

7 aspects that improve the UX of your app

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7 aspects that improve the UX of your app



What i'm going to talk about are a handful of aspects that i collected in the past years that all make a difference for the UX of your app. It's not a full guide on how to create an UX concept for apps but more like a selection of my favorite topics, compressed into 15-20 minutes.

1 animation 🐎

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Why does animation matter?

- motion drives user's attention and hints at what will happen if a user completes a gesture
- It helps orient within the interface and guide focus between views
- It provides a visual feedback

„Animation is not about making your app cool. It’s about providing your users with the experience they expect.“ - Nick Babich

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animation

- show status
- navigation and transitions
- visual feedback



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show status

- loading indicator
- pull to refresh
- animation that indicates a problem

navigation and transitions

- explain changes in the screen
- explain function change (like a play button turning into a pause button)
- provide context
- show visual hierarchy between objects

visual feedback

- lack of feedback can confuse users
- we want to make controls appear tangible
- visualize results of an action

This GIF shows buttons responding to a user's tap. (source: Material Design)

- this provides visual feedback and reassures the user

2

push notifications

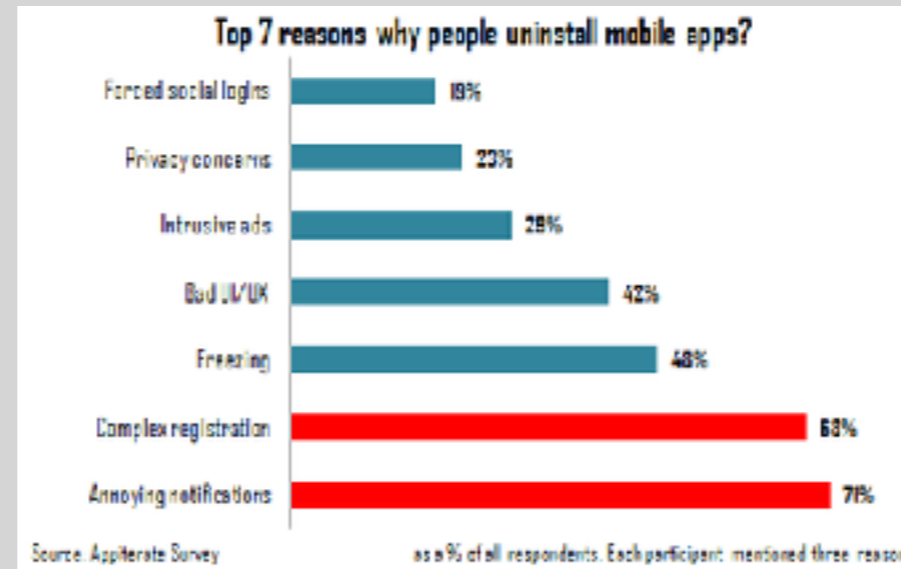
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Push notifications are very effective ways to engage the users of your app. But if done wrong, they can do great damage to the user experience!

„The good thing about notifications is they remind your users that your app is installed. A bad thing about notifications is they remind your users that your app is installed.“ - Sam Jarman

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push notifications



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As you can see, 71% of users who uninstall an app, do this because of annoying notifications.

push notifications

- permission
- amount
- timing
- wording —>
- relevance
- implementation



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permission

- ask for permission carefully
- use one alert to explain the value - why your app wants to send push notifications. When you do that before the official permission alert, the acceptance will be much higher

find out the suitable amount

- the tolerated amount depends heavily on the purpose of your app. There's basically no limit if you have a chat app or an app where users follow a live soccer event, but the limit for a tolerable amount might be very low if you want your users to do/purchase/use something.

find the best timing

- Keep in mind that your users might be in different time zones. Check out if the push service you're using has the option to send out a notification in the local timezone for the user.

wording

- be precise, you only have about 10 words. And don't write „click here“ ;)

relevance

- make them relevant: try to personalize them and not send the same content to everyone, let users chose their preferences and respect those
- personalize based on user journey
- if suitable and helpful, use the location of the user. For example if it's a travel app, you can provide a relevant feature/information.

