

# Design Guidelines, Theories and Principles

**Human Computer Interaction** 

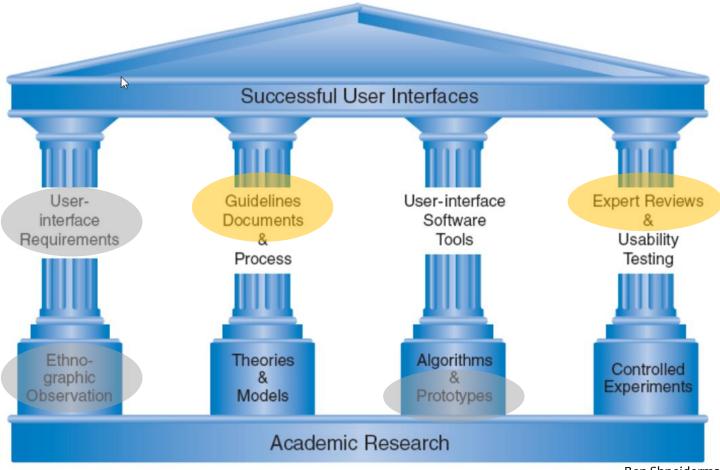
Luigi De Russis, Fulvio Corno

Academic Year 2021/2022





### The Four Pillars of Design



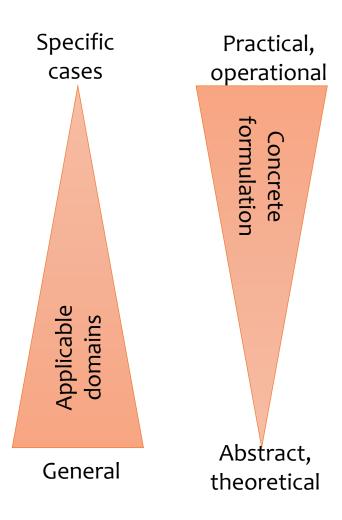
Ben Shneiderman & Catherine Plaisant, Designing the User Interface: Strategies for Effective Human-Computer Interaction

#### Goals

Generating design Evaluating generated solutions designs Guidelines Expert reviews and heuristics Principles Usability testing Theories Controlled experiments

#### Generating design solutions

- Guidelines: Low-level focused advice about good practices and cautions against dangers.
- Principles: Mid-level strategies or rules to analyze and compare design alternatives.
- **Theories**: High-level widely applicable frameworks to draw on during design and evaluation, as well as to support communication and teaching.



# **Design Theories**

Theoretical frameworks enabling foundational research
The "Why"

#### **Design Theories**

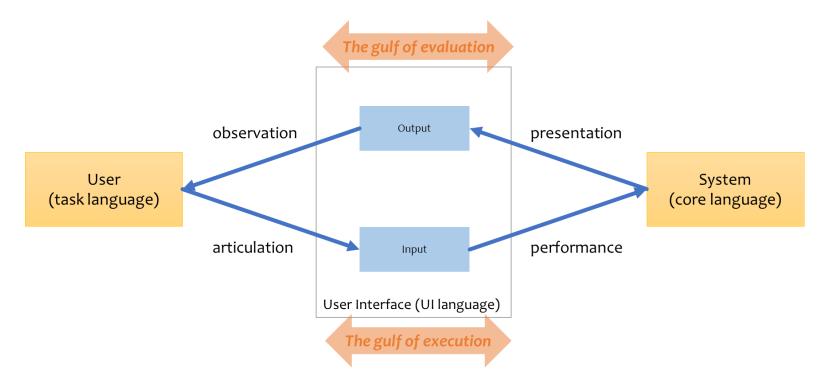
#### Types of theories

- Descriptive
  - UI elements, terminology, semantics
- Explanatory
  - Sequences of events with causal relationships
- Prescriptive
  - Guidelines for designers to make decisions
- Predictive
  - Comparison of design alternatives based on performance figures

#### **Human capacity**

- Motor task
  - Skill in pointing, clicking, ...
     movements
- Perceptual
  - Sensory inputs
- Cognitive
  - Problem-solving, short-/long-term memory

### Norman's Action Models (Explanatory)



- 1. **Goal** (form the goal)
- 5. **Perceive** (the state of the world)

2. **Plan** (the action)

- 6. **Interpret** (the perception)
- 3. **Specify** (an action sequence) 7. **Compare** (the outcome with the goal)
- 4. **Perform** (the action sequence)

### Foley and van Dam four-level approach (Descriptive)

#### Conceptual level

User's mental model of the interactive system

#### Semantic level

 Describes the meanings conveyed by the user's command input and by the computer's output display

#### Syntactic level

 Defines how the units (words) that convey semantics are assembled into a complete sentence that instructs the computer to perform a certain task

#### Lexical level

 Deals with device dependencies and with the precise mechanisms by which a user specifies the syntax

#### **Consistency Theories** (Prescriptive)

- Consistency of nouns (objects) and verbs (actions)
  - Reduces learning time and errors
- Consistency of
  - Color
  - Layout
  - Icons
  - Fonts and Font sizes
  - Button sizes
  - 0 ...
- Inconsistencies might be used (sparingly!) for drawing attention

#### Consistent

delete/insert character delete/insert word delete/insert line delete/insert paragraph

# Design Principles

The important aspects that we need to consider when creating a design.

