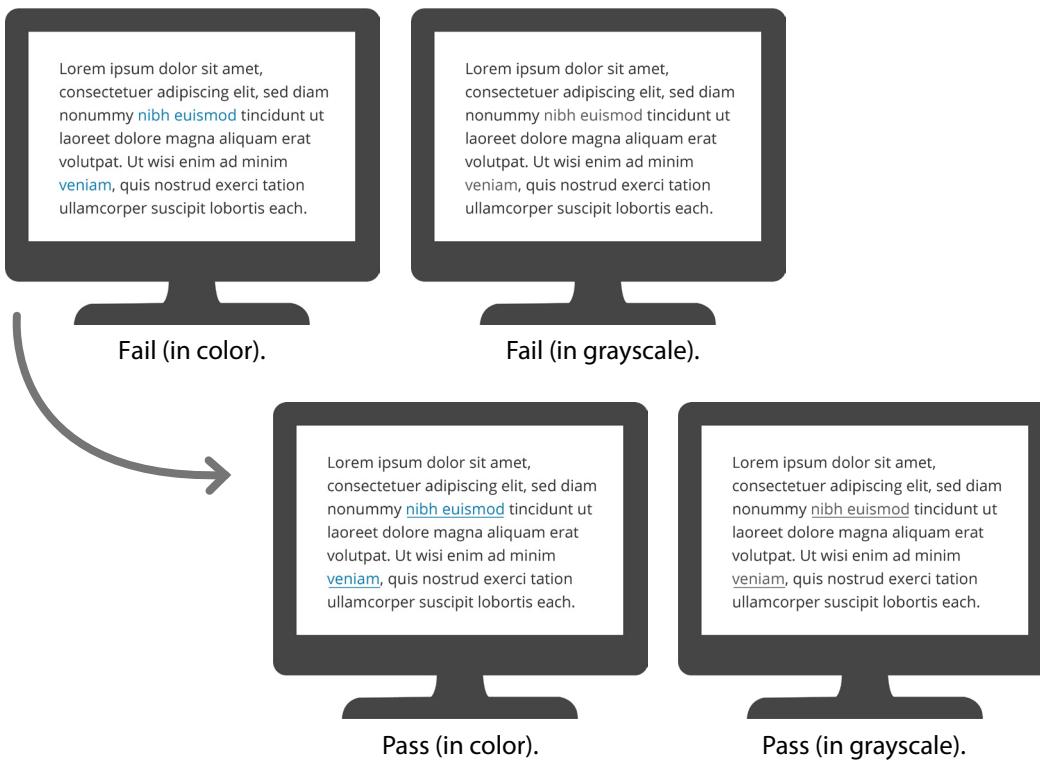


Pass (in grayscale).

For links that have surrounding text, underline them; for links that are standalone, use bold.

Tips for links surrounded by other text:

- **Tip 1:** Turn the design grayscale. Are the links obvious or do they blend in with the non-clickable text? They should be obvious
Why? Some users explore by clicking on everything, others simply look and scroll. We can't expect everyone to click around as they explore, so by making interactive elements obvious at a glance the interface is easier and quicker to use.
- **Tip 2:** Don't want to underline all links that are surrounded by other text? Alternative #1: Use bold or some other non-color-related text styling that's obvious. Alternative #2: Use relative luminance (where the link color has a minimum 3:1 contrast ratio with the surrounding text color, and both have a minimum 4.5:1 contrast ratio with the background color, and the text links acquire an underline or other text styling on hover and a different styling on keyboard focus). *Why? An underline is the best method, but these alternatives help color-blind users, or those with vision impairments (even situational ones) identify the text that's clickable within a block of text.*
- **Tip 3:** Use text styling (aka text decoration), such as underline, *in addition* to relative luminance (plus an underline on hover and focus) for even better accessibility, and usability for all.



BEST
PRACTICE
05

For progress trackers / progress indicators (and other similar UI elements): Start by designing all three states for the steps in a progress tracker (past, current, and future) in one shade to avoid using color to convey meaning, and then make them visually unique using non-color styling, and finally add color as the secondary visual cue.

Deeper perspective: The point of a progress tracker is to offer a big picture view (situational awareness). If some steps are faint colored or disabled-looking then it's offering only a partial view, nulling the overarching benefit of displaying a progress tracker.

Helpful mindset: "If it's too light for everyone to see, then some people aren't seeing it. If it looks like it's not there, then it might as well not be there, so just delete it. Don't want to delete it? Then make it more contrasting."

- **Step 1:** Make everything one color (like black or dark gray) and don't change the color at all until you're done with the structure.



- **Step 2:** Design 3 distinct states: Past, Current, Future. Style each to be visually different from the other two, without using color.

Styling ideas for your inspiration:

- Future steps: hollow-fill (vs. the others that have a solid fill).



