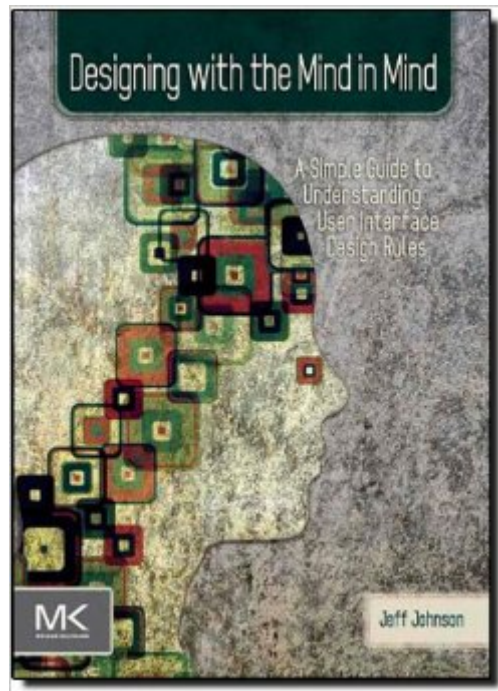


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# Designing With The Mind In Mind: Simple Guide To Understanding User Interface Design Rules



## Synopsis

Early user interface (UI) practitioners were trained in cognitive psychology, from which UI design rules were based. But as the field evolves, designers enter the field from many disciplines. Practitioners today have enough experience in UI design that they have been exposed to design rules, but it is essential that they understand the psychology behind the rules in order to effectively apply them. In *Designing with the Mind in Mind*, Jeff Johnson, author of the best selling *GUI Bloopers*, provides designers with just enough background in perceptual and cognitive psychology that UI design guidelines make intuitive sense rather than being just a list of rules to follow. \* The first practical, all-in-one source for practitioners on user interface design rules and why, when and how to apply them.\* Provides just enough background into the reasoning behind interface design rules that practitioners can make informed decisions in every project.\* Gives practitioners the insight they need to make educated design decisions when confronted with tradeoffs, including competing design rules, time constrictions, or limited resources.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Developed from a course titled "Human-Computer Interaction" that he taught at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand, Dr. Jeff Johnson -- who holds degrees from Yale and Stanford, experience at Xerox and author of the book, "GUI Bloopers" -- offers contextual explanations as to how we visualize and categorize information, data and images in such a manner that engineers and programmers can design user interfaces in the most effective manner. It's a well-written, insightful

and very practical guide that will be of interest to anyone interested in the how-and-why of computer/machine interface design. Topics covered include: How our visual perceptions are biased by experience, the current context, and user's intentions/goals; How our vision is optimized to see structure; Gestalt principles of proximity, continuity, closure, symmetry, figure/ground separation and then how they are combined; How structure enhances people's ability to scan long numbers; how visual hierarchy enables readers to focus on the most relevant information; A discussion of psychological theory that indicates that we're "wired for language, but not for reading" and the design implications of these findings; Limitations of our color vision and implications for how color is presented in user interfaces; the fact that user's peripheral vision is poor and common methods used to make messages more visible (e.g. pop-ups, sound, and flash/motion); Design implications regarding our limited short term and long term memory; how recognition and learning from experience for readers is typically easy while problem solving and recall is hard; And, a discussion of time requirements for systems designers to consider.

This concise book by J. Johnson is filled with practical guidelines and rules of thumb for would-be designers of software-intensive, multi-function tools. Such e-tools' success requires an interface that creates direct, low-friction paths from the goals of the tool-user to the goal-promoting operations made possible by the tool, whether it be a word processor, a smartphone, or an MP3 player. Whenever one specifies a guideline or rule of thumb, or announces a policy that is about to be adopted and enforced, it is wise to explain the reasoning behind it, even if one has the power to enforce its adoption. Detailing the reasons, in tandem with examples of good and bad practice, makes the rule more memorable, and more likely to be reconstructed by someone trying to recall what the rule is. The reasoning, if valid, will also undercut the natural tendency to ignore or actively subvert rules that appear arbitrary, with no better basis than the whim of some over-controlling personality. An incredible thing about "Designing with the mind in mind" is that most of its guidelines are ultimately easy to remember and, equally important, "easy to swallow", that is, made as palatable as possible by the reasons and examples provided. Because the basis for each guideline is so well explained, the guidelines all make intuitive sense. The reasons provided for the design guidelines are primarily drawn from cognitive psychology, and secondarily from neuroscience. Therefore, the title appropriately reads "with the mind in mind" and not "with the brain in mind". In a compact book (around 200 pages) that can be read in two sessions, it would have been a mistake to try to ground all the guidelines in neural constraints.

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