INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE

Feedback and Mapping

Feedback is the instant signal a user receives after an interaction, telling them what happened. It's the system's way of saying, "Got it! Here's what's happening now." It can be a sound, a visual cue, or a vibration.

Mapping is the intuitive connection between a control and its effect. Good mapping means controls are laid out in a way that matches their action's outcome, like stove knobs arranged to match the burners. It's all about making control use obvious and natural.

Make interactions intuitive: Feedback lets users know their action's outcome; Mapping ensures controls feel natural and logical.

Affordances and Signifiers

Remember that door you tried to push that was meant to be pulled?

Affordances are about the possible interactions between users and objects based on the object's properties. They exist naturally.

Signifiers are design elements added specifically to guide or inform the user about how to use an object. They exist to communicate and clarify affordances.

In summary, while an affordance is about what an object can do, a signifier is about communicating that potential to ensure it is understood and used correctly.

Constraints

Constraints guide user actions and prevent errors by limiting the ways an interaction can occur.

They're design elements that make it clear what can't be done, funneling users towards correct usage. Constraints can be physical (like a USB plug that only fits one way), cultural (symbols or colors with specific meanings), or logical (software that greets you with a login screen, indicating you must log in to proceed).

Ensure simplicity and reduce errors: Constraints streamline user interactions, making systems easier to use and harder to misuse.

Conceptual Models

Conceptual Models are simplified, mental representations of how things work.
They help users understand and predict system behavior through familiar concepts and metaphors. For example, a desktop with files and folders on a computer screen models a physical office space, helping users grasp how to organize and access information digitally.

Bridge understanding and interaction: Conceptual models provide a framework for how to use systems, making complex technology accessible and intuitive.

Discoverability

Discoverability refers to the ease with which users can find and understand available features or actions within a system. It's about making functionalities visible and comprehensible, so users know what they can do and how to do it. Good discoverability ensures that tools and options are not hidden but rather intuitively placed where users expect them, like a camera icon for taking pictures in an app.

Unlock potential and ease use: Discoverability illuminates pathways for users, enabling them to fully utilize a system's capabilities without frustration.