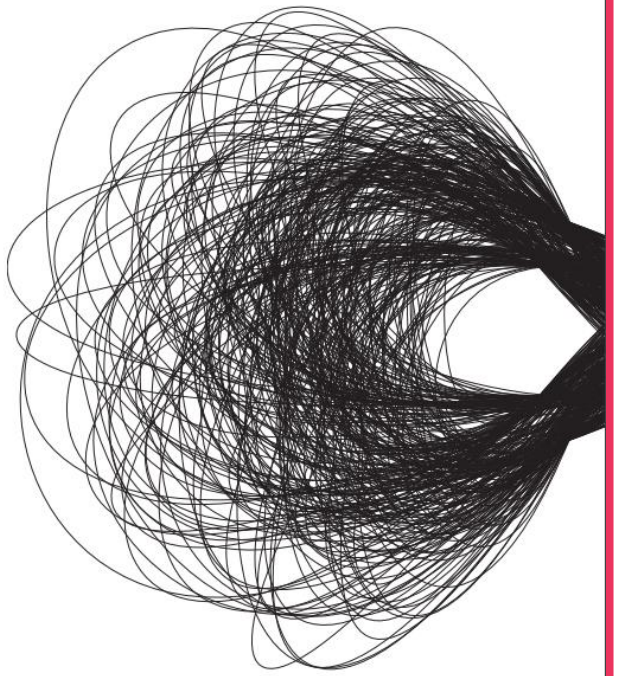
The Laws of Simplicity

[by John Maeda]
http://lawsofsimplicity.com

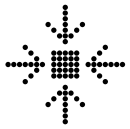


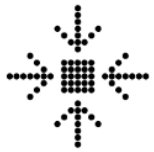
Introduction

John Maeda is an executive, designer and technologist.

Originally a MSc. CS student at MIT, he completed his Ph.D. in design at Tsubuka Univ. Institute of Art and Design.

He was a Professor at MIT Media Lab for 12 years, he helped to accelerate the Scratch language [2003] and somehow, allows the emergence of Processing.org





LAW 1 / REDUCE

The simplest way to achieve simplicity is through thoughtful reduction.

LAW 2 / ORGANIZE

Organization makes a system of many appear fewer.

LAW 3 / TIME

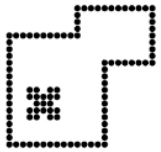
Savings in time feel like simplicity.

LAW 4 / LEARN

Knowledge makes everything simpler.

LAW 5 / DIFFERENCES

Simplicity and complexity need each other.



LAW 6 / CONTEXT

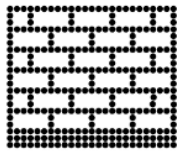
What lies in the periphery of simplicity is definitely not peripheral.

LAW 7 / EMOTION

More emotions are better than less.

LAW 8 / TRUST

In simplicity we trust.

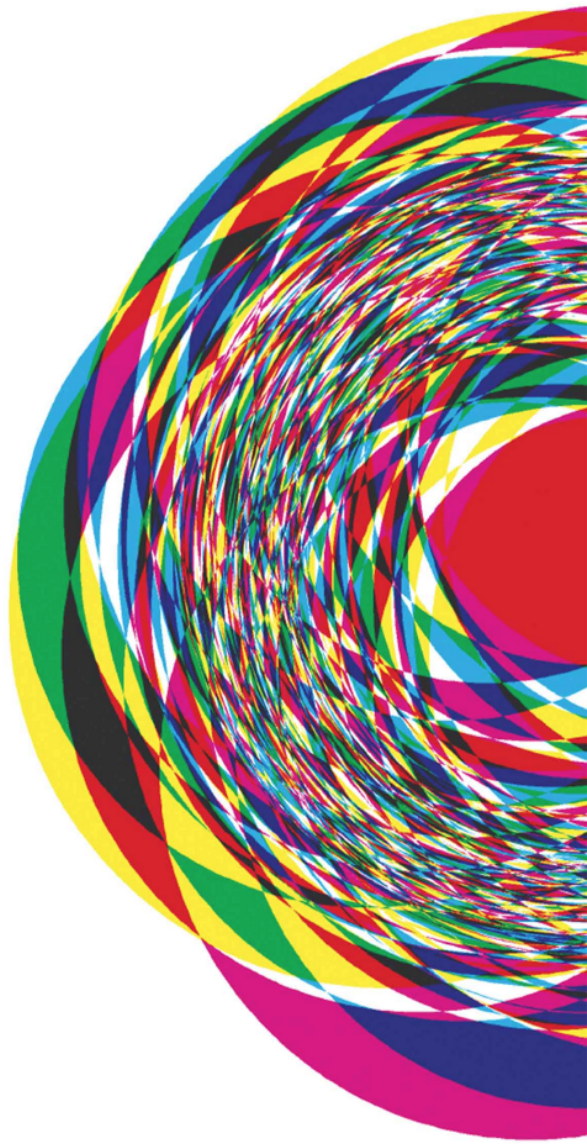


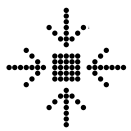
LAW 9 / FAILURE

Some things can never be made simple.

