

# Usability: setting user expectations (and meeting them)

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# Usability in a nutshell



- An attribute that describes the ease of use of any user interface.
- Interfaces need to be:
  - Intuitive
  - Efficient
  - Idiot-proof
- Usability is strongly linked to utility
  - Does it do anything?
  - Does it solve my problem?
  - Do I have to jump through any hoops?
  - How do you close this thing?



- Worldwide 2007
  - **1,300,000,000** users  
([internetworldstats.com](http://internetworldstats.com))
- Romania 2007
  - **7,000,000** users (says [trafic.ro](http://trafic.ro) 😊)

That's ***a lot*** of users!

What do they have and you want?

What do users have and you want?

# Time

And they have lots of it!



# Usability buys you time!

You can engage users on different levels.

But you need their attention

- Do something useful
- Be clear on what stuff does
- Be creative but use **common sense**
- Don't confuse users!  
It's f\*\*\*\*ing annoying 😞



# User Expectations

*“If it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck,  
I would call it a duck “*

[James Whitcomb Rile](#)

# User Expectations

*“If it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck,  
I would call it a ~~duck~~ dog”*

*bad designer*

# User Expectations

## Good page structure

### Content

Users never read a page.

They scan it!

- Divide your information into content blocks.
- Keep the page clean!

### Interface

Users want to know:

- Where they are
- What happened
- What they can do

## More interface design

Users love to click stuff

- Buttons
- Images
- Links

They like to be informed and **feel in control**.

“People fear what they don’t understand” – [Culture of Fear](#)

# Beware of arrows!

- Arrows are a **directional** design element.

This means people follow them.

- Arrow buttons are irresistible.  
Make them clickable!

## **The devil is in the details:**

Never use arrows as a filler design bit!



# Icons



- Use them to represent a property, action or location.
- They're the "shorthand" of interfaces.
- **Icons should be self-explanatory**
- Just because an icon is cute doesn't mean you have to use it

# Tabs

Tabbed navigation provides a way of better structuring your content.



- When users click a tab they don't expect a page refresh.
- Make sure users don't lose data when changing tabs
- If you can't do tabs, stick to old-school menus!

# Usability beyond design

## ▪ Spice-up form usability

- Auto-complete elements
- Filter non-relevant information from select inputs (Region > Cities)
- Sequential completion of large forms (Step1, Step2 ...)
- Auto-save the user input at regular intervals.

## ▪ Outsmart the user:

- Use the browser / IP to detect language or locale settings
- Watch for use patterns and boost the user's preferences in the interface
- Personalize as much as possible. Users love to pampered!

# User Experience

- How do you know the user experience is good?

- **Eat your own dog food!**

- If you think it sucks the user already knows it
- If it's not broken, don't fix it!
- Be creative but think of the user



**The king & queen  
of user experience**

Right?



# Wrong!



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Windows Vista<sup>™</sup>

**YAHOO!**<sup>®</sup>



**Adobe**

**Google**<sup>™</sup>

**User Experience is built  
on the user's  
previous experience**



**COREL®**



Windows Vista™

**YAHOO!®**



**Adobe**

**Google™**

# Usability is nothing without a use!

- Make yourself useful: solve a problem
  - Keep the WTF count to a minimum!
  - Use common sense!
- 
- **Never ever** stand in the user's way!



# Dead Tree Format

An interesting [book](#) about users and:

- How they behave online
- What they expect
- How you can harness usability

Common sense, of course!



# Get in touch

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That's me! 😊