

The Eight Golden Rules are:

- 1. Strive for consistency.** Consistent sequences of actions should be required in similar situations; identical terminology should be used in prompts, menus, and help screens; and consistent color, layout, capitalization, fonts, and so on, should be employed throughout. Exceptions, such as required confirmation of the delete command or no echoing of passwords, should be comprehensible and limited in number.
 - 2. Seek universal usability.** Recognize the needs of diverse users and design for plasticity, facilitating transformation of content. Novice to expert differences, age ranges, disabilities, international variations, and technological diversity each enrich the spectrum of requirements that guides design. Adding features for novices, such as explanations, and features for experts, such as shortcuts and faster pacing, enriches the interface design and improves perceived quality.
 - 3. Offer informative feedback.** For every user action, there should be an interface feedback. For frequent and minor actions, the response can be modest, whereas for infrequent and major actions, the response should be more substantial. Visual presentation of the objects of interest provides a convenient environment for showing changes explicitly.
 - 4. Design dialogs to yield closure.** Sequences of actions should be organized into groups with a beginning, middle, and end. Informative feedback at the completion of a group of actions gives users the satisfaction of accomplishment, a sense of relief, a signal to drop contingency plans from their minds, and an indicator to prepare for the next group of actions. For example, e-commerce websites move users from selecting products to the checkout, ending with a clear confirmation page that completes the transaction.
 - 5. Prevent errors.** As much as possible, design the interface so that users cannot make serious errors; for example, gray out menu items that are not appropriate and do not allow alphabetic characters in numeric entry fields. If users make an error, the interface should offer simple, constructive, and specific instructions for recovery.

For example, users should not have to retype an entire name-address form if they enter an invalid zip code but rather should be guided to repair only the faulty part. Erroneous actions should leave the interface state unchanged, or the interface should give instructions about restoring the state.
 - 6. Permit easy reversal of actions.** As much as possible, actions should be reversible. This feature relieves anxiety, since users know that errors can be undone, and encourages exploration of unfamiliar options. The units of reversibility may be a single action, a data-entry task, or a complete group of actions, such as entry of a name-address block.
 - 7. Keep users in control.** Experienced users strongly desire the sense that they are in charge of the interface and that the interface responds to their actions. They don't want surprises or changes in familiar behavior, and they are annoyed by tedious data-entry sequences, difficulty in obtaining necessary information, and inability to produce their desired result.
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