3

screen sizes

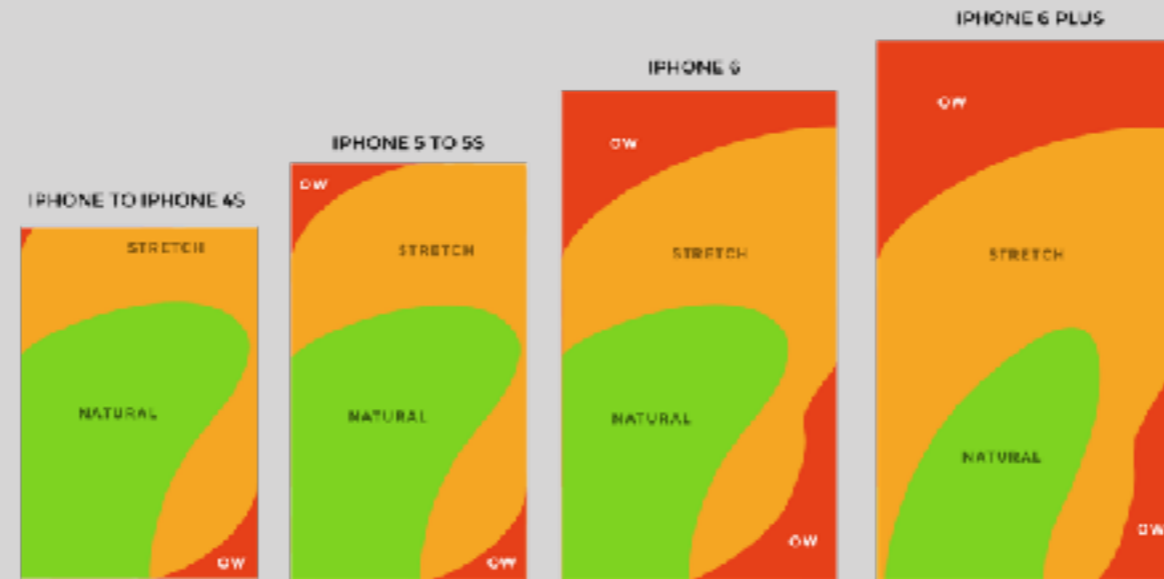
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When designing an app you have to think of the context in which your users use it.

- phones keep getting larger and larger
- According to research by Steven Hoober 49% of people use their thumb to tap/navigate, while holding the phone in one hand.
 - right thumb on the screen: 67%
 - left thumb on the screen: 33%

Only about 10 % of people are left-handed so the 33 % suggest that people use their phone while doing something else with their right hand. (eat, smoke, drink coffee ...)

screen sizes



visualization: Scott Hurff

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This nice illustration shows which areas of the screen can be touched naturally and which need stretching of your hand, and the red ones are those that hurt.

To me, this is so important that i switched from an iPhone 7 to an iPhone SE - just to be able to use my phone more comfortably with one hand and to reach into the corners more easily.

screen sizes

- design for thumb zone —>
- easily reached area: important navigation
- hard to reach area: negative actions
- provide swipe gestures



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So what can we do, knowing about these challenges?

Thumb zone:

- design for the thumb zone, the natural part. As an example: this fullscreen overlay menu in the HSV app is fully in the comfort zone of my thumb.
- the tab bar at the bottom is also easily reachable, but the burger menu in the lower right corner can be harder to reach when you hold the phone in your right hand.

easily reached area:

- You should put important navigation items there, which are used most often.

hard to reach area:

- keep infrequently used actions there
- Place negative actions (such as delete) in the hard to reach red zone, because you don't want users to accidentally tap them.

swipe gestures:

- when you have a back button in the top left corner, always implement swiping from left to right as well, to give the user this option to navigate
- drawer menus can also be implemented in a way that allows the user to swipe it in, for example from right to left

