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Good Design Does Its Job, Bad Design Just Looks Pretty

Great design creates a seamless experience through user focus, functionality, and impact. While it may be visually appealing, bad design falters in real-world application, failing to solve the user's needs effectively.



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Key Difference

Aspect	Good Design	Bad Design
Purpose	Solves user problems effectively	Focuses only on appearance, ignoring functionality.
Usability	Intuitive, user-friendly, and easy to navigate.	"Why Confusing, requires effort to understand or use.at?" and "How much?"
Aesthetics	Enhances usability and complements the function.	Prioritises visuals over the user experience.
Consistency	Maintains coherence in design elements.	Inconsistent, leading to a disjointed experience.

	Good Design	Bad Design
Error Handling	Guides users gracefully through mistakes	Provides little to no feedback on errors.
Performance	Fast, responsive, and reliable.	Lags or is resource-intensive, frustrating users.
Feedback	Generates positive feedback and high engagement.	Triggers complaints or low user retention.
Longevity	Stands the test of time with scalable solutions.	Requires frequent redesigns due to inefficiencies.
Outcome	Leaves users satisfied and fulfilled.	Leaves users frustrated or dissatisfied.

User-Centered Design

Definition:

Design should solve real problems for real people.

Implementation:

Conduct user research to understand needs, goals, and pain points. Create Personas and empathy maps to guide design decisions.

Example:

Designing a simple navigation system that caters to users with varying technical skills.

Usability

Definition:

The design should be intuitive and easy to use without requiring extensive instructions.

Implementation:

Focus on clear information architecture, consistent patterns, and minimal learning curve.

Example:

A shopping app with an intuitive checkout process that requires minimal steps.

Accessibility

Definition:

Ensure the design is usable by people with diverse abilities and in various environments.

Implementation:

Use proper contrast, keyboard navigation, screen reader compatibility, and alt text for images.

Example:

Netflix’s subtitles and customisable text settings for visually impaired users.

Functionality Over Aesthetics

Definition:

The design must work seamlessly to serve its purpose before prioritising visual appeal.

Implementation:

Balance beautiful visuals with meaningful functionality.

Example:

Google’s homepage—minimal yet highly functional.

Consistency

Definition:

Maintain consistency in design patterns, colours, typography, and interaction elements across the product.

Implementation:

Use style guides and design systems to enforce consistency.

Example:

Material Design principles by Google ensure visual and functional consistency across Android apps.

Feedback & Responsiveness

Definition:

Provide clear feedback for user actions and ensure the interface responds promptly.

Implementation:

Use loading indicators, success/error messages, and animations for interactions.

Example:

Button hover effects or confirmation messages after submitting a form.

Performance Optimisation

Definition:

Good design also ensures fast load times and seamless operation, especially on low-end devices.

Implementation:

Optimise images, use efficient code, and test for performance on multiple devices.

Example:

A fast-loading e-commerce website that works on both mobile and desktop.

Scalability

Definition:

The design should adapt easily to future changes, updates, or expansions.

Implementation:

Use modular components and flexible layouts.

Example:

A dashboard with customisable widgets for varying user needs.

Emotional Impact

Definition:

Create designs that evoke positive emotions and build a connection with users.

Implementation:

Use engaging visuals, relatable content, and human-centered micro-interactions.

Example:

Duolingo’s playful animations and encouraging messages to motivate learning.

Problem Solving

Definition:

The design must address the user's challenges effectively.

Implementation:

Prioritise user pain points and create solutions through prototypes and iterations.

Example:

A banking app simplifying complex transactions into clear steps.

Data-Driven Decisions

Definition:

Use analytics and user feedback to refine designs continuously.

Implementation:

Track metrics like user engagement, task completion rate, and drop-off points.

Example:

Improving navigation based on heat-map analysis of user behaviour.

Aesthetics Meets Function

Definition:

Visual elements should enhance, not hinder, usability.

Implementation:

Use colour, typography, and spacing to guide user focus without overwhelming them.

Example:

Spotify’s clean and intuitive music browsing experience with eye-catching album art.