Design Principles

Primary design principles we focus on and imbue into the products we build. These basic principles generate elegant compositions, holistic alignment, engaging user experiences & interactions.

These principles is our primary approach to solving these problems. They are the priority decisions makers when designing our products.

1. Simplicity (be uncomplicated)

2. More signal less noise (be clear)

3. Common patterns (be familiar)

4. Visual hierarchy (be organized)

5. White space (be consumable)

Trust	Intrinsic motivation
Foolproof	Honesty
Proportion	Basic
Simplicity	Clarity
Transparency	Harmony
Subtle	Meaningful Order
Functional	Common Patterns
User Oriented	Rhythm
Typography	Continuance
Universal	Alignment
Effective	Obvious
Usable	More Signal
Passive & Active	Unobtrusive
Negative Space	Serendipity
White Space	Emotional
Detailed	Contrast
Highly Contextual	Visual Hierarchy
Balance	Lean In
Common Conventions	Lean Out
Minimalism	Elegant
Emphasis	Helpful
Unity	Non Complex
Empathetic	Innovative
Durable	
Utilitarian	
Focused	

Simplicity - *be uncomplicated*

Simplicity unclutters our lives

An uncluttered life is an unfettered life. Simplicity gives us back the life we have given up to all the clutter. A simple user interface is not boring. It excites users because it lets them connect with the content and engage the company behind the site.

A simple design lends itself naturally to usability. With a lack of clutter, the user can easily understand the web site's navigational structure. Furthermore, a simple design does not feature an overwhelming number of distractions (in the form of too much advertisement, or too many graphics, etc.), so the user can absorb content purely and fully.

Laws of Simplicity by John Maedea

Law 1: Reduce - The simplest way to achieve simplicity is through thoughtful reduction. Shrink, hide & embody.

Law 2: Organize - Organization makes a system of many appear fewer. Sort, label, integrate & prioritize.

Law 3: Time - Savings in time feel like simplicity. How can you make the wait shorter? How can you make the wait more tolerable?

Law 4: Learn - Knowledge makes everything simpler. Basics, repeat yourself often, avoid creating desperation, inspire with examples. Never forget to repeat.

Law 5: Differences - Simplicity and complexity need each other. Rhythm of life.

Law 6: Context - What lies in the periphery of simplicity is definitely not peripheral. Nothing is something.
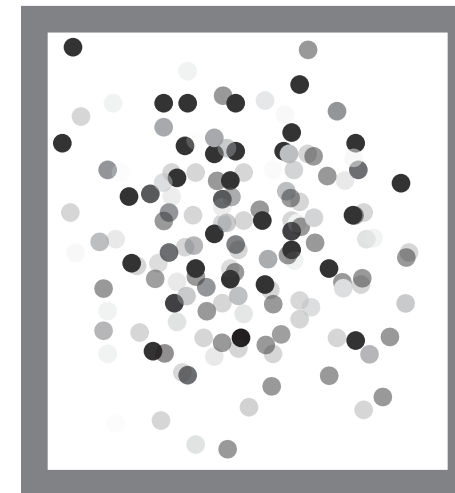
Law 7: Emotion - More emotions are better than less.

Law 8: Trust - In simplicity we trust.

Law 9: Failure - Some things can never be made simple.

Law 10: The One - Simplicity is about subtracting the obvious, and adding the meaningful.

Simplicity brings
unification, context, and usability

Lack of simplicity brews frustration, distractions, lack of rhythm and chaotic experiences.

More Signal Less Noise - *be clear*

What is Signal-to-Noise Ratio?
There are a series of steps in any communication. It begins with the creation of a message, followed by the transmission of that message, and ending with the reception of that message by another party. At each of these 3 stages the signal itself degrades some and noise is added.

Types of Signals
• Visual Signals & Noise
   Strong - Provides visual clarity and clear understanding of value.
   Weak - difficult for users to visually digest information.

• Verbal Communication Signals & Noise
   Strong- Short concise to the point litteral, emotional or value communication.
   Weak - Over leangthy descriptions, assumptions, and fragmented comunication.

• Tasks Flows
   Strong- Clear understanding of the value of the task. Confidence & trust in the task.
   Weak - Unclear value of the task, not sure of the expected outcome or if the task was affective.

What constitutes as noise?
• Excessive aesthetic
• Redundant chatter or communication
• Unbalanced proportions of GUI

Additional
The act of consciously increasing the decibels of our brand values, value proposition, or message tone to our users. Its connecting the invisible dots & eliminating the guess work. Clear signal allows our users to understand concepts quickly, able to achieve meaningful task. Its enabling predictability.

"Make all visual distinctions as subtle as possible, but still clear and effective."
— Edward Tufte

Strong Signal provides clarity, and eliminates the guesswork.

Weak Signal surfaces apprehension, confusion, loss of clarity & mental friction.

