

Foreword

Jeff Johnson's impactful books on user interface design are distinct in emphasizing the foundations of good design decisions in practical human psychology. This remains a key insight into design generally and user interface design specifically. Design is rarely just a matter of knowing and following rules; more typically, it involves recognizing how and when rules apply and do not apply, adapting rules in context, and formulating new rules.

How can designers manage such open-ended complexity? Johnson's answer is that designers should understand the rationales and foundations for design rules in the psychology of human perception and cognition. Humans perceive, think, and act in distinctive ways, with distinctive strengths and weaknesses. Understanding human characteristics allows designers to reason creatively about the applicability of design rules in context and to better explain and justify their decisions.

Designs ultimately succeed or fail because humans can understand them, enjoy them, learn from them, and use them effectively. This can seem obvious, until we take a critical look at our world, filled with designs that don't effectively convey what they do or how they do it, frustrate us and waste our time, and do not respect or leverage the amazing human mind. Designing with the Mind in Mind is an important tool to help designers succeed.

—John M. Carroll

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