LAW 10 / THE ONE

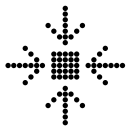
Simplicity is about subtracting the obvious, and adding the meaningful.





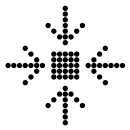
Preamble

"*if you wish to save time, I suggest you start with basic simplicity [1 to 3] and then skip to the tenth Law of THE ONE wich sums up the entire set.*" [p. vi]



STEP 1: Basic Simplicity

Immediately applicable to thinking



Law 1: REDUCE

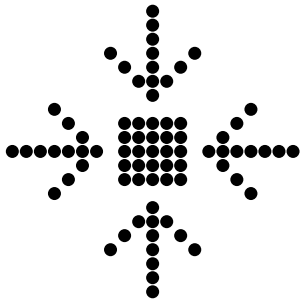
The simplest way to achieve simplicity is through thoughtful reduction [p. 1]

"*When in doubt, just remove. But be careful of what you remove.*"

When it's done, apply the "**SHE**" method.

→ **SHE** : **S**hrink, **H**ide, **E**mbody

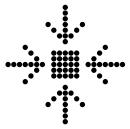
Law 1: REDUCE



Shrink: when a small unassuming object exceeds our expectations, we are not only surprised but pleased.

Hide: like the Swiss army knife, only the tool that that you wish to use is exposed. Computers have made the power to HIDE incredible amounts of complexity.

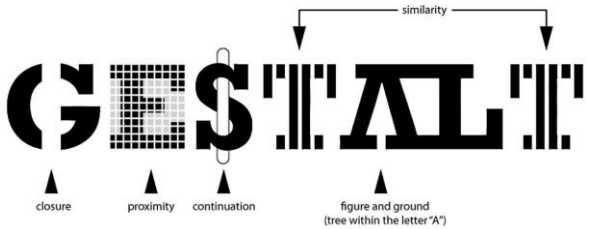
Embody: an object needs to be instilled with a sense of value. Consumers will only be drawn to the smaller, less functional product if they perceive it to be more valuable than the bigger version of the product with more features.



Law 2: ORGANIZE

Organization makes a system of many appear fewer [p. 11-12]

"*The whole is more than the sum of its parts*" [Principles of Gestalt [e.g. form]



Use **SLIP** to organize

→ **SLIP**: **S**ort, **L**abel, **I**ntegrate and **P**rioritise

Gestalt Principles

UX CHEAT.com

Good Figure

Objects groupped together tend to be perceived as a single figure. Tendency to simplify.

Proximity

Objects tend to be grouped together if they are close to each other.

Similarity

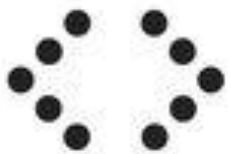
Objects tend to be grouped together if they are similar.

Continuation

When there is an intersection between two or more objects, people tend to perceive each object as a single uninterrupted object.

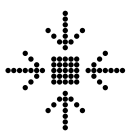
Closure

Visual connection or continuity between sets of elements which do not actually touch each other in a composition.



Symmetry

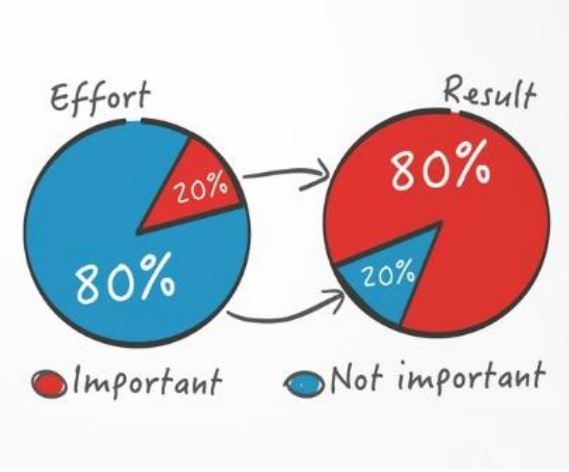
The object tend to be perceived as symmetrical shapes that form around their center.