- Future steps: A dotted or dashed stroke around the (hollow) circle.
- Past steps: Use a checkmark in place of the step number.



- Current step: A thick line under the step label.
- Current step: A down-pointing arrow below the step label, or attached to the bottom of the circle.



- Current step: Add a second ring/outline around the circle.



- Any steps: Change the size of the circles.
- Any steps: Change the shape of the circles — hexagons, squares, etc. (ensure the new shape is in-line with the brand's personality).
- Any steps: A hollow-fill, with varying thicknesses for the stroke.



- **Step 3:** Add enhancements to further differentiate the 3 states.

Such as:

- Change the font weight (one example: regular for Past and Future, and extra bold for current).
- If each step is clickable, make them look clickable, such as underlining the step labels (Note: in the code, the distance between the text and its underline can be increased, which improves readability).
- Make the connector line thicker between the Past and Current steps.
- Make the connector line from the Current step to all the Future steps dotted or dashed.

- **Step 4:** Finish by designing it with color! (Don't forget to test the colors' contrast ratios with their background colors.)

Example 1 (on a light background):



Example 2 (on a dark background):



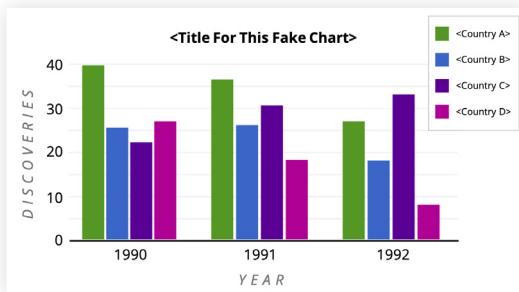
BEST
PRACTICE

06

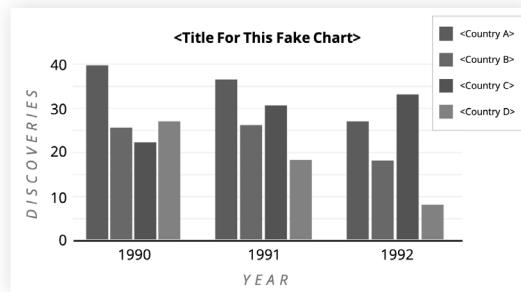


For bar charts (and other similar data visualizations): Use pattern fills for bar charts and other similar data visualizations.

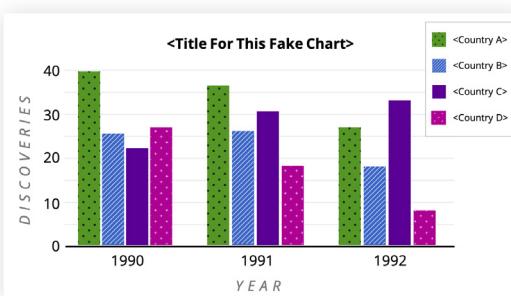
- **Step 1:** Look at your chart in grayscale and see if you can still interpret the data. *Why? This will show you what areas of your chart need differentiating.*
- **Step 2:** Use different pattern fills (when there is an area large enough for a pattern fill to be seen), which can be done in addition to using color. Make sure the color of each pattern has a 3:1 (or greater) contrast ratio with the background color of its bar. *Why? This way it will not matter which colors a person is unable to tell apart (e.g. red-green, blue-yellow, brown-orange) – they can rely on the different patterns to differentiate the bars from one another, and correlate each patterned bar to its corresponding pattern in the legend (don't forget to add the patterns to the legend too!)*
- **Step 3:** After adding patterns, turn the chart grayscale again. Can you clearly tell which bar corresponds to which legend item? If you can't quickly tell the differences, people with vision impairments won't be able to either. You may need to pick different patterns. *Why? Sometimes patterns that are too lightweight or too heavy will need to be swapped for a different pattern that looks more (1) identifiable, and (2) unique from the other patterns used.*



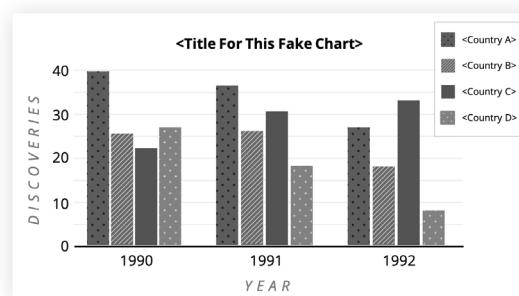
Fail (in color).



Fail (in grayscale).



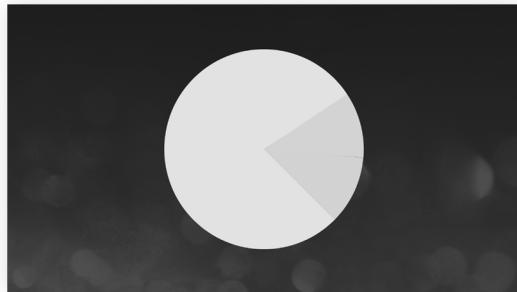
Pass (in color).