The "What"

### **Design Principles**

- More practical than Theories
- More fundamental, widely applicable, and enduring than Guidelines
- Fundamental principles (→ from Needfinding)
  - Determine user's skill levels
  - Identify the tasks
- 5 primary interaction styles
- 8 golden rules of interface design
- Prevent errors
- Automation and human control

#### Interaction styles

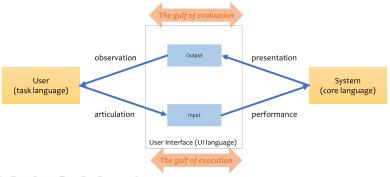
- Direct manipulation
- Menu selection
- Form fill-in
- Command language
- Natural language

Advantages	Disadvantages
Direct manipulation	
/isually presents task concepts	May be hard to program
Allows easy learning	May require graphics display and pointing devices
Allows easy retention	
Allows errors to be avoided	
Encourages exploration	
Affords high subjective satisfaction	
Vienu selection	
Shortens learning	Presents danger of many menus
Reduces keystrokes	May slow frequent users
Structures decision making	Consumes screen space
Permits use of dialog-management tools	Requires rapid display rate
Allows easy support of error handling	
form fill-in	
Simplifies data entry	Consumes screen space
Requires modest training	
Gives convenient assistance	
Permits use of form-management tools	
Command language	
Plexible	Poor error handling
Appeals to "power" users	Requires substantial training and memorization
Supports user initiative	
Allows convenient creation of user-defined macros	
Vatural language	
Relieves burden of learning syntax	Requires clarification dialog
	May not show context
	May require more keystrokes
	Unpredictable

# Norman's Principles from Action Models

#### Principles of good design

- State and the action alternatives should be visible
- Should be a good conceptual model with a consistent system image
- Interface should include good mappings that reveal the relationships between stages
- User should receive continuous feedback



#### User failures can occur

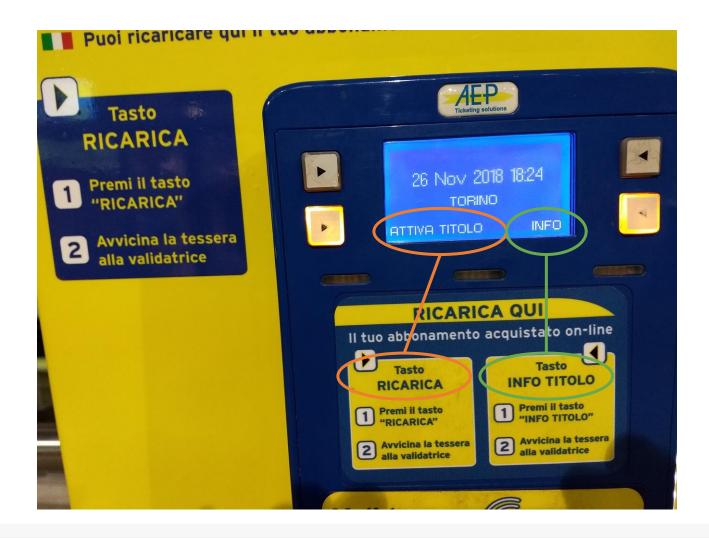
- Users can form an inadequate goal
- Might not find the correct interface object because of an incomprehensible label or icon
- May not know how to specify or execute a desired action
- May receive inappropriate or misleading feedback

- Strive for consistency
- Cater to universal usability
- Offer informative feedback
- Design dialogs to yield closure
- Prevent errors
- Permit easy reversal of actions
- Keep users in control
- Reduce short-term memory load

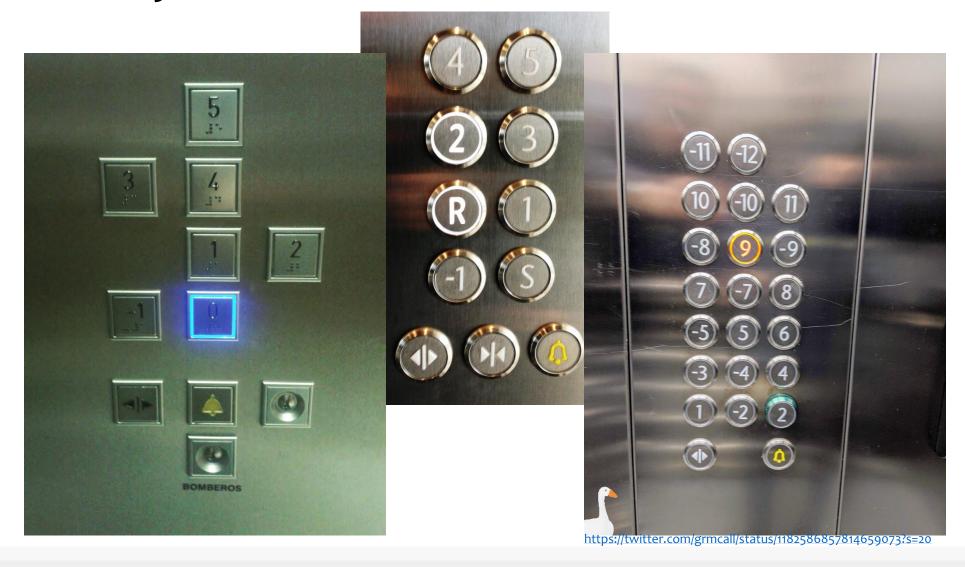
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- Similar situations should lead to similar sequences of actions
- Same terminology in prompts, menus, help
- Color, layout, capitalization, fonts,...
- Exceptions should be comprehensive and limited
   E.g., delete, password echo

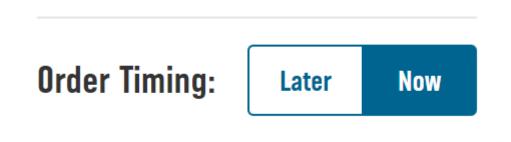
#### Internal consistency



# **Consistency with mental models**



#### **Consistency of interpretation**



- Which one is the selected one?
  - Color codes are ambiguous
  - No further internal clues
  - No external clues
- Does it represent the current status?
- Does it represent the status that we want to achieve?

