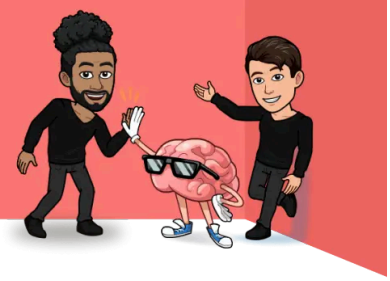
CHEATSHEET

# Psychology of Design

List of cognitive biases & principles that affect your UX



| | Name | One-Liner | Category |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | 👀 Hick's Law | More options leads to harder decisions | Information |
| 2. | 💼 Confirmation Bias | People look for evidence that confirms what they think | Information |
| 3. | 👁️ Priming | Previous stimuli influence users' decision | Information |
| 4. | 🚛 Cognitive Load | Total amount of mental effort that is required to complete a task | Information |
| 5. | ⚓ Anchoring Bias | Users rely heavily on the first piece of information they see | Information |
| 6. | 👉 Nudge | Subtle hints can affect users' decisions | Information |
| 7. | 🍰 Progressive Disclosure | Users are less overwhelmed if they're exposed to complex features later | Information |
| 8. | 🎯 Fitts's Law | Large and close elements are easier to interact with | Information |
| 9. | 🐠 Attentional Bias | Users' thoughts filter what they pay attention to | Information |
| 10. | 💔 Empathy Gap | People underestimate how much emotions influence user behaviors | Information |
| 11. | ⛵ Visual Anchors | Elements used to guide users' eyes | Information |
| 12. | 🌶️ Von Restorff Effect | People notice items that stand out more | Information |
| 13. | 🎖️ Visual Hierarchy | The order in which people perceive what they see | Information |
| 14. | 🔭 Selective Attention | People filter out things from their environment when in focus | Information |
| 15. | ✈️ Survivorship Bias | People neglect things that don't make it past a selection process | Information |
| 16. | 🕶️ Banner Blindness | Users tune out the stuff they get repeatedly exposed to | Information |
| 17. | 🍒 Juxtaposition | Elements that are close and similar are perceived as a single unit | Information |
| 18. | 🚦 Signifiers | Elements that communicate what they will do | Information |
| 19. | 🎭 Contrast | Users' attention is drawn to higher visual weights | Information |

| | Name | One-Liner | Category |
|---|---|---|---|
| 20. | External Trigger | When the information on what to do next is within the prompt itself | Information |
| 21. | Decoy Effect | Create a new option that's easy to discard | Information |
| 22. | Centre-Stage Effect | People tend to choose the middle option in a set of items | Information |
| 23. | Framing | The way information is presented affects how users make decisions | Information |
| 24. | Law of Proximity | Elements close to each other are usually considered related | Information |
| 25. | Tesler's Law | If you simplify too much, you'll transfer some complexity to the users | Information |
| 26. | Spark Effect | Users are more likely to take action when the effort is small | Information |
| 27. | Feedback Loop | When users take action, feedback communicates what happened | Information |
| 28. | Expectations Bias | People tend to be influenced by their own expectations | Information |
| 29. | Aesthetic-Usability Effect | People perceive designs with great aesthetics as easier to use | Information |
| 30. | Social Proof | Users adapt their behaviors based on what others do | Meaning |
| 31. | Scarcity | People value things more when they're in limited supply | Meaning |
| 32. | Curiosity Gap | Users have a desire to seek out missing information | Meaning |
| 33. | Mental Model | Users have a preconceived opinion of how things work | Meaning |
| 34. | Familiarity Bias | People prefer familiar experiences | Meaning |
| 35. | Halo Effect | People judge things (or people) based on their feelings towards one trait | Meaning |
| 36. | Miller's Law | Users can only keep 7±2 items in their working memory | Meaning |
| 37. | Unit Bias | One unit of something feels like the optimal amount | Meaning |
| 38. | Flow State | Being fully immersed and focused on a task | Meaning |
| 39. | Skeuomorphism | Users adapt more easily to things that look like real-world objects | Meaning |
| 40. | Singularity Effect | Users care disproportionately about an individual as compared to a group | Meaning |
| 41. | Reciprocity | People feel the need to reciprocate when they receive something | Meaning |
| 42. | Authority Bias | Users attribute more importance to the opinion of an authority figure | Meaning |
| 43. | Pseudo-Set Framing | Tasks that are part of a group are more tempting to complete | Meaning |