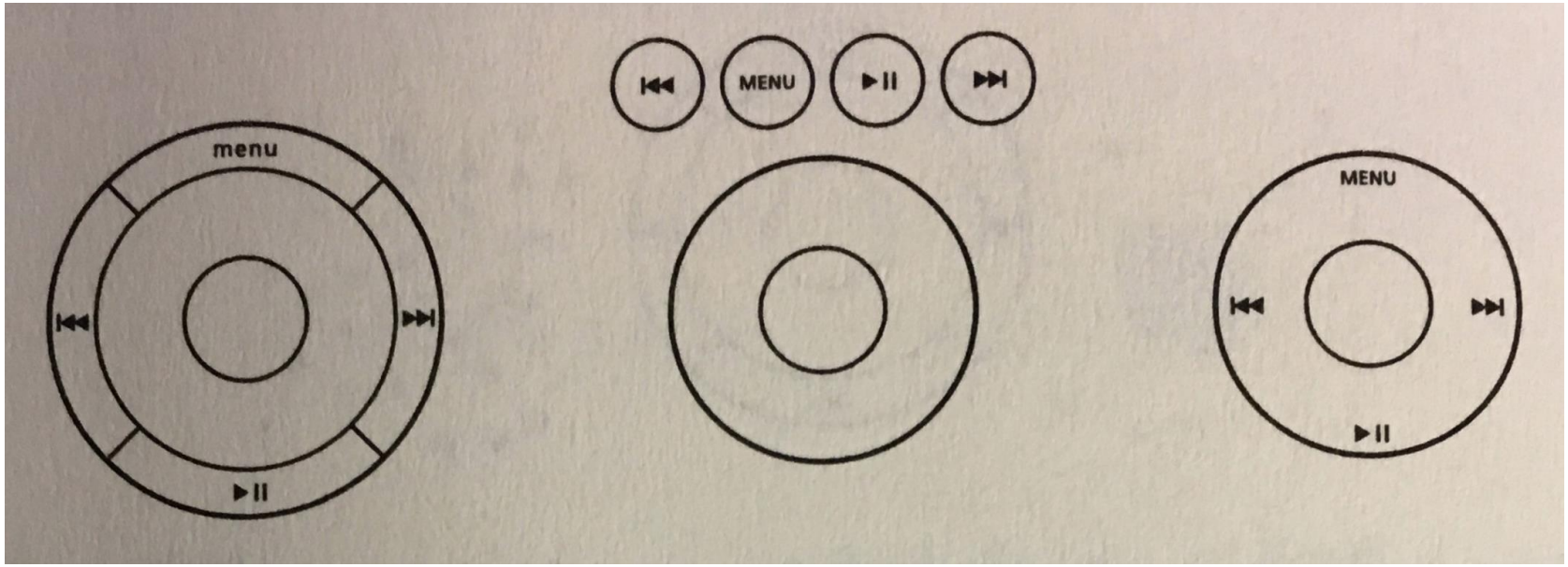
https://medium.com/ringcentral-ux/gestalt-principles-learn-how-to-influence-perception-83112932d0bc

Law 2: ORGANIZE

- **Sort**: card sort into groups.
- **Label**: name each group.
- **Integrate**: wherever possible, merge groups.
- **Prioritise**: use the ***Pareto Principle*** (80/20 rule) where it can be assumed that in any given piece of data, generally 80% can be managed at a lower priority and 20% requires the highest level.

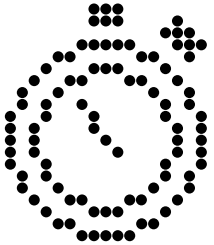


Law 2: ORGANIZE



The evolution of the iPod wheel illustrates how organising smaller parts, into a whole can increase the usability of a product.

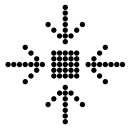
Law 3: TIME



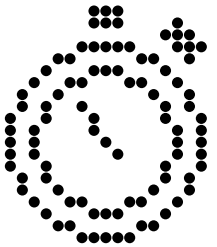
Savings in time feel like simplicity [p. 23-24]

Use “**SHE**” method to save time.

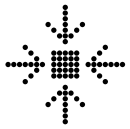
→ **SHE** : **S**hrink, **H**ide, **E**mbody