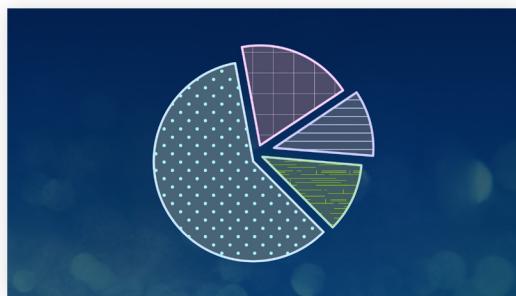
Pass (in grayscale).



Fail (in color).



Fail (in grayscale).



Pass (in color).



Pass (in grayscale).

BEST
PRACTICE

07

For data visualizations: Use interactivity in data visualizations to allow users to pinpoint specific numbers, and to view individual graph elements isolated.

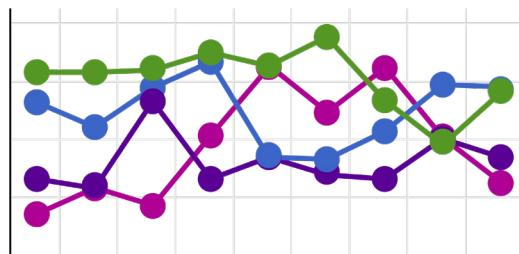
- **Use interactivity to allow users to click/tap/hover on individual data points (bar, node, region) and get its exact value (number, label).** Or for simple data visualizations, display the value next to each data point by default. *Why? Certain areas are likely to call viewers' attention and they will want to know the exact value for that area. Also, this is an accessible alternative for graphs that use a pale grid in the background that's too faint to be contrast compliant (the grid is used to line up the top of each bar or point on each line with the values on one or more axes).*
- **Use interactivity to show a line/area/region isolated on click/tap/hover.** *Why? This makes it easier to see individual parts of the data viz without the "visual background noise" of other data elements that may be overlapping or difficult to distinguish.*

BEST
PRACTICE
08

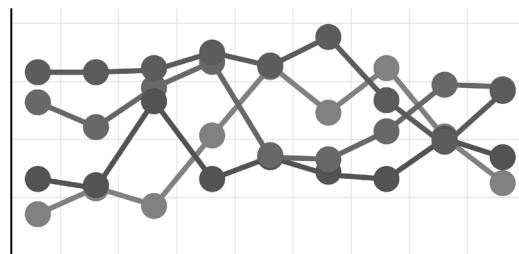


For line graphs (and other similar data visualizations): Use dashed/dotted line styles, and/or varying line widths, for line graphs and other similar data visualizations.

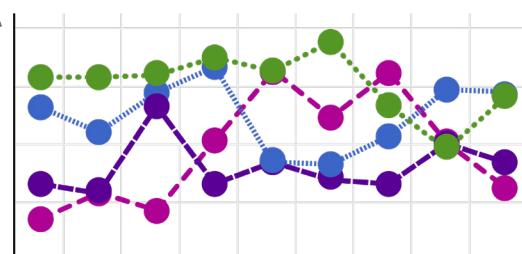
- **Use different dashed/dotted line styles, and/or line widths, for line graphs.** Different line widths work when there is a limited number of lines in the chart allowing for the line widths to be obviously different from one another. Don't forget to apply the same line styles in the legend. *Why? The line styles are what people with vision-impairments can rely on to differentiate the lines from each other and correlate each line to an item in the legend.*
- **Still use color-coding for the lines (in addition to the dashed/dotted line styles).** *Why? This helps those who CAN perceive colors (full colors or even just shades).*
- **Before deeming your graph “finished”, turn it grayscale and have someone who has never seen the graph before look at it.** Can they tell the lines apart, correlate each one to the right legend item, and overall interpret the data? If not, ask what they had a hard time with (remembering that usability and accessibility issues are the chart’s fault, not the viewer’s). You may need to use different line styles that are (1) quick to identify at the size they are scaled to, and (2) more unique from the other line styles.



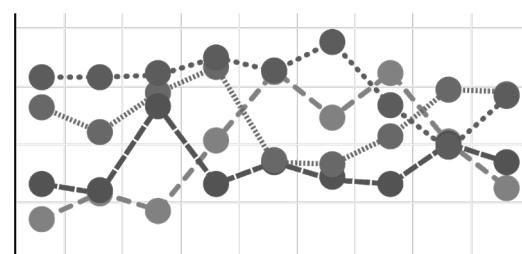
Fail (in color).



Fail (in grayscale).



Pass (in color).



Pass (in grayscale).

