

## User Interface Design Principles

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### What the ANDP Team thinks

The team thinks that for the ANDP search and delivery service the most important concepts for the user interface design are:

- Simple and awesomely powerful
- Fast
- What the user wants
- 'Googley'

Rather than sit down and develop our own user interface design principles and re-invent the wheel, we have instead decided to aspire to those of Google. Google have very clearly articulated the principles they believe you need to follow in order to achieve the 'Googley' experience, and these are outlined below:

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Sourced from: <http://www.google.com/corporate/ux.html> 28 May 2008

## Google User Experience

### Our aspirations

The Google User Experience team aims to create designs that are **useful, fast, simple, engaging, innovative, universal, profitable, beautiful, trustworthy and personable**. A harmonious balance of these ten principles is a constant challenge. A product that gets the balance right is "Googley" – and will satisfy and delight people all over the world.

### Ten principles that contribute to a 'Googley' user experience

#### 1. Focus on people – their lives, their work, their dreams. **USEFUL**

The Google User Experience team works to discover people's actual needs, including needs they can't always articulate. Armed with that information, Google can create products that solve real-world problems and spark the creativity of all kinds of people. Improving people's lives, not just easing step-by-step tasks, is our goal.

Above all, a well-designed Google product is useful in daily life. It doesn't try to impress users with its whizbang technology or visual style – though it might have both. It doesn't strong-arm people to use features they don't want – but it does provide a natural growth path for those who are interested. It doesn't intrude on people's lives – but it does open doors for users who want to explore the world's information, work more quickly and creatively, and share ideas with their friends or the world.

## 2. Every millisecond counts. **FAST**

Nothing is more valuable than people's time. Google pages load quickly, thanks to slim code and carefully selected image files. The most essential features and text are placed in the easiest-to-find locations. Unnecessary clicks, typing, steps, and other actions are eliminated. Google products ask for information only once and include smart defaults. Tasks are streamlined.

Speed is a boon to users. It is also a competitive advantage that Google doesn't sacrifice without good reason.

## 3. Simplicity is powerful. **SIMPLE**

Simplicity fuels many elements of good design, including ease of use, speed, visual appeal, and accessibility. But simplicity starts with the design of a product's fundamental functions. Google doesn't set out to create feature-rich products; our best designs include only the features that people need to accomplish their goals. Ideally, even products that require large feature sets and complex visual designs appear to be simple as well as powerful.

Google teams think twice before sacrificing simplicity in pursuit of a less important feature. Our hope is to evolve products in new directions instead of just adding more features.

## 4. Engage beginners and attract experts. **ENGAGING**

Designing for many people doesn't mean designing for the lowest common denominator. The best Google designs appear quite simple on the surface but include powerful features that are easily accessible to those users who want them. Our intent is to invite beginners with a great initial experience while also attracting power users whose excitement and expertise will draw others to the product.

A well-designed Google product lets new users jump in, offers help when necessary, and ensures that users can make simple and intuitive use of the product's most valuable features. Progressive disclosure of advanced features encourages people to expand their usage of the product. Whenever appropriate, Google offers smart features that entice people with complex online lives – for instance, people who share data across several devices and computers, work online and off, and crave storage space.

## 5. Dare to innovate. **INNOVATIVE**

Design consistency builds a trusted foundation for Google products, makes users comfortable, and speeds their work. But it is the element of imagination that transforms designs from ho-hum to delightful.

Google encourages innovative, risk-taking designs whenever they serve the needs of users. Our teams encourage new ideas to come out and play. Instead of just matching the features of existing products, Google wants to change the game.

## 6. Design for the world. **UNIVERSAL**

The World Wide Web has opened all the resources of the Internet to people everywhere. For example, many users are exploring Google products while strolling with a mobile device, not sitting at a desk with a personal computer. Our goal is to design products that are contextually relevant and available through the medium and methods that make sense to users. Google supports slower connections and older browsers when possible, and Google allows people to choose how they view information (screen size, font size) and how they enter information (smart query parsing). The User Experience team researches the fundamental differences in user experiences throughout the world and works to design the right products for each audience, device, and culture. Simple translation, or "graceful degradation" of a feature set, isn't sufficient to meet people's needs.

Google is also committed to improving the accessibility of its products. Our desire for simple and inclusive products, and Google's mission to make the world's information universally accessible, demand products that support assistive technologies and provide a useful and enjoyable experience for everyone, including those with physical and cognitive limitations.

## **7. Plan for today's and tomorrow's business. *PROFITABLE***

Those Google products that make money strive to do so in a way that is helpful to users. To reach that lofty goal, designers work with product teams to ensure that business considerations integrate seamlessly with the goals of users. Teams work to make sure ads are relevant, useful, and clearly identifiable as ads. Google also takes care to protect the interests of advertisers and others who depend on Google for their livelihood.

Google never tries to increase revenue from a product if it would mean reducing the number of Google users in the future. If a profitable design doesn't please users, it's time to go back to the drawing board. Not every product has to make money, and none should be bad for business.

*Note: It is not the Library's intent to make money from the ANDP. This will be a free public service.*

## **8. Delight the eye without distracting the mind. *BEAUTIFUL***

If people looked at a Google product and said "Wow, that's beautiful!" the User Experience team would cheer. A positive first impression makes users comfortable, assures them that the product is reliable and professional, and encourages people to make the product their own.

A minimalist aesthetic makes sense for most Google products because a clean, clutter-free design loads quickly and doesn't distract users from their goals. Visually appealing images, color, and fonts are balanced against the needs for speed, scannable text, and easy navigation. Still, "simple elegance" is not the best fit for every product. Audience and cultural context matter. A Google product's visual design should please its users and improve usability for them.

## **9. Be worthy of people's trust. *TRUSTWORTHY***

Good design can go a long way to earn the trust of the people who use Google products. Establishing Google's reliability starts with the basics – for example, making sure the interface is efficient and professional, actions are easily reversed, ads are clearly identified, terminology is consistent, and users are never unhappily surprised. In addition, Google products open themselves to the world by including links to competitors and encouraging user contributions such as community maps or iGoogle gadgets.

A greater challenge is to make sure that Google demonstrates respect for users' right to own and control their own data. Google is transparent about how it uses information and never shares data outside Google without a user's explicit consent. Our products warn users about such dangers as insecure connections, different privacy policies on other websites, actions that may make users vulnerable to spam, or the possibility that data shared outside Google may be stored elsewhere. Google is reassuring but truthful about data sharing so that users can make informed choices. The larger Google becomes, the more essential it is to live up to our "Don't be evil" motto.

## **10. Add a human touch. *PERSONABLE***

Google includes a wide range of personalities, and our designs have personality, too. Text and design elements are friendly, quirky, and smart – and not boring, close-minded, or arrogant. Google text talks directly to people and offers the same practical, informal assistance that anyone would offer to a neighbor who asked a question. And Google doesn't

let fun or personality interfere with other elements of a design, especially when people's livelihood, or their ability to find vital information, is at stake.

Google doesn't know everything, and no design is perfect. Our products ask for feedback, and Google acts on that feedback. When practicing these design principles, the Google User Experience team seeks the best possible balance in the time available for each product. Then the cycle of iteration, innovation, and improvement continues.