# Inconsistency for Drawing Attention

The border color and button text color in the "danger zone" are deliberately different than the rest of the page

#### Merge button

When merging pull requests, you can allow any combination of merge commits, squashing, or rebasing. At least one option must be enabled.



After pull requests are merged, you can have head branches deleted automatically.

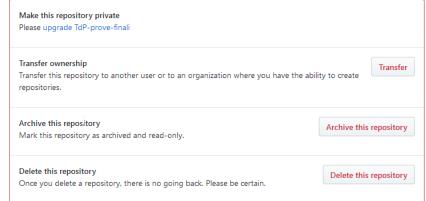
Automatically delete head branches  Deleted branches will still be able to be restored.	

#### GitHub Pages

GitHub Pages is designed to host your personal, organization, or project pages from a GitHub repository.



#### Danger Zone



- Strive for consistency
- Cater to universal usability
- Offer informative feedback
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- Prevent errors
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- Users with different needs: let the interface adapt, let content be transformed
- Novices vs. experts. Young vs elderly. Web vs. mobile. Users with disabilities (→Accessibility)
- Responsive design
- International (and cultural)variations

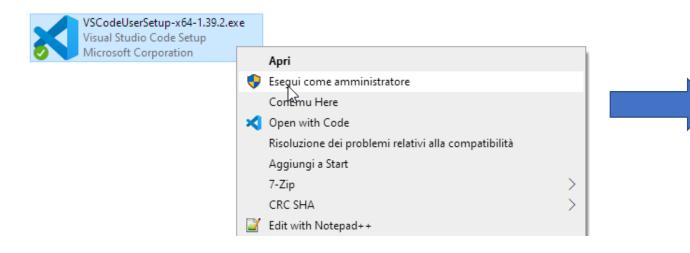
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- For \*every\* human action, there should be an interface feedback
- Frequent and minor actions: light feedback
- Infrequent and major actions: stronger feedback
- Visual presentation of objects helps showing the changes (e.g., dim, highlight, grey out, ...)

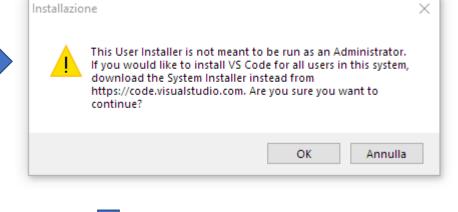
## **Example**



#### Example



Try to install VS Code for all users on a computer (install to Program files rather than user's folders)





#### We went a long way from...

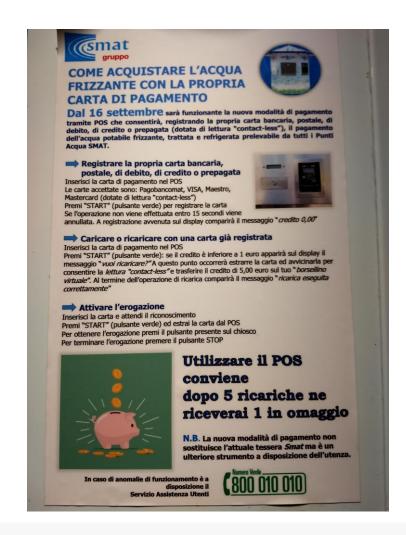
```
GW-BASIC 3.23
(C) Copyright Microsoft 1983,1984,1985,1986,1987,1988
60300 Bytes free
10 INPUT X
RUN
? Fulvio
?Redo from start
               3LOAD" 4SAVE" 5CONT← 6,"LPT1 7TRON← 8TROFF← 9KEY
```

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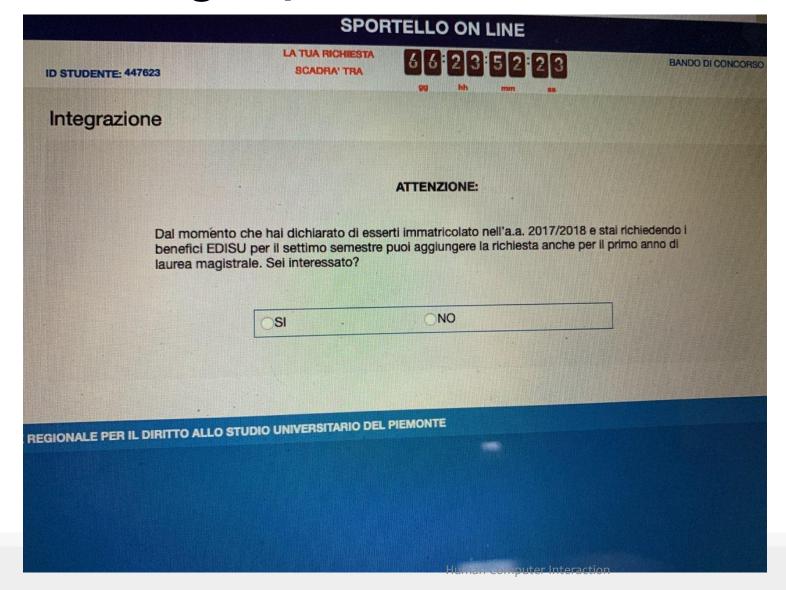
- Every sequence of actions should have
  - Beginning
  - Development
  - o End
- Provide clear feedback at end
  - Satisfy users
  - 'Delete' current task from their working memory, prepare for the next