BEST
PRACTICE

09

- For data visualizations:** Use other non-color indicators, like shapes, labels, or icons, to make data visualizations color independent (when pattern fills or line styles are not feasible).
 - **Use different shapes for graph elements.** Such as the points on lines in line graphs, nodes in node graphs, bubbles in bubble charts, or rectangles in org charts, gantt charts, or bar/column charts. Think beyond primary shapes. For example, think about how many variations you can make from a rectangle — one clipped corner, one rounded corner, a column with a picket fence top, scalloped top, triangle top.
 - **Add labels (or icons with a legend) on the data viz when possible.** Such as next to each line, pointing to each pie slice, or hovering over each bar. These can be visible by default for simple data visualizations, or triggered on hover/click for more data-heavy visualizations.
-

BEST
PRACTICE

10

- For any colored UI elements:** Combine multiple color independence tactics for a more failproof design that's more usable for all.

For example, you could combine **all** of these tactics:

 - **Non-color styling:** e.g. different patterns, dashed line styles, shapes, text styles, border/line thicknesses, iconography, labels, size.
 - **Relative luminance:** where each color has a 3:1 contrast ratio with the other colors of the color-coded part of the data visualization. A monochromatic color scheme (all shades of 1 color) can make this easier to achieve when you have a lot of colors.
 - **Non-color styling on hover and keyboard focus (if applicable):** e.g. a text link gains an underline on hover and an outline glow on keyboard focus.
 - **Color for color-coding:** still use color as a secondary visual cue because it helps people without vision impairments.

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Section 5 Action Summary

Section summary and checklist of the 12 action items

TWO-LINE SUMMARY OF THIS SECTION

Overall, interactive elements should have adequate signifiers to be perceived as interactive (clickable, tappable, etc.), and a physical presentation that enables us to complete the interaction. This section covered how to use wording to make buttons and links more accessible and usable.

The language/wording we use for button labels and hyperlinks signifies to our users what (a) action they can complete or (b) location they can go to. All of our best practices for writing better button labels and link text are for the ultimate mission of giving our users the best, most accurate, most befitting signifiers. Better signifiers mean better usability and accessibility.

BEST PRACTICE

O1



Use the term “signifiers” (or alternatively “perceived affordances”) instead of the term “affordances”, when talking about the cues (visual, auditory, etc.) that hint at an interface element’s intended use.

“Signifiers”

Signals that communicate an element’s intended use. They are clues that indicate an element is interactive in a certain way.

“Perceived Affordances”

The actions a user perceives as being possible based on how an element is presented.

BEST PRACTICE

O2



Check for strong signifiers that are: (1) befitting the link/button’s destination or the action it triggers, and (2) straightforward and obvious enough to be interpreted appropriately by your target audience.

**BEST
PRACTICE**

03

- Use action words (for buttons and other action triggers, so that could also be links).

**BEST
PRACTICE**

04

- Use task-specific words (for buttons and other action triggers).

**BEST
PRACTICE**

05

- Keep the label wording concise (for buttons and other action triggers).

Button wording signifies a **call to action**

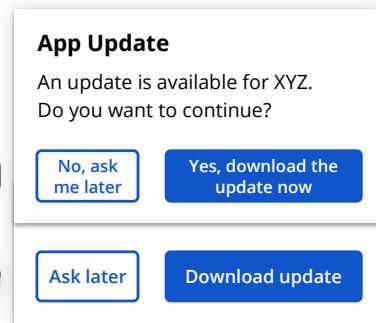
Use action words.



Use task-specific words.



Keep it concise.

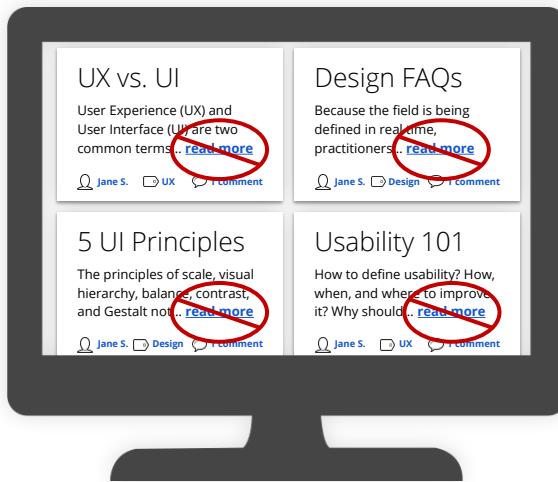


**BEST
PRACTICE**

06



Avoid ambiguous link wording that's not unique (such as: read more, learn more, continue reading, details, click here). For three reasons: Usability, Accessibility, and SEO.



**BEST
PRACTICE**

07



Avoid "Click Here" links specifically because, (1) it implies the person has a device to click with, (2) it implies the person doesn't know how to complete an action without being told, and (3) it conceals the actual action.

**BEST
PRACTICE**

08



Frontload the most important words (for buttons and other action triggers).

LINK TEXT SHOULD:



Start With the Most Important Words:

Frontload key words e.g. lead with the action (the verb), or the subject (the noun), etc.

