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UI & UX DESIGN

HACKS

YOU MUST KNOW

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Hack #1 - UX is not interchangeable with UI

User Experience (UX) is commonly confused with User Interface (UI). Though the two are intertwined in any design process, they are not synonymous.

UX focuses on how the user interacts with the design which includes user testing, research and problem solving. UI is focused on the visual layout of the application, which is typically influenced by UX.

It's understandable that one would confuse the two concepts, but it is important to know the difference between the two.

Many companies prefer someone with both UI and UX experience, so mastering both concepts could result in more job opportunities whether they be full-time or freelance.

Hack #2 - Make data-based decisions

It's natural to make decisions based on our personal preference, but UX relies on real user data to make decisions.

Depending on our instinct or a co-workers opinion may not result in a better experience for the user. The best way to combat this is by collecting data from the user and observing the trends that are present.

Try using HotJar to see a visual representation of how your users interact with your website or application.
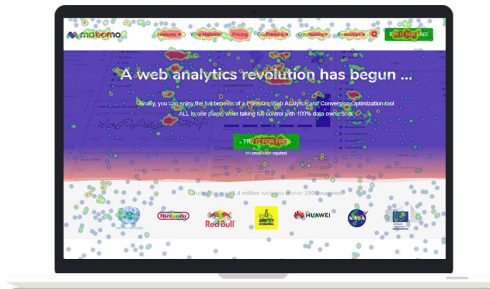
HotJar let's you see how user's interact with your site.

Hack #3 - Plan the user's interactions

Do some thinking for your users. In UX, we want to make sure the user interacts with the application in the way we intend them to.

Designing a predictable layout with clear clues and guidance allows the user to focus less on the interaction and more on the content.

Hack #4 - Simplify user decisions

Make it very easy for a new user to navigate through your app by simplifying the decision making process. Check out the example below.
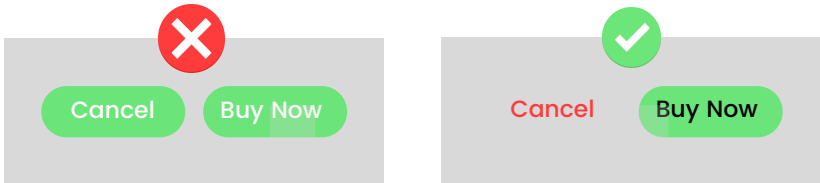
What makes the example on the right better than the left is the color choice that helps subconsciously guide our users decisions.

People associate green with money and positivity, so it is innate for us to gravitate towards a green button when purchasing.

Also, the similar styling on the left confuses the user and requires them to use more effort when navigating the site. This is just one example that shows the power of simplified decision making.

Hack #5 - Provide frequent and clear feedback

Our users want a response to their interactions. We've all had experiences where we've clicked a button, but due to the lack of feedback we aren't sure if it worked correctly or not. Check out the example below.

The example on the right is better because it gives us feedback on our action. Feedback should be frequent, clear, concise and helpful to the user.

Hack #6 – Prevent errors

Instead of making it easy to fix errors, prevent errors altogether by anticipating mistakes. Check out the example below.

The UI on the right is better because it anticipated the user accidentally tapping 'Erase' and puts more emphasis on the post button.

The main thing to consider is, "which mistakes may the user make and how can I prevent them?"

Hack #7 - Create clear interaction guidelines

Let the user know what to do. Don't make them guess. Check out the example below.

The example on the right is better because it tells the user how to interact in on clear, concise statement. If our layout is different than other websites, we must help our users our by giving them basic instructions.