## Clear dialog sequence





#### Clear dialog sequence



OK

Submit

Confirm

Next

•••

- Strive for consistency
- Cater to universal usability
- Offer informative feedback
- Design dialogs to yield closure
- Prevent errors
- Permit easy reversal of actions
- Keep users in control
- Reduce short-term memory load

- Avoid the possibility of making errors
- Disable menu items, buttons, links, ...
   that are not applicable
- Prevent entering illegal characters
- Offer simple, constructive and specific instructions for recovery
  - Repair only the faulty part
- Errors should not alter application state (or make it easy to restore)

## **Error prevention**



- Strive for consistency
- Cater to universal usability
- Offer informative feedback
- Design dialogs to yield closure
- Prevent errors
- Permit easy reversal of actions
- Keep users in control
- Reduce short-term memory load

- Actions should be reversible (at the cost of extra development effort)
  - Relieves anxiety
  - Encourages exploration
- Different levels of reversibility
  - A single action
  - A data-entry task
  - A complete group of actions

- Strive for consistency
- Cater to universal usability
- Offer informative feedback
- Design dialogs to yield closure
- Prevent errors
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- The interface should always respond to user actions
- Minimize the tedious and lengthy tasks
- Avoid surprises or changes in familiar behavior
- Provide undo/redo, cancel/confirm

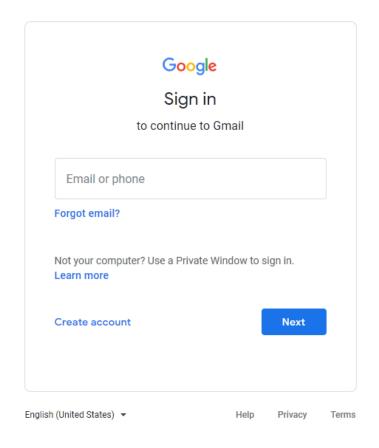
# Example

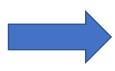
*Come docente, quali problemi hai avuto nello svolgimento degli esami?
Scegliere una o più delle seguenti opzioni
Non ho avuto problemi
Organizzazione dell'esame (poca chiarezza nella spiegazione delle modalità, sovrapposizione di date, procedure troppo confuse, deposito e consultazione documentazione complesso, ecc.)
Dispongo di hardware/software inadeguato
La connessione che uso è lenta/non continua
Problemi ambientali (troppo rumore, confusione, scarsa possibilità di concentrazione)

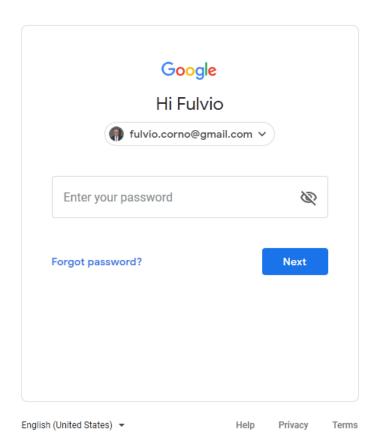
- Strive for consistency
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- Rule of thumb:
  - People can remember 7±2 chunks of information
- Information on a screen should not be needed (remembered) in the next screen
- No entry of phone numbers (collect from addressbook), show website location, fit long forms in a single page, ...

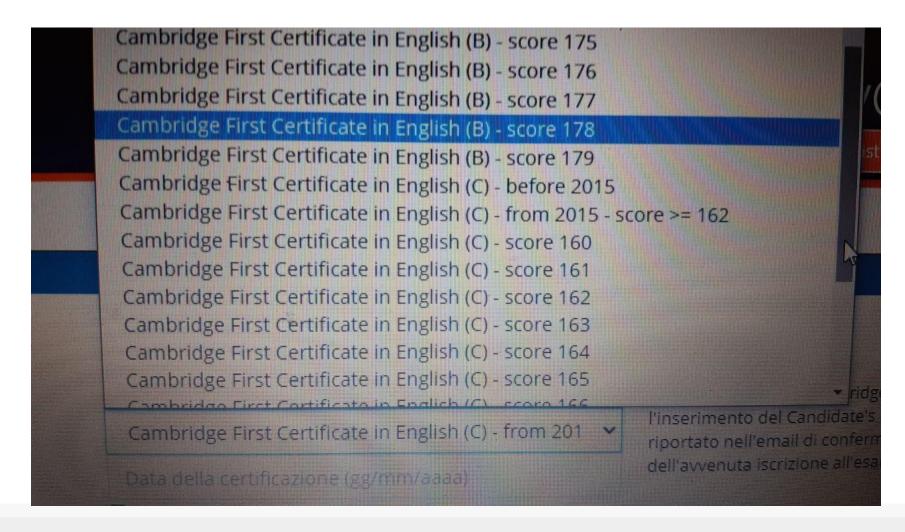
# Discussion (an exception?)