STRATEGIES TO HELP ACHIEVE BEST PRACTICE #8:

 Learn How Professional UX Designers Interview Clients	 Click here to subscribe to our blog and get more UX tips and tricks.	 To learn more about our work and view samples from past clients, click here .
 Interview Clients Like the UX Pros	 For more UX tips and tricks subscribe to our blog	 View our process and past work

Strategy: Flip sentences around to get the most important words to the front.

Strategy: Lead with the ACTION (the verb).

 Read more SEO hacks for the new year	 Watermelon Ranch's shares are up 45 percent	 We provide full-service web design services, specializing in WordPress development
 Read more SEO hacks for the new year	 Watermelon Ranch's shares are up 45 percent	 We provide full web design services , specializing in WordPress development

Strategy: Lead with the SUBJECT (the noun).

BEST
PRACTICE

09

- Be transparent about the transport or trigger; the purpose of each link/button should be clear from the label text alone (being transparent is being sincere; a link is a promise).

LINK TEXT SHOULD:

	 Be Transparent About the Transport or Trigger: Being transparent is being sincere; a link is a promise.		
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**BEST
PRACTICE**

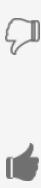
10

- Ensure the link/button text is informative, descriptive, and specific: identify the link's purpose (is it clear when read out of context?).

LINK TEXT SHOULD:

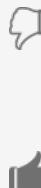
 **Identify the Link's Purpose:**
Be informative, descriptive, and specific (Is the link clear out of context?)

STRATEGIES TO HELP ACHIEVE BEST PRACTICE #9 & #10:



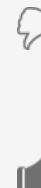
Shop All Jeans
[Learn More](#)
[Details](#)

Shop All Jeans
[Jean Sizing Chart](#)
[Shipping Details](#)



[Learn more](#)

[Learn more about our services /](#)
Learn More: [Our Services](#) / [More service offerings](#)



We offer a **complete package** so you can stay focused on your business.

We offer a **complete website maintenance package** so you can stay focused on your business.

Strategy: Be specific.

Strategy: Add descriptive keywords.

**BEST
PRACTICE**

11

- Ensure the link/button text is unique from the others on the page (use unique wording for each unique destination).

LINK TEXT SHOULD:

 **Be Unique from Other Links on the Interface:**
Have unique link text for each unique destination.

STRATEGIES TO HELP ACHIEVE BEST PRACTICE #11:



Groundbreaking Discovery That Solves Darwin's Paradox!
[Read story »](#)



[**Groundbreaking Discovery That Solves Darwin's Paradox!**](#)



Photos of my trip are [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).



Photos of my trip: [on the sailboat](#), at [Sapphire beach](#), and [going snorkeling](#).



[Click for a demo.](#)
Go to the [Amaya Website](#) to download the Amaya software.



[View demo](#)
Get [Amaya!](#)

Example from: w3.org/QA/Tips/noClickHere

Strategy: Link to the destination's page title.

Strategy: Don't conceal, reveal.

Strategy: Eliminate references to the mechanics.

OVERALL STRATEGIES TO HELP ACHIEVE BEST PRACTICE #8-11:



[Infographic Report](#)



[Infographic Report](#) ↗



[Free Accessibility Checklist](#)



[Free Accessibility Checklist – PDF /](#)
[Free Accessibility Checklist \(PDF\)](#)



Check out the blue whale fact sheet at:
<http://www.URL.com/>



[Blue whale fact sheet](#)

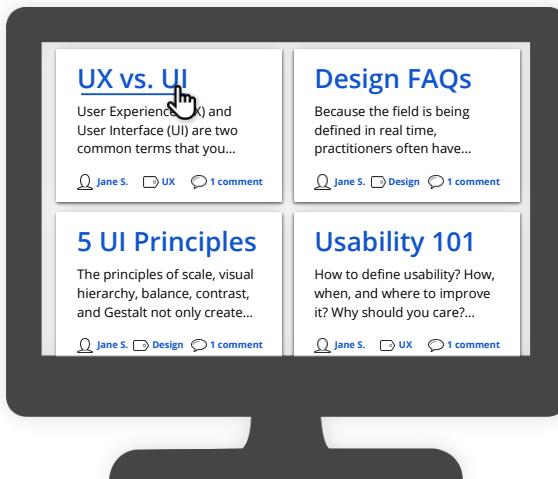
Strategy:
Indicate external links (links that open in a new tab, or open a file).

Strategy:
Don't use "naked" URLs.

**BEST
PRACTICE**

12

- Instead of using a “read more”-type link/button, hyperlink the title of the post (or alternatively, change the “read more”-type link/button to be descriptive of the page it links to).