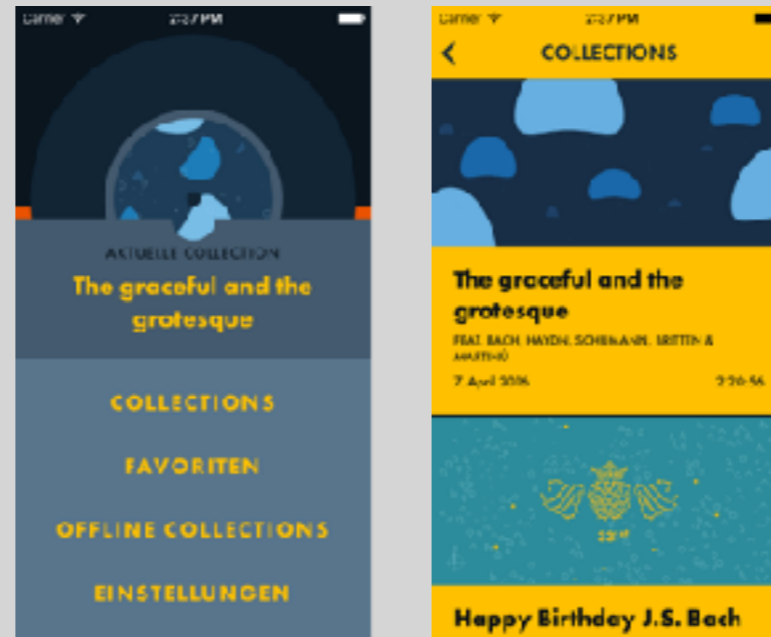
4 navigation 📌

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Navigation is an essential part of the user experience. There are many different options and you should choose one that suits your content best.

navigation styles

- tab bar
- drill down —>
- burger menu
- gesture based



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find the right navigation style for your app.

tab bar

- suitable in many situations, especially if you have three/four main features

drill down

- if you don't have a very complex app

burger menu (three horizontal lines)

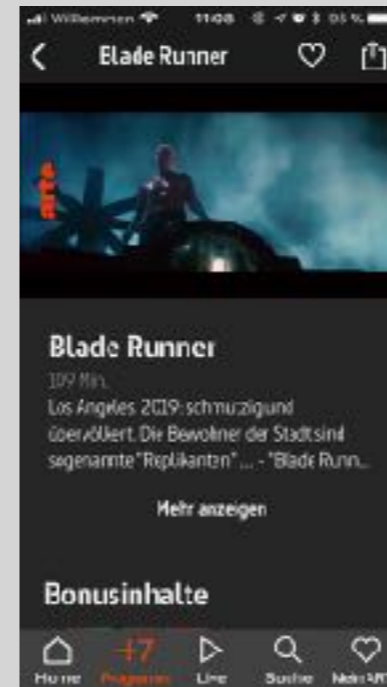
- can be problematic, hides a lot of information

gesture based navigation

- it's tricky because it's hidden, but since Tinder and Snapchat, many people are used to it. So it really depends on your target group.

navigation

- reachable navigation
- consistency
- indicate location in app —>
- finger-friendly



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what should you consider for your navigation?

- because of big screens: the navigation bar (in the top area of the screen) should more often be replaced with more reachable navigation
- make it consistent, don't change the location of navigation controls
- the navigation should communicate the user's current location in the app
- make it finger-friendly, not too small touch targets, keep enough spacing between controls

5

object-oriented UX

(developed by Sophia V. Prater)

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object-oriented UX is about designing objects before actions.

a design is intuitive when it behaves how a user expects it to.

Well, then... what do users expect?

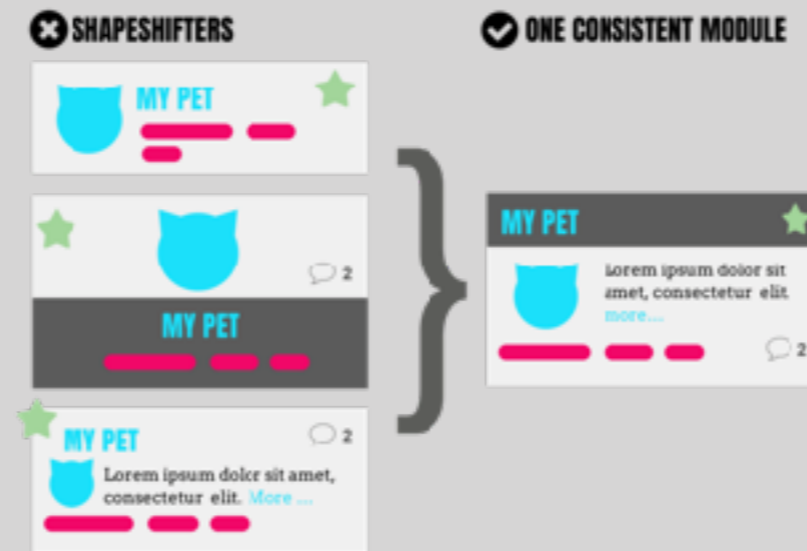
Whenever we find ourselves in a new environment (physical or digital) we want to know:

- What are the objects here?
- Where are the objects?
- How do these objects relate to me and to each other?