Hack #8 - Consider the details

Make sure the size, location and appearance match the purpose of the element. Check out the example below.
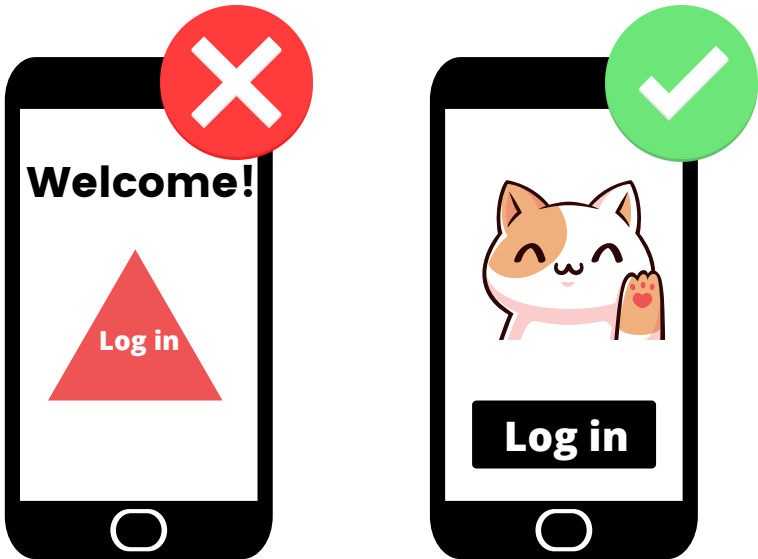
The example on the right is simple, easier to click on a mobile device due to finger placement, there is more contrast on the log in button for the visually impaired and it incorporates an eye-catching visual instead of more words.

Hack #9 - Be descriptive

Use clear, concise word choice to effectively facilite the user experience. Check out the example below.
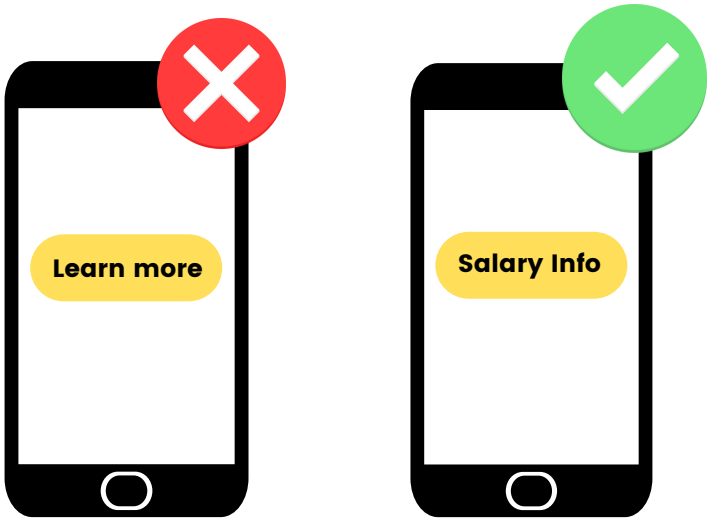
Buttons that say "Learn more" get less clicks than buttons with more descriptive texts. By renaming is "Salary info", the user knows exactly what they will be learning more about.

Hack #10 - Don't be too creative

Users have expectations about how sites should work. Make sure your creativity doesn't hinder the user experience by over complicating things. Check out the example below.
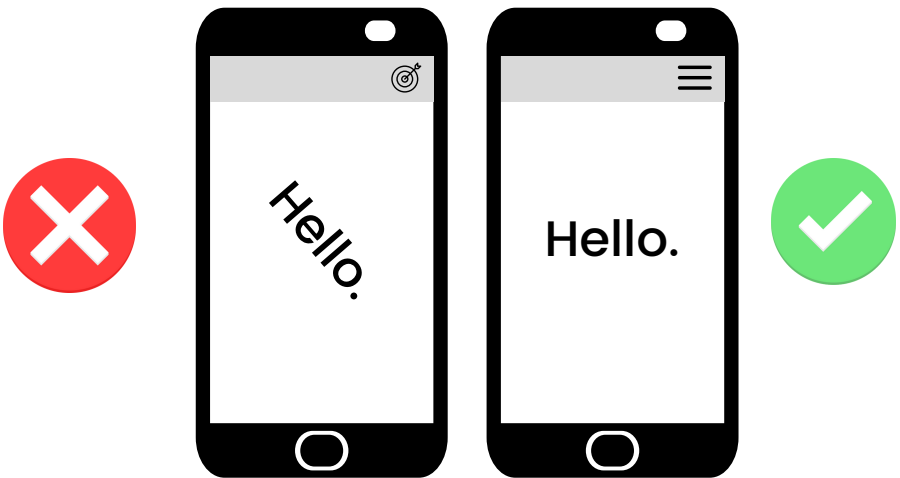
Keep icons, and layouts standard for the most part so a new user will understand how to use the site.