**INTERACTION
COST**

*We go to the effort to try and fulfill all of these best practices because it's a simple matter of **interaction cost**. People (disabled or otherwise) treat clicks like currency and they don't spend their clicks frivolously. If the wording doesn't call them to click on something, we won't get their click/tap.*

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Section 6 Action Summary

Section summary and checklist of the 9 action items

ONE-LINE SUMMARY OF THIS SECTION

People should be able to consistently tell what's actionable, simply by looking at the interface, without having to sweep the screen with their mouse to discover what's interactive* (the more effort a UI requires, the less use it will get).

* **Interactive:** Able to be clicked, tapped, double-tapped, long tapped, voice-activated, selected using a keyboard, and so on.

There are 7 key button styling techniques that will help us signify clickability.

.....

BEST PRACTICE

01



The Shape Technique: Shape can indicate to us whether something is a button or not. Rectangles are the safest choice, but other shapes can work too — particularly when coupled with strong signifiers of clickability.

- **Rectangles are the safest choice.** Since the dawn of the web, rectangles have been used for buttons, so our association between rectangles and buttons is very strong. This makes a rectangle a befitting signifier of a button.
- We can, of course, be more creative and **use other shapes if the branding of the digital product calls for it**, just as long as we bring in other strong signifiers that will carry the weight of signifying clickability, as needed.
- **No matter which shape you go with, just make sure to be consistent** with it throughout your digital product.

Note: "Consistency" applies to all 7 of these techniques. I just introduced it with the Shape Technique. **Know that if there's ever a head-to-head match between clarity and consistency, always choose clarity.**



INCONSISTENT



Copy

Remove



CONSISTENT

Add New

Copy

Remove

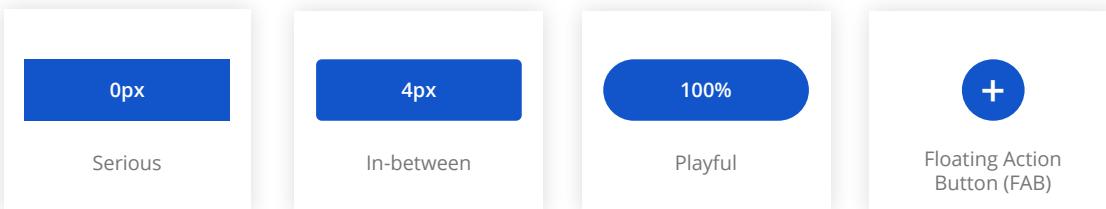
Example from: smashingmagazine.com/2016/11/a-quick-guide-for-designing-better-buttons/

**BEST
PRACTICE**

02



The Border Radius Technique: A button's border radius can change-up its "personality". From no border radius being more serious to fully-rounded corners being more playful — choose a "personality" that matches the vibe of the brand/digital product.



Example from: uxdesign.cc/ui-cheat-sheets-buttons-7329ed9d6112

**BEST
PRACTICE**

03



The Fill (and Color) Technique: To convey differences / hierarchy, we use structural changes. When it comes time to stylistically differentiate buttons to visually convey their position in the hierarchy, we do not rely on just different colors to communicate those differences. Instead, we use structural things like fills (e.g. solid vs. hollow-fill), strokes (e.g. outline vs. no outline), and sizes (e.g. micro to jumbo).

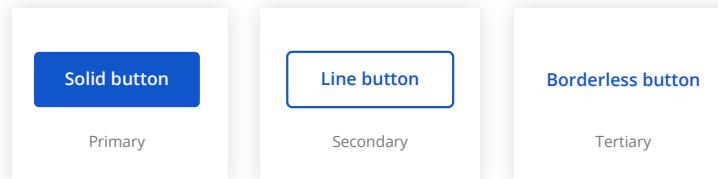
An example:

- Primary actions are solid fill buttons.
- Secondary actions are line buttons.
- Tertiary actions are borderless buttons.

Account Nickname:

Cancel Back Next

Example - on UI.



Example - in design system/style guide.



The Shadow (and Elevation) Technique: **Shadows convey elevation.** Therefore they are another technique we can use to signify that something can be interacted with. Whether that's a button, card, panel, accordion bar, or anything that needs to show that it's elevated from the page background or stacked over something.

- **No shadow:** Using no shadow but a "heavier" fill color (a color with higher contrast against its background) provides visual dominance and faux elevation.
- **Small shadow:** This simulation of slight elevation can be used to visually signify an element is important, or used as an alternative style for a button (e.g. primary alt, secondary alt, etc.), or it can be used for one of an element's interactive states (e.g. hover).
- **Long shadow:** This simulation of higher elevation can be used to visually command attention, or it can be used as an interactive state (e.g. hover) for an element that has a small shadow in its default state.

No shadow

"Heavier" color
for faux elevation:
visually dominant action

Small shadow

Slight elevation:
important action,
raised state, or alt style

Long shadow

High elevation:
action that commands
attention, or raised state

To summarize: Use a button color with a somewhat high level of contrast against its background to make it optically appear to elevate. Use a light shadow (small or long, in its default state or as an interactive state) to increase the button's appeared elevation, look of clickability, and visual importance.

