Usability Guide

Design Principles for Creating Useful • Usable • Seamless • Desirable User Experiences

1  Be user-centered
Put actual end-users first as you design. Get to know your users by observing them and listening to them. Remember: you are not the target audience.

2  Design before you build
Reflect on your user research. Develop concept prototypes that respect those findings in terms of user behavior and workflow. Use the prototype for usability testing and for communicating with all stakeholders.

3  Build in accessibility
Can people with disabilities achieve their objective? Consult Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0).

4  Ensure products are self-explanatory
Does the interface help or hinder the users’ ability to complete their task quickly, efficiently, and even joyfully? Simple is good. Clarity is important.

5  Minimize cognitive load
Does the interface match users’ mental model for how they would naturally perform the work task? Are there steps that might be eliminated or combined to increase the efficiency of the interface?

6  Test early and often.
Test usability with the end-users throughout the project. Make modifications. Test again.
Usability Methods

Interviews
Interview one user at a time. Gather context, motivation, learn about their workflow. Let your users do the talking.

Surveys
Gain feedback from broad user community on new or current technology or services.

Card Sorting
Place navigation menu items on index cards and let users sort and collect them into meaningful categories. The results of this exercise informs your information architecture, so your interface is more self-explanatory.

Journey Maps
Collaboratively draw the service experience from the users’ perspective to reveal gaps.

Task Analysis
Observe users performing daily tasks in their own environment. Applying these observations to your design helps create intuitive interfaces.

Usability testing
Obtain early feedback on your design ideas with low or high fidelity prototypes. Observe and record end-users responses and actions as they interact with prototype.

For help, tools, or more resources contact us!
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