Hack #11 - Intentionality is key

Make sure that your decisions are being made for specific reasons, not at random. Check the example below.
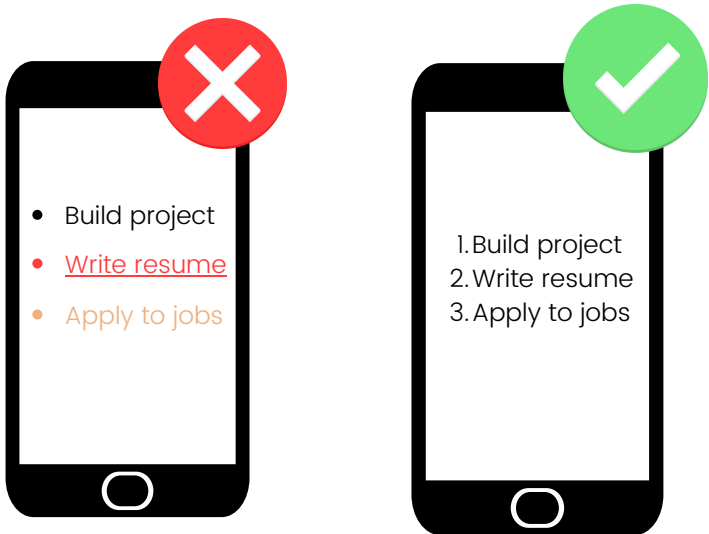
in this example, a numbered list makes it clear for the user that these are to be performed in a sequence. Also, the color differences and underlining have no true purpose. If we're intentional it facilitates the user's experience.

Hack #12 - Consider the digital immigrant

Some of your users may not be fluent in technology. Make it easy for them to understand the purpose of your application.
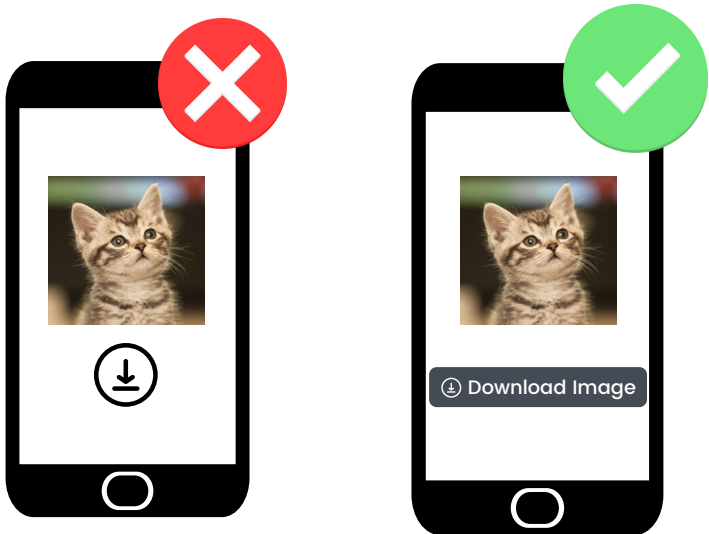

Even though you understand the meaning of an icon doesn't mean your user does. Think about someone who has never used the internet. Would they be able to understand your design?

Hack #13 - Find real users to test

You'll always need another set of eyes in your design, preferably more than just a few. More users means more perspectives that will mimic those who will actually use the application or website.

Choose people in your target demographic. Don't choose your friends. Ask valuable auestions. Be prepared to receive constructive criticism.
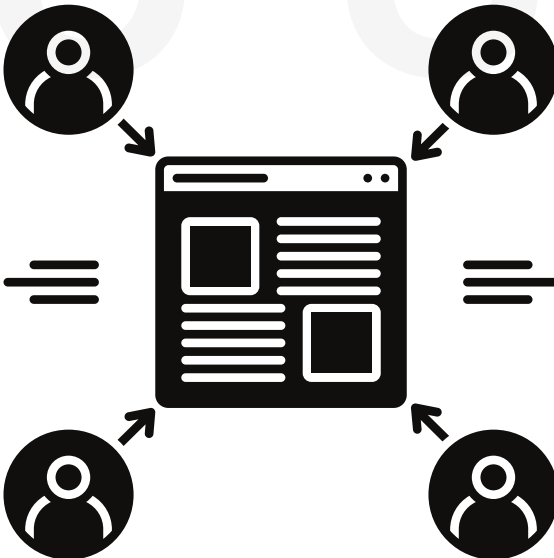
Hack #14 - Avoid cognitive overloads

Cognitive overload refers to the idea of a situation demanding more mental resources than you are able to give.