Key things to remember:

- Be consistent with how you use shadows.
- Don't make them too dark.
- Don't overuse them.

BEST
PRACTICE
05

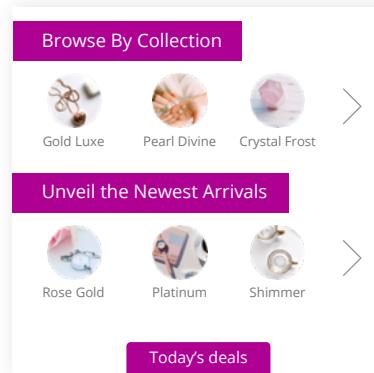


The Competition Technique: Similar-styled elements become competition. We want our CTAs (Calls To Action) to stand out clear as day. But it's difficult to visually pick out clickable elements when similar-looking elements compete with them.

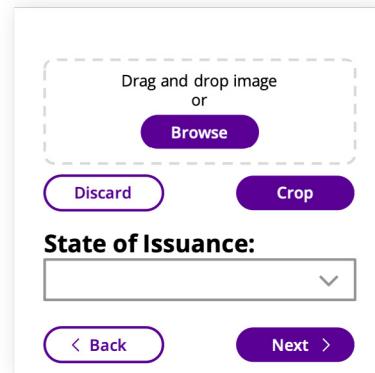
- **Restyle or remove anything that's visually competing with CTAs** (like form elements, a busy background image, rectangle shapes nearby, or even other buttons).
- **Aim to have only one primary button per page or distinct area.**

An input field labeled "Account Nickname:" containing "Liz's Account". Below it are two buttons: "Cancel" and "Save".

The styling for the input field and buttons are too similar.



The non-clickable headers look too much like buttons.



Try to have only one primary CTA per page (or distinct section).

BEST
PRACTICE
06



The Proximity Technique: When UI elements are in too close of proximity they can suffocate each other, none will stand out, and interactive elements will be difficult to interact with.

- **Breathability: Use lots of white space, perhaps more than you would normally be inclined to.** This allows our interactive elements to stand out, gives them breathing room, and provides them enough space between each other so people don't select a neighboring interactive element on accident.
- **Relation: Group related items.** This way their relation is clear. Just not too close, because even within families there needs to be breathing room between everyone.
- **Touch targets: Make touch targets large enough to be easily selectable.** Each touch target needs to be big enough for anyone to easily select it *and* not accidentally select neighboring interactive elements.

Upload Magic:

Drag and drop file
or
Browse

Release **Cap it**

Issuing Wizard:

▼

< Back **Next >**

Example: Before proximity technique.

Upload Magic:

Drag and drop file
or
Browse

Release **Cap it**

Issuing Wizard:

▼

< Back **Next >**

Example: After proximity technique.

**BEST
PRACTICE**

07



The final of the 7 techniques, the **Label Capitalization Technique**: **The type of capitalization used for labels can convey different tones of voice**. Sentence case is the safest choice because it's friendly, conversational, and the easiest to read, but when in doubt test it out with users (real or representative).

- If you are unsure which button capitalization to use, just go with sentence case. Or do some testing and find out from real/representative users what works best for them.
- Whichever button capitalization you decide to go with, just make sure to stay consistent throughout your digital product.

Sentence case

Friendly, conversational,
natural, inviting, easy-to-read

ALL CAPS

Uniform, strait-laced,
authoritative

Title Case

Formal, impersonal
(not preferred)

lower case

Casual, low-effort, meek
(not preferred)

.....

Aside from the 7 button styling techniques, we also covered two more best practices in this section.

.....

**BEST
PRACTICE**

08



Reserve Button Signifiers for Buttons Only: Whichever combination of signifiers you decide to use for your buttons, links, and other interactive elements, just remember: **reserve that combo of signifiers for those interactive elements. Non-interactive elements should not get to use them.**

Also avoid using classic, well-known button signifiers (e.g. rectangle shapes) for non-clickable elements even if you're not using them in your designs.

**BEST
PRACTICE**

09



Consistency, Similarity, and Distinctness: Aim for consistency, but do so while keeping the users in mind, not the other pages of the product (or another product). **If you need to sacrifice consistency to aid clarity or usability, then do so.**



Consistency

Aim: completely matching, except content

Aids users in transferring their knowledge. Improves: learnability, users' efficiency, and perceptions of trustworthiness, credibility, and reliability.

Similarity

Aim: closely related, like siblings, but not identical twins

Use when the user research or usability testing shows that deviations from the style guide can drive or enhance the goals of the user and/or business.

Distinctness

Aim: completely different (rationale inferred)

Used to differentiate things OR to draw attention to specific elements (to further the goals of the user experience).