Without knowing what and where the objects are, we feel blind. Navigating feels uncomfortable. Taking action might even feel impossible.

object-oriented UX

- avoid shapeshifting objects



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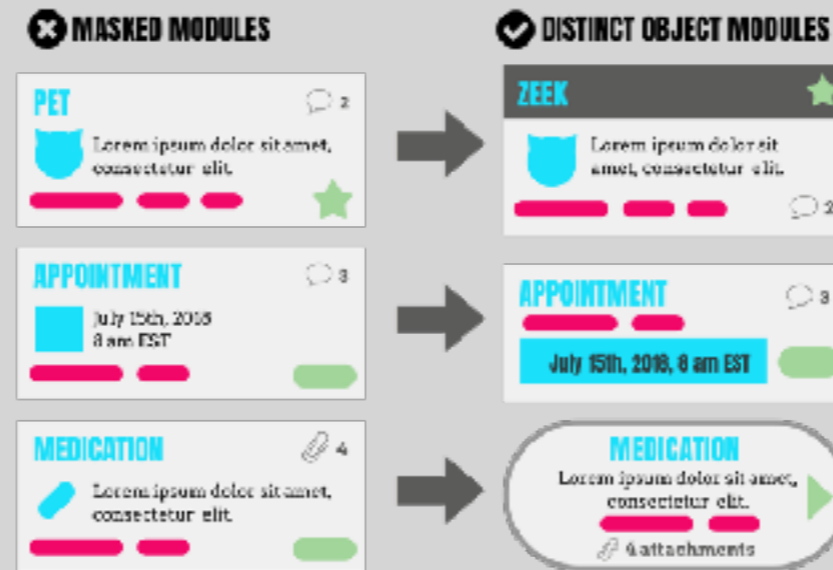
avoid shapeshifting objects

Objects in the real world don't usually change form as they change context. When I bring a new toaster home from the store, it doesn't change into a different toaster.

—> things that are the same should always look the same

object-oriented UX

- avoid masked objects



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avoid masked objects

don't shove different objects into the same package! If you have a row of buttons/modules that look the same, they should lead to the same type of thing.













—> different things should always look different

6 accessibility 🕶️

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Making your app accessible is important because you want to make it usable for people with disabilities.

accessibility

	Permanent	Temporary	Situational
Touch	 One arm	 Arm injury	 Now parent
See	 Blind	 Contact	 Distracted driver
Hear	 Deaf	 Ear infection	 Bartender
Speak	 Non-verbal	 Laryngitis	 Heavy accent

„situational disability“ **Inclusive**
a sustainable design. Enabling

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But i want to remind you that there is also „situational disability“

For example, when you design your app to be used easily with one hand, you're not only doing that for people with one arm, you're doing it for everyone. The same goes for seeing, hearing and speaking.

So, designing your app in a way that it is easily usable, benefits everyone.

accessibility

- make usability a priority
- know your target group and their needs
- adapt your app so it supports the accessibility features of the operating systems
- if possible, test with real users in real environments

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So, what can you do?

- consider the aspects related to screen sizes and reachable navigation
- know your target group and their needs
- adapt your app to support OS features like text-to-speech
- test with real users to find out how well they can use your app

7

OS features

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OS features are a big reason why we build apps instead of just mobile websites. They can provide a much better experience.

OS features

- control center
- widgets —>
- push notifications
- deeplinks
- new features



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some examples of useful features:

- control center (for example when you have a music stream in your app it should be possible to play/pause the stream in the control center)
- widgets, like this news widget and next game widget
- push notifications
- deeplinks (when users share content from your app, this should open the exact content in their friends app)
- always check out new features of the operating systems



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FUCK
Perfection
 perfection

don't let perfectionism hold you back from finishing and publishing something!