# Exceptions... sometimes entering is better than selecting

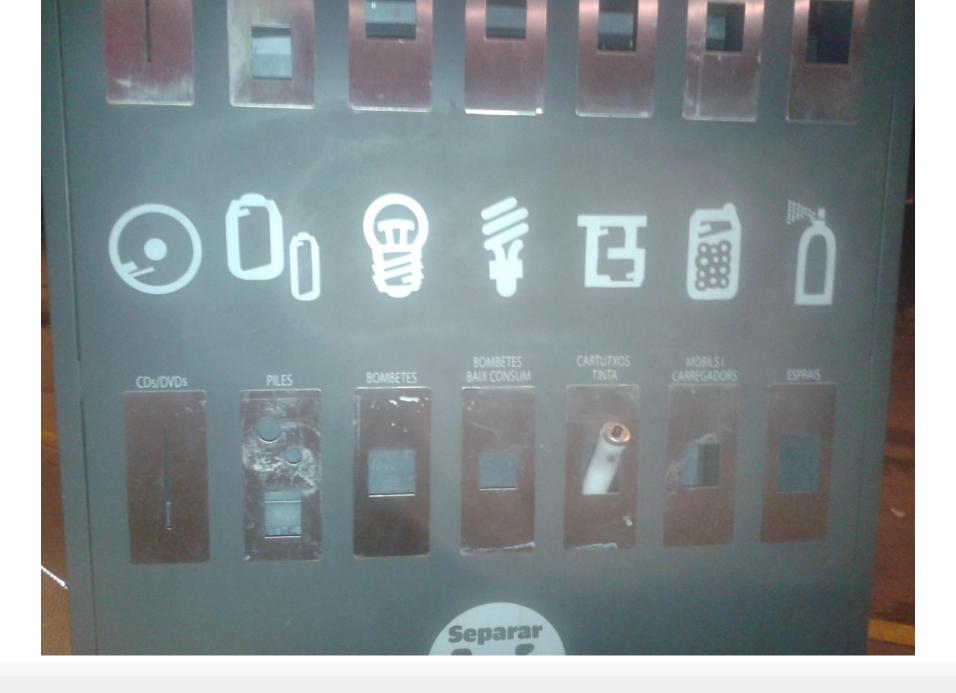


# **Design Principles by Benyon (I)** (adapted from Norman, Nielsen and others)

- Learnability helping people access, learn and remember the system
  - Visibility ensure that things are visible, so users can see what functions are available and what the system is currently doing
  - Consistency (→above)
  - Familiarity use language and symbols that the intended audience will be familiar with
  - Affordance design things so it is clear what they are for (e.g., buttons should be pushed). Maps the (perceived) properties of the objects with how they can be used

### **Affordance**

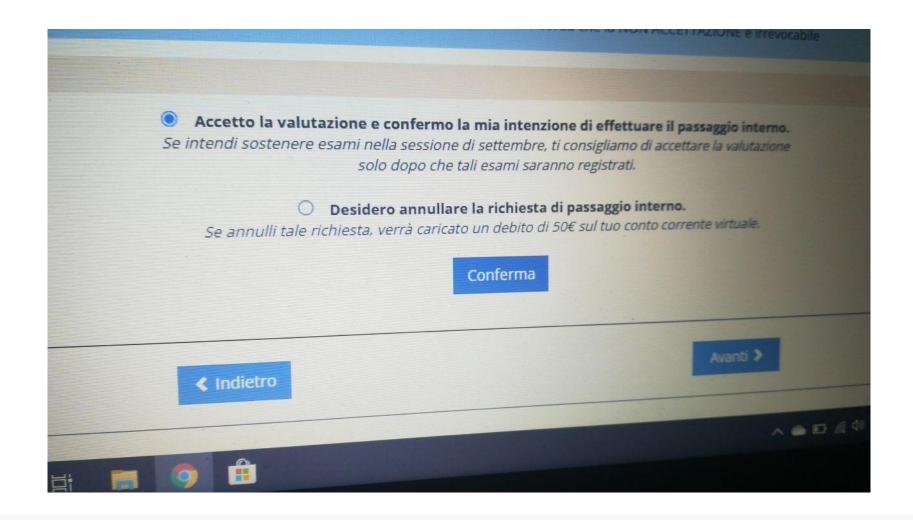




# **Design Principles by Benyon (II)** (adapted from Norman, Nielsen and others)

- **Effectiveness** giving users the sense of being in control, knowing what to do and how to do it
  - Navigation support people in moving around the different sections: maps, directional signs, information signs
  - Control who is in control for the next interaction? Clear and logical mapping between controls and their effect. Relationships with the "side effects" in the real world
  - Feedback (→feedback above)