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Section 7 Action Summary

Section summary and checklist of the 5 action items

ONE-LINE SUMMARY OF THIS SECTION

Make links consistent with each other **and** visually different from non-clickable text (while using color-blind-friendly styling), so that people can tell what's actionable simply by looking at the interface and not have to sweep it with their mouse (or other pointing device) to find out.

BEST PRACTICE

01



A user-friendly way to style links is to:

- **Underline links that have surrounding text.**
- **Bold links that are standalone.** (This is if you're not using an underline.) Or use some other color independent styling — meaning, styling that you could see even if you were completely color-blind.
- **Make them some shade of blue.** We don't forget color, which helps non-color-blind users. Blue is the safest choice for a link color, but studies have shown that other colors work almost as well when done with consistency.

CATEGORY

Title Here

Loreum ipsum dolor sit inacisdid
consectetur adipiscing elit, seid
aliquasctrsa eiusmod nascua...

JANE SMITH

Example of link styling for standalone links and in-copy links.

BEST
PRACTICE

O2

□ Don't want to use underlining for your links? 3 alternatives to indicate a link without using underlining:

- **Strategy #1:** Use other text styling, like bold (or italics, font size, typeface, border).
 - Just remember whatever you choose you won't be able to use for anything other than links, or confusion will ensue.
- **Strategy #2:** Use a luminous link color PLUS some non-color styling (such as an underline) for "on hover", and another (such as a border) for "on focus".
 - Luminous colors are those that have a 3:1 or greater color contrast ratio with the color of the surrounding text (e.g. the body copy) PLUS a contrast ratio of 4.5:1 or greater with the background color (e.g. the color of the page or container).
 - 26 luminous colors from WCAG can be found at: [w3.org/WAI/WCAG22/working-examples/link-contrast](https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG22/working-examples/link-contrast)
 - This technique will allow the link styling to pass the WCAG accessibility guidelines, but for optimal accessibility, it's *not* the preferred technique since relative luminance is not particularly obvious to some people with colorblindness.
- **Strategy #3:** Use solitary placement (often with bolding or smaller all caps). Place the link away from other text so it's standalone (not part of a sentence or paragraph). Its placement, coupled with its other styling like bolding, will indicate that it's a link.

We underline our links

Title Here

Lorem ipsum dolor sit inacisdid consectetur adipiscing elit...

 Jane S.  News  1 comment

OR ...

...use **luminous links**
PLUS an underline /
non-color styling on
hover and focus.

...use placement
(often with **bolding**
or **SMALLER ALL CAPS**) for
standalone links.

...use other styling
(**bold**, *italics*, **font size**,
typeface, border).

Title Here

Lorem ipsum **dolor sit** inacisdid
consectetur adipiscing elit...

 Jane S.  News  1 comment

Title Here

Lorem ipsum **dolor sit** inacisdid
consectetur adipiscing elit...

 Jane S.  News  1 comment

Title Here

Lorem ipsum dolor sit inacisdid
consectetur adipiscing elit...

Related posts ▾

**BEST
PRACTICE**

03



Pick your link styling and stick to it: Whichever appearance you choose for links, apply that same treatment consistently throughout the digital product.

**BEST
PRACTICE**

04



Reserve three things for links only, whether you choose to use them for your links or not:

- (1) underlining,
- (2) blue text, and
- (3) underlining + blue text.

Any non-clickable elements that use one of these will look like a link, and that would be a misuse of a link signifier.

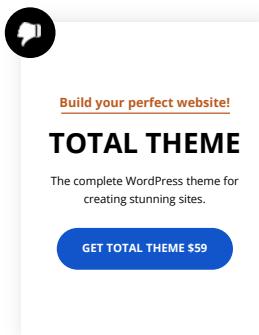
**BEST
PRACTICE**

05

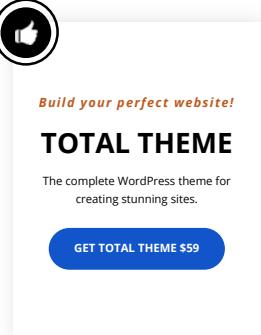


Reserve a chosen color for all clickable/tappable elements, and avoid using that color for any non-clickable elements.

Reserve underlining for links



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Reserve a chosen color for all clickable/tappable elements



Rice Krispies Treats
Recipe By: Kellogg's
[Save](#) [Print](#) [Share](#)
INGREDIENTS

- 3 tablespoons butter
- 1 package (10 oz) marshmallows
- 6 cups Rice Krispies cereal

[Buy Ingredients Online](#)
DIRECTIONS
[Watch how to make this recipe](#)



Rice Krispies Treats
Recipe By: Kellogg's
[Save](#) [Print](#) [Share](#)
INGREDIENTS

- 3 tablespoons butter
- 1 package (10 oz) marshmallows
- 6 cups Rice Krispies cereal

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DIRECTIONS
[Watch how to make this recipe](#)

Tip: Be cautious of using blue for non-clickable elements

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