Module 7
Design patterns

Introduction

In this module, you'll be introduced to the concept of design patterns, which are reusable solutions to common problems that are seen over and over again in software. You'll learn that design patterns are techniques that allow you to bring design principles to life in software interfaces. You'll know how to use design patterns to enhance the quality of your designs.

You'll be introduced to a range of concepts including chunking, alignment, table alignment, call-to-action, visual hierarchy and progress indicators, as a way to make software more perceivable and predictable.

You'll recognise the different digital affordances and how they need to be harnessed appropriately in order to reduce errors and the level of effort for users. You'll also learn how help, error handling and inline validation can also reduce the level of effort, reduce errors and increase the smooth flow through software. You'll also understand the concept of pattern libraries, an online resource that can help prevent designers from having to reinvent the wheel.

Topics covered include:

- Chunking
- Alignment
- Label alignment
- Call to action
- Visual hierarchy
- Progress indicators
- Digital affordances
- Pattern libraries
- Help
- Error handling
- Inline validation

Recommended reading

Web Form Design

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Additional resources

- Usability Testing of Inline Form Validation
- How Chunking Helps Content Processing - NN/g
- Pttrns
- Mobile Patterns
- Pattern Tap

Chunking

Break large bits of data into digestible chunks.

Formset folders — input groups.
↳ fill out form faster and with less mistakes

— Group data sets on dashboards.
— Aids scanability.

Alignment

Alignment of items helps page structure.

↳ can assist with path to completion

↳ sense of order.

↳ less misleading → less mistakes.

Label alignment (field labels)

Top aligned labels mean less
work for users.

→ Don't only use placeholder
in place of label.

Call to action

Purpose of the screen.
 → what to do and what
    happens next.

→ ask for sale or donation!

→ make sure it stands out.

Visual hierarchy

Prioritise content
- → Colour
- → Contrast
- → Size.

→ make important info and functions stand out.

Progress indicators

Show progress in sequence
— Done — Doing — To do.

→ Indicate time left.

→ Aids predictability.

Invites user to interact.

Blindingly obvious.

Don't confuse affordances with each other.

Pattern libraries

→ Benchmarking

→ Analyse rather than just look.

→ Craft your own solution

Help

Tooltips. — either on hover or as smaller text.

Don't overdo help to the point of intrusion

Inline validation

Check input as user completes form.

Validate only after user leaves field.

Be sure to test properly.

Indicate where
↳ show what went wrong
↳ how to fix it.