### **Example: Navigation and Control?**



# **Design Principles by Benyon (III)** (adapted from Norman, Nielsen and others)

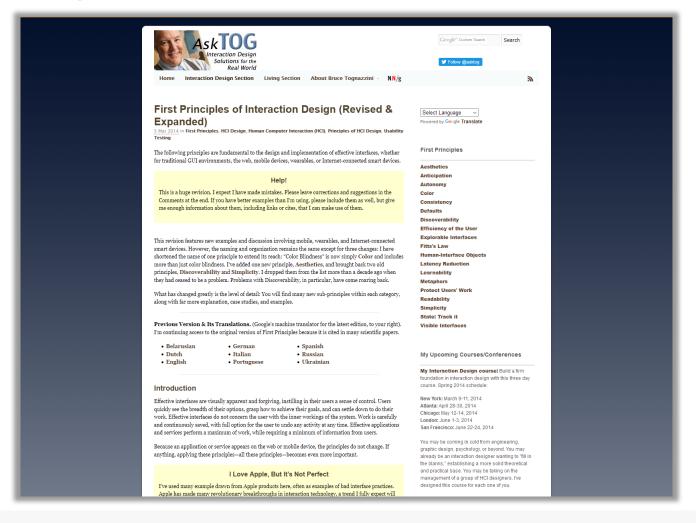
- Safety and Security
  - Recovery (→error recovery)
  - Constraints (→prevent errors)
- Accommodation offer an interaction way that suits the users
  - Flexibility (→universal usability)
  - Style stylish, attractive, nice-looking
  - Conviviality polite, friendly, pleasant. No abrupt interruptions

## Norman's Seven Principles for Transforming Difficult Tasks into Simple Ones

- Use both knowledge in the world and knowledge in the head
- Simplify the structure of tasks
- Make things visible
- Get the mappings right
- Exploit the power of constraints, both natural and artificial
- Design for error
- When all else fails, standardize

First Principles of Interaction Design

(Bruce Tognazzini, 2014)



https://asktog.com/atc/principles-of-interaction-design/

Aesthetics
Anticipation
Autonomy
Color
Consistency
Defaults
Discoverability

Efficiency of the User

**Explorable Interfaces** 

Fitts's Law

Human-Interface Objects

**Latency Reduction** 

Learnability

Metaphors

Protect Users' Work

Readability

Simplicity

State: Track it

Visible Interfaces

## Design Guidelines

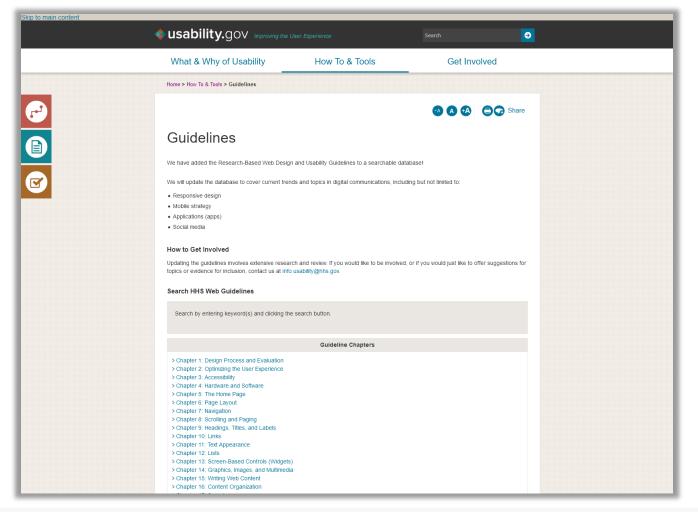
**Shared language** to promote **consistency** among multiple designers in terminology usage, appearance, and action sequences

The "How"

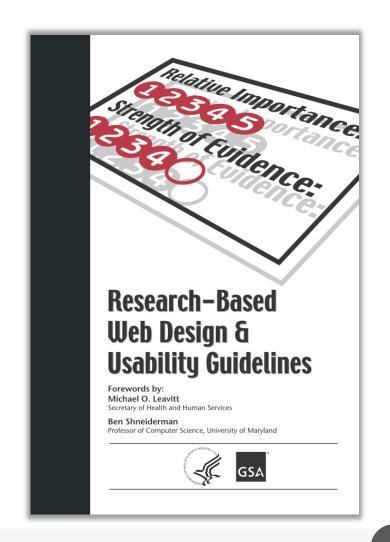
### **Design Guidelines**

- Concrete suggestions about "How" the Principles may be satisfied
- Often rule-based
- Based on best practices
- Encapsulate experience of expert designers
- Sometimes blessed as «standards»
- But:
  - May be too specific and hard to apply to your situation
  - o Difficult to develop a general-purpose guideline

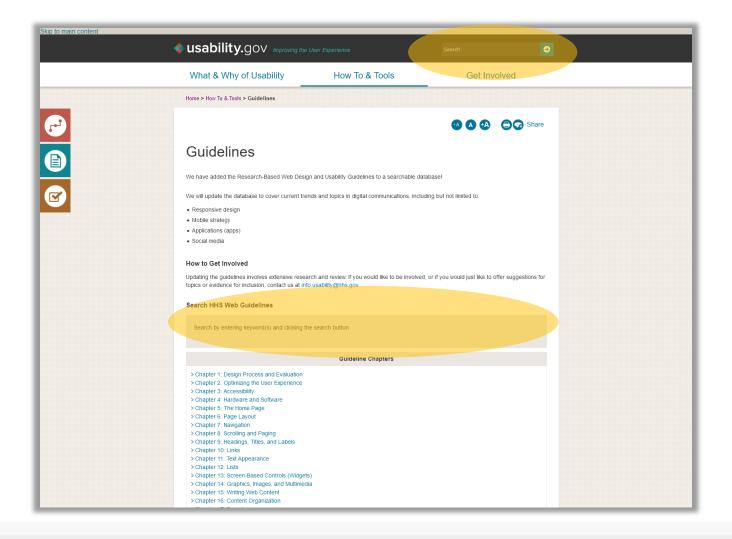
# Research-based Web Design and Usability Guidelines