Don't make your users make too many decisions, read too much text or view too much content at one time. Space out your content and divide it into digestible pieces.

Hack #15 - Add your personal touch

Even though we don't want to over complicate the UX, we want to also make it our own.

Design is art, and it is important to set your brand, business or company apart from the competition by adding something unique. Whether it's a feature, color scheme or styling, be sure to make your creations stand out from the rest.
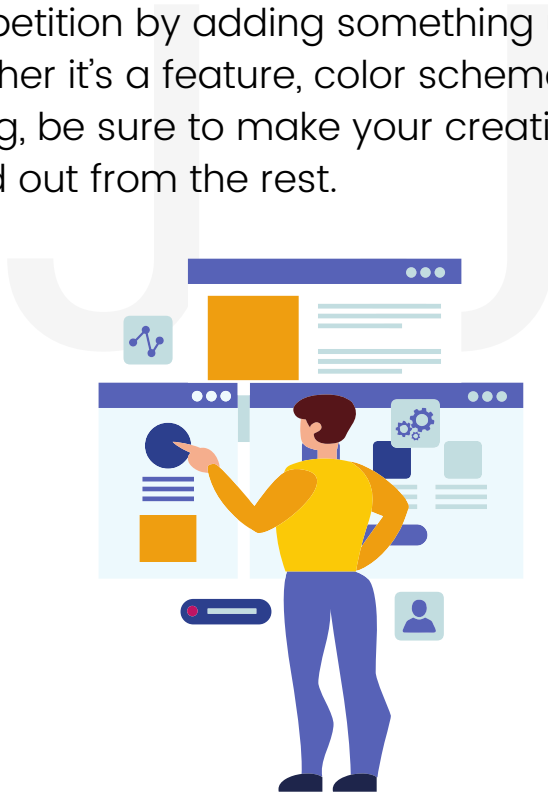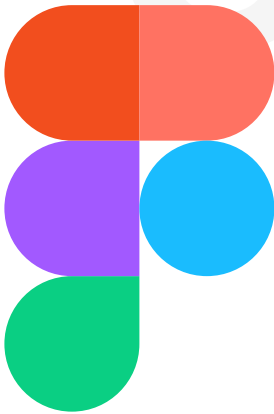
Hack #16 - Prototype before building

Before diving directly into building a design, make sure to prototype. Even though it takes more time uofront, it will save you time on the backend by allowing you to anticipate mistakes and errors that could arise.

Try using tools like Figma or Adobe XD to help out with this process.

Hack #17 - Make prototypes similar to the real thing

Instead of just creating a loosely correlated prototype, make it look as close to the real design as possible. This will allow you to find more potential errors before building.

This means using the actual text and pictures, no Lorem Epsum or placeholders.

Hack #18 - Make a useful product, not just a pretty one

People use applications that are useful, not just beautiful.

Make sure that the UI and UX are truly solving a problem while also looking amazing.

Hack #19 - There's no "I" in team

Teamwork is essential for an amazing user experience.

Make sure that you utilize the team around you and maximize opportunities for collaboration.

Captivating designs rarely are produced in isolation. Play off your strengths and acknowledge your weaknesses to your team so they can help you grow.

Hack #20 - Test. Retest. Repeat.

One test on one group of people is simply not enough data to inform decisions on UX design.

User testing is an iterative process, meaning it's meant to be repeated over and over to produce valid results. Validity means that our results will translate to the real world, which is very important to UX design.

Remember to conduct more than one test and compare the results to ensure they are valid.

Test

Review and reassess

Test

Test