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Week 1

**#11 People Avoid Cognitive Overload**

**Embellishment:** Cognitive overload occurs when too much information is presented to a user at once, causing them to become mentally overwhelmed and unable to process or make decisions efficiently. In web design, it's essential to prioritize simplicity and clarity. One effective way to prevent cognitive overload is to use progressive disclosure. This technique involves initially showing users only the essential information they need, and revealing more detailed content as necessary. For example, a complex form can initially ask for basic information like name and email, and then progressively show more fields as the user fills out the form.

**Visual Example:** A good example of avoiding cognitive overload can be seen in the design of Apple's product pages. Their pages are clean and easy to navigate, with essential information like features and pricing displayed clearly. More detailed specifications and comparison charts are available, but they are not forced upon the user upfront. Here’s an example of how clean, minimalistic design focuses the user's attention:

A cell phone on a screen

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

A screenshot of a computer

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

**#24 People Make Decisions Based on Mental Shortcuts**

**Embellishment:** Mental shortcuts, or heuristics, help people make decisions quickly without spending too much time deliberating. However, these shortcuts can sometimes lead to biases or errors in judgment. In web design, understanding these heuristics can help design decisions that guide users toward optimal choices. For instance, the *anchoring effect* is a mental shortcut where people rely too heavily on the first piece of information they see when making decisions. This can be used to your advantage when pricing products. For example, showing a "regular price" with a "sale price" encourages the user to perceive the discount as more significant.

**Visual Example:** One common design tactic based on heuristics is the use of the “price anchor.” A simple web design example could be a pricing page for a software product that shows three tiers—Basic, Standard, and Premium—with the Premium tier priced much higher than the others. The "Standard" tier is usually displayed as the most popular, making it the default choice. This creates an anchoring effect where users tend to gravitate toward the middle option, which is often strategically priced to maximize conversions.

A screenshot of a computer

AI-generated content may be incorrect.