U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services. The Research-Based Web Design & Usability Guidelines, Enlarged/Expanded edition. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2006. https://guidelines.usability.gov/

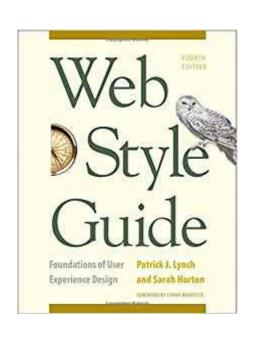


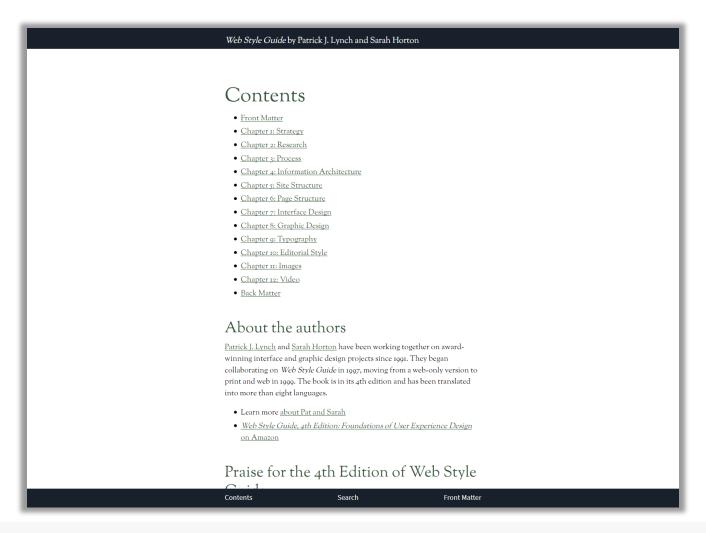
#### But...



