Design Principles Example

These guide decision making in the product itself. When we make design decisions, these principles inform how we think.

Make the system state visible - Users should always understand what's happening, what's changed, and where they are. Design feedback loops.

Prefer reversible actions over confirmations - Design for exploration and recovery rather than interruption and friction.

Keep users in context - Avoid unnecessary interruptions or context switching that break flow.

Embrace the complexity - The problems are inherently complex, our job is to help users navigate it. Simplify the experience, not the problem.

Default to consistency, diverge with intent - Consistency builds trust, but intentional divergence can create clarity or differentiation. Be thoughtful.

Highlight the user need - Ground decisions in real user needs, not personal preference or assumption, and make this explicit in your work.

Make it scalable and future proof - Solutions should extend, adapt, and grow with the product, not limit it. Anticipate future use and design it beyond your immediate context or need.

Balance data with intuition - Use research and data to inform decisions, but apply design intuition to create meaningful experiences.

Name the tradeoffs - Good design is about choosing what not to do. Be intentional and transparent about those. Call them out.

Create documentation as you go - Don't wait until the end. Start writing down your thinking, decisions, and tradeoffs throughout the process.

Upfront accessibility is cheap - Accessibility cannot be an afterthought. Changing it later is expensive. Accessibility improves the experience for everyone.

Maintain the hierarchy - Keep all elements in their appropriate parent-child relationships and make sure it's clear how elements relate to one another or change one another.

Take Small Bites - start with the minimum needed. Prefer simplicity vs over-engineering. Use progressive disclosure for focus. Introduce complexity only when it adds value.

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