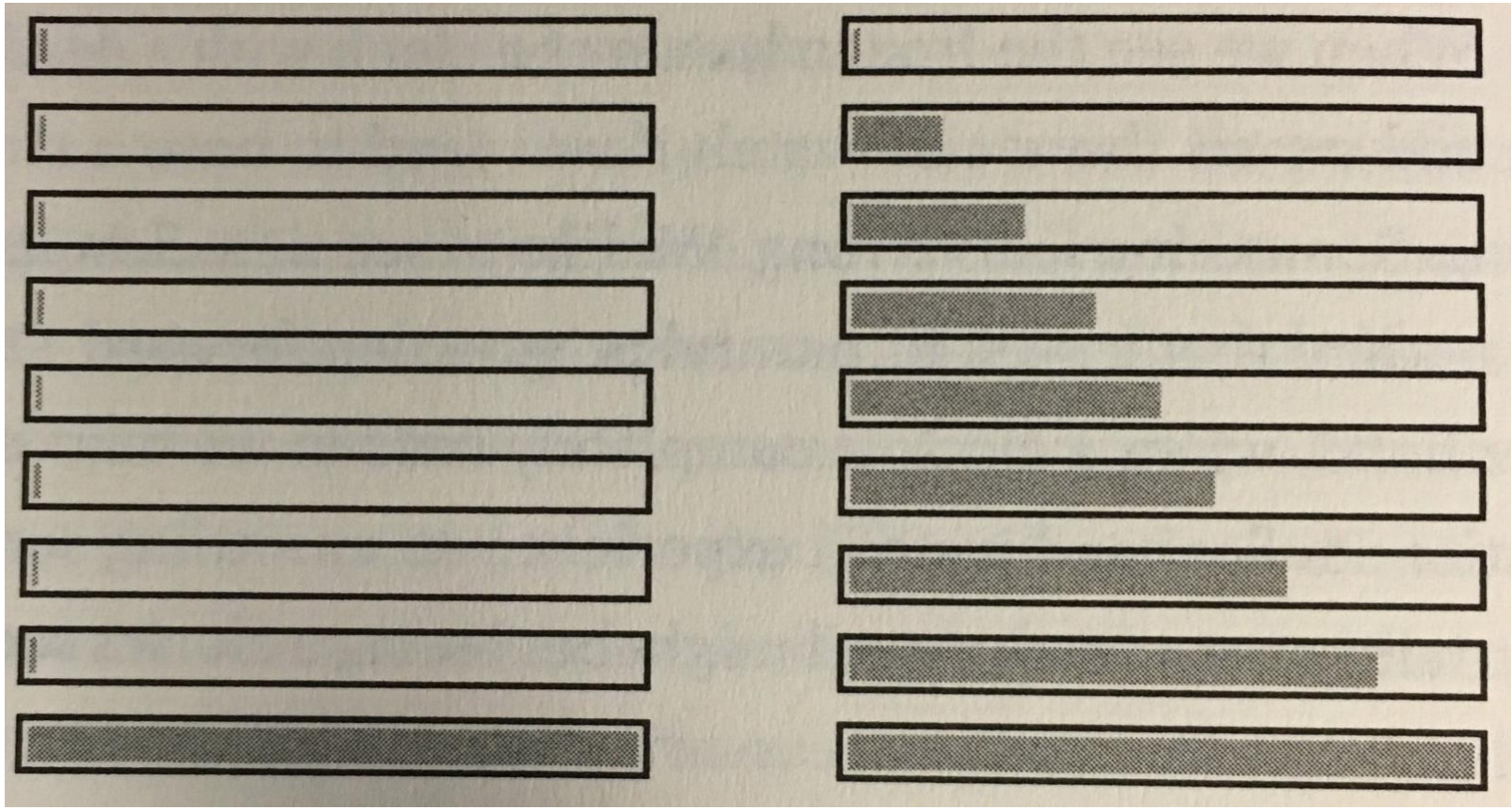
Law 3: TIME



- **Shrinking time**: potentially the pinnacle of this is removing choice and letting a machine make choices for you (for example, Amazon's one click payments). Alternatively, this could be achieved with randomness (exemplified by the iPod shuffle).
- **Hiding time**: a simple way of "saving" time is simply to hide it.
  It's for this exact reason casinos remove windows and clocks form their walls.
- **Embodying time**: a frozen computer is like a frozen clock, this is exactly why the progress bar was invented.

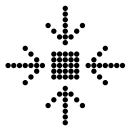


Law 3: TIME



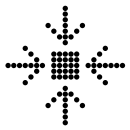
Loading bars: which ones appears to take less time?

STEP 2: Intermediate Simplicity

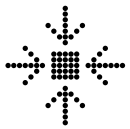


Law 4 to 9

- **Law 4**: LEARN
- **Law 5**: DIFFERENCES
- **Law 6**: CONTEXT
- **Law 7**: EMOTION
- **Law 8**: TRUST
- **Law 9**: FAILURE

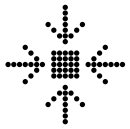


STEP 3: Deep Simplicity



Law 10: THE ONE

Simplicity is about substracting the obvious, and adding the meaningful



Keys

1. **Away**: *More appears like less by simply moving it far, far away*

2. **Open**: *Openness simplifies complexity*

3. **Power**: *Use less, gain more*