| | Name | One-Liner | Category |
|---|---|---|---|
| 44. | Variable Reward | People especially enjoy unexpected rewards | Meaning |
| 45. | Group Attractiveness Effect | Individual items seem more attractive when presented in a group | Meaning |
| 46. | Curse of Knowledge | Not realizing that people don't have the same level of knowledge | Meaning |
| 47. | Aha! moment | When new users first realize the value of your product | Meaning |
| 48. | Self-Initiated Triggers | Users are more likely to interact with prompts they setup for themselves | Meaning |
| 49. | Survey Bias | Users tend to skew survey answers towards what's socially acceptable | Meaning |
| 50. | Cognitive Dissonance | It's painful to hold two opposing ideas in our mind | Meaning |
| 51. | Goal Gradient Effect | Motivation increases as users get closer to their goal | Meaning |
| 52. | Feedforward | When users know what to expect before they take action | Meaning |
| 53. | Occam's Razor | Simple solutions are often better than the more complex ones | Meaning |
| 54. | Noble Edge Effect | Users tend to prefer socially responsible companies | Meaning |
| 55. | Hawthorne Effect | Users change their behavior when they know they are being observed | Meaning |
| 56. | Hindsight Bias | People overestimate their ability to predict outcomes after the fact | Meaning |
| 57. | Law of Similarity | Users perceive a relationship between elements that look similar | Meaning |
| 58. | Law of Prägnanz | Users interpret ambiguous images in a simpler and more complete form | Meaning |
| 59. | Streisand Effect | When trying to censor information ends up increasing awareness of that information | Meaning |
| 60. | Spotlight Effect | People tend to believe they are being noticed more than they really are | Meaning |
| 61. | Fresh Start Effect | Users are more likely to take action if there's a feeling of new beginnings | Meaning |
| 62. | Labor Illusion | People value things more when they see the work behind them | Time |
| 63. | Default Bias | Users tend not to change an established behavior | Time |
| 64. | Investment Loops | When users invest themselves, they're more likely to come back | Time |
| 65. | Loss Aversion | People prefer to avoid losses more than earning equivalent gains | Time |
| 66. | Commitment & Consistency | Users tend to be consistent with their previous actions | Time |

| | Name | One-Liner | Category |
|---|---|---|---|
| 67. | 🏝️ Sunk Cost Effect | Users are reluctant to pull out of something they're invested in. | Time |
| 68. | 🌛 Decision Fatigue | Making a lot of decisions lowers users' ability to make rational ones | Time |
| 69. | 🌋 Reactance | Users are less likely to adopt a behavior when they feel forced | Time |
| 70. | 🥽 Observer-Expectancy Effect | When researchers' biases influence the participants of an experiment | Time |
| 71. | 🌱 Weber's Law | Users adapt better to small incremental changes | Time |
| 72. | 🔨 Law of the Instrument | If all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail | Time |
| 73. | 🍭 Temptation Bundling | Hard tasks are less scary when coupled with something users desire | Time |
| 74. | 🎈 Parkinson's Law | The time required to complete a task will take as much time as allowed | Time |
| 75. | 🎩 Dunning-Kruger Effect | People tend to overestimate their skills when they don't know much | Time |
| 76. | 🌤️ Affect Heuristic | People's current emotions cloud and influence their judgment | Time |
| 77. | 📉 Hyperbolic Discounting | People tend to prioritize immediate benefits over bigger future gains | Time |
| 78. | 💳 Cashless Effect | People spend more when they can't actually see the money | Time |
| 79. | ⌚ Chronoception | People's perception of time is subjective | Time |
| 80. | 🌚 Self-serving bias | People take credits for positive events and blame others if negative | Time |
| 81. | 🥬 Pareto Principle | Roughly 80% of the effects come from 20% of the causes | Time |
| 82. | 🔍 Discoverability | The ease with which users can discover your features | Time |
| 83. | 🔫 Backfire Effect | When people's convictions are challenged, their beliefs get stronger | Time |
| 84. | 🌈 False Consensus Effect | People overestimate how much other people agree with them | Time |
| 85. | 🚃 Bandwagon Effect | Users tend to adopt beliefs in proportion of others who have already done so | Time |
| 86. | 🧙 Barnum-Forer Effect | When you believe generic personality descriptions apply specifically to you. | Time |
| 87. | 🐍 Second-Order Effect | The consequences of the consequences of actions | Time |
| 88. | ⌨️ IKEA Effect | When user partially create something, they value it way more | Time |
| 89. | 🧚 Planning Fallacy | People tend to underestimate how much time a task will take | Time |

| | Name | One-Liner | Category |
|---|---|---|---|
| 90. | ⛺ **Provide Exit Points** | Invite users to leave your app at the right moment | Memory |
| 91. | 🎢 **Peak-End Rule** | People judge an experience by its peak and how it ends. | Memory |
| 92. | 👅 **Sensory Appeal** | Users engage more with things appealing to multiple senses | Memory |
| 93. | 🧩 **Zeigarnik Effect** | People remember incomplete tasks better than completed ones | Memory |
| 94. | 🤲 **Endowment Effect** | Users value something more if they feel it's theirs | Memory |
| 95. | 🛍️ **Chunking** | People remember grouped information better | Memory |
| 96. | 📸 **Picture Superiority Effect** | People remember pictures better than words | Memory |
| 97. | 📌 **Method of Loci** | People remember things more when they're associated with a location | Memory |
| 98. | 🧭 **Shaping** | Incrementally reinforcing actions to get closer to a target behavior | Memory |
| 99. | 💚 **Delighters** | People remember more unexpected and playful pleasures | Memory |
| 100. | 💛 **Internal Trigger** | When users are prompted to take action based on a memory | Memory |
| 101. | 💾 **Recognition Over Recall** | It's easier to recognize things than recall them from memory | Memory |
| 102. | 🏰 **Storytelling Effect** | People remember stories better than facts alone | Memory |
| 103. | 👹 **Negativity Bias** | Users recall negative events more than positive ones | Memory |
| 104. | ⏰ **Availability Heuristic** | Users favor recent and available information over past information | Memory |
| 105. | 🌌 **Spacing Effect** | People learn more effectively when study sessions are spaced out | Memory |
| 106. | 🏁 **Serial Position Effect** | It's easier for users to recall the first and last items of a list | Memory |

## Don’t miss the new ones!

We update the list every few weeks here: https://growth.design/psychology.

Don’t hesitate to share the link with your friends & colleagues who might enjoy it.

—Dan Benoni & Louis-Xavier Lavallée