### Web Style Guide

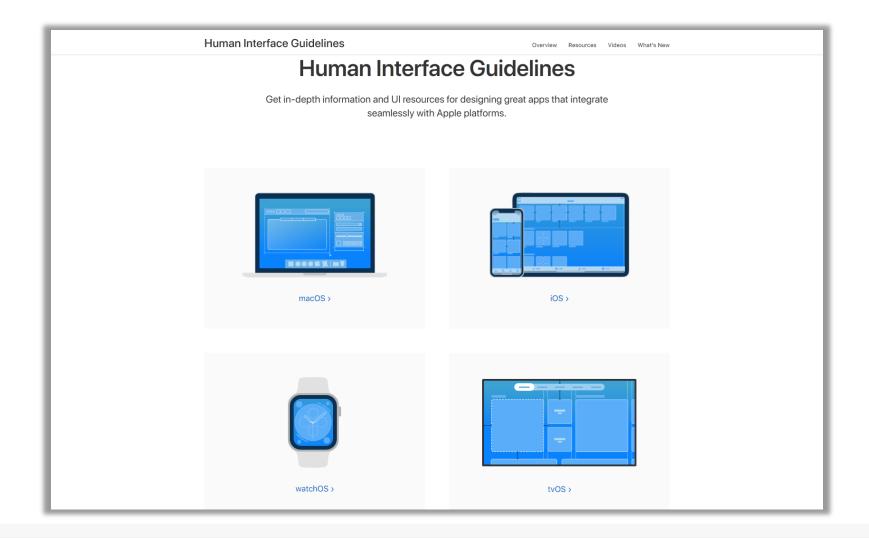






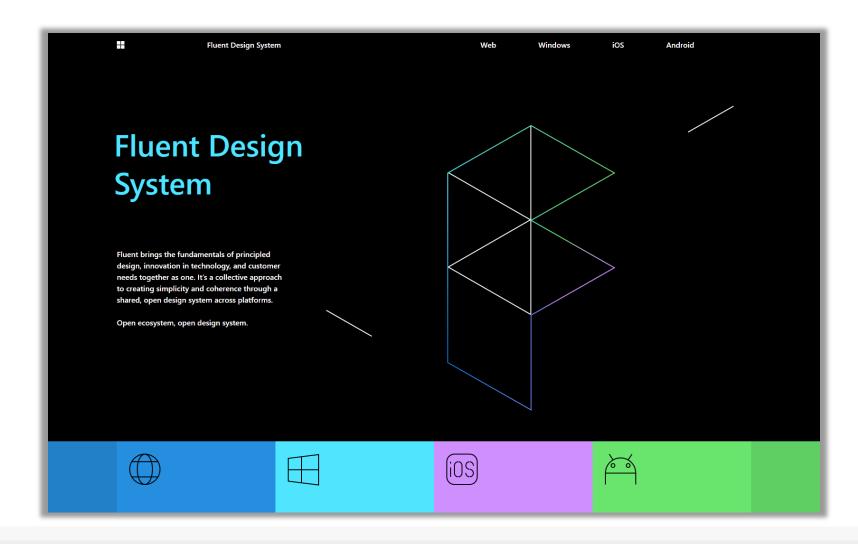


## **Example: Apple**



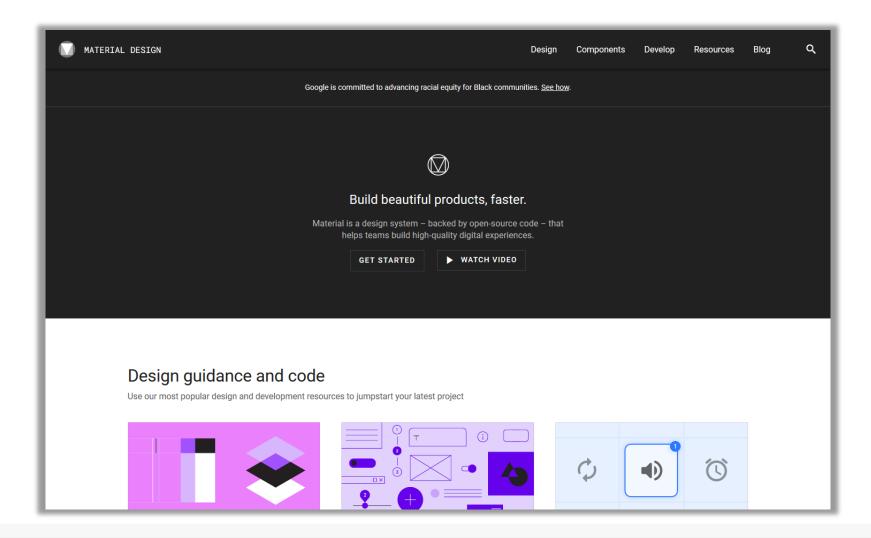


## Example: Microsoft «Fluent» design



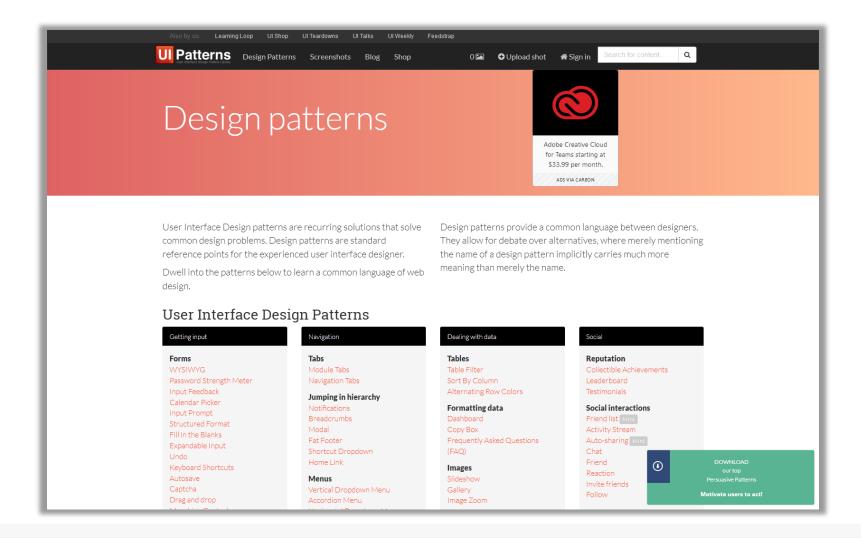


## Example: Google «Material» design



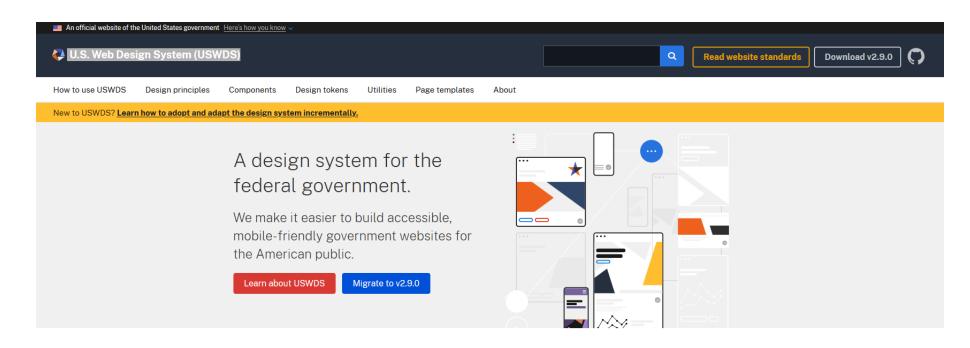


### **Example: UI Design Patterns**





## U.S. Web Design System (USWDS)





#### Components

Browse all USWDS components and get UX, accessibility, and implementation guidance.

Browse the components



#### Design tokens

Learn how to get started using design tokens, the building blocks of USWDS component design.

View design tokens



#### Utilities

Adapt your designs and deliver prototypes quickly and consistently, without touching a line of CSS.

**Build with utilities** 



#### Page templates

Use our basic page templates as a starting point for your design and development process.

Start from a template

#### References

- Ben Shneiderman, Catherine Plaisant, Maxine S. Cohen, Steven M. Jacobs, and Niklas Elmqvist, Designing the User Interface: Strategies for Effective Human-Computer Interaction
  - Chapter 3: Guidelines, Principles, and Theories
- David Benyon: Designing Interactive Systems, Pearson, 2014
  - Section 4.5: Design Principles
- COGS120/CSE170: Human-Computer Interaction Design, videos by Scott
   Klemmer, <a href="https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLLssT5z\_DsK\_nusHL\_Mjt87THSTlgrsyJ">https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLLssT5z\_DsK\_nusHL\_Mjt87THSTlgrsyJ</a>



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