Common Patterns - *be familiar*

The need for standards.
Common patterns or standards, increase users' sense of mastery over a web application, increase their ability to get things done, and increase their overall satisfaction with the experience.

Common Patterns ensure that users
• know what features to expect
• know how these features will look in the interface
• know where to find these features on the site and on the page
• know how to operate each feature to achieve their goal
• don't have to ponder the meaning of unknown design elements
• don't miss important features because they overlook a non-standard design element
• don't get nasty surprises when something doesn't work as expected

Additional
Follow conventions, go with what people are accustomed to align to mental models. Enhance predictability (tool tips, title tags, soft underhand pitches)

Allows user to get to content quick, able to achieve tasks quicker resulting in ease of use or better usability. Its not making me think. Its not making relearn how to do the same thing over and over.

Strong Common Patterns
connects the dots,
progression by showing
what to expect.

Weak Common Patterns
provide little or no
guidance about how to
achieve a goal.

Visual Hierarchy - *be organized*

What is visual Hierarchy?
Visual hierarchies create centers of interest on web application, communicate additional meaning through convention and repetition, highlight actions you want your visitors to take, and establish patterns of movement and flow. In addition, it solves problems does not create them. It makes order out of chaos. Its designing for optimal scanning

Benefits of good visual hierarchy
• A good visual hierarchy makes the page easy to understand.
• Content is organized, prioritized & therefore show which things are important & which are not
• Visitors can know quickly whether the page provides what they are looking for
• Creating a good vertical rhythm with type and hierarchy
• Show the relation between everything on the page
• Avoid creating a cluttering feelings

Visual Hierarchy Expresses Meaning
Contrast - shows relative importance. Without being told you know the larger text is more important than the smaller text. Bigger grabs our attention first and so comes across as more important.

Repetition - attaches meaning to new elements. Think blue underlined links. You've seen them before and the next time you see them you bring with you information about them. Repetition instantly communicates that elements are at the same level in the hierarchy.

Alignment - creates order. It allows you to quickly connect elements across the page and helps define start and end points. A single element that breaks the established alignment calls attention to itself and it's importance. Think of a pull quote. Visually it gives you clues it's an important concept taken from within the text.

Proximity - groups elements within a hierarchy and creates new sub hierarchies. Your home page has three offers for different products or services. Each might have a heading, a descriptive paragraph, an image, and a link to more information. The specific design elements would be on a different hierarchical level, but each offer (by containing the same 4 elements) connects the offers as being at the same hierarchical level.

Strong visual hierarchies guide visual & logical progression by showing whats important.

Weak visual hierarchies provide little or no guidance about what is important.

White Space - *be consumable*

Benefits of white space
Improved legibility, the most obvious benefit of white space is that it increases legibility.

Higher comprehension
White space between paragraphs and around blocks of text actually helps people understand what they are reading better.

Increased attention
White space can also be a powerful way of drawing the users attention to a particular screen element. To a non designer the most obvious way to make something stand out is to make it bigger. However, often surrounding the item with white space is just as effective.

Creates the right visual tone
The use of white space can be a powerful way to communicate elegance, openness and fresh-ness.
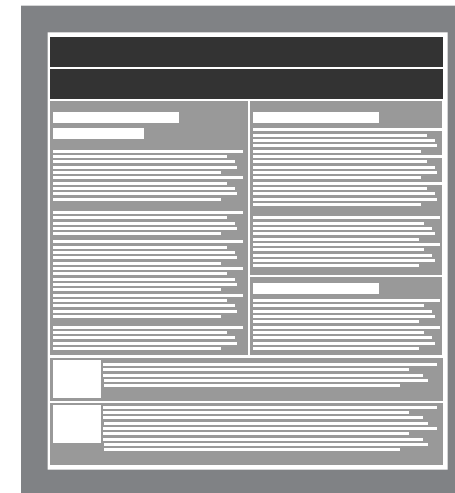
Basic Elements of White Space
• Space around graphics and images
• Margins, padding and gutters
• Line-spacing and letter-spacing within text content
• Space between columns

Strong use of white space communicates legibility, openness and freshness.
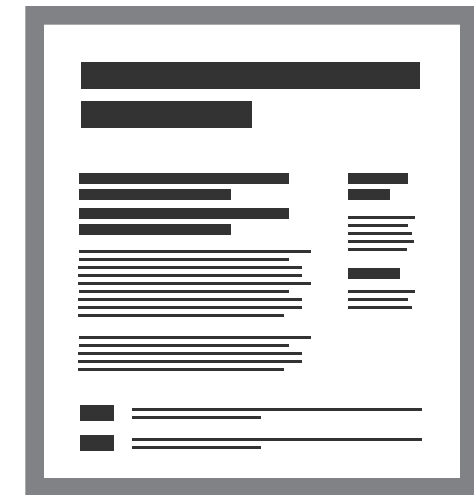
Lack of white space causes visual tension and an overwhelming sense of clutter or noise.

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White Space - *be consumable*

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