Introduction

The design axioms give designers, engineers, product managers, and anyone else who influences the creation of software design, a simple-but-essential core set of rules for building effective interfaces.

http://www.designprinciplesftw.com/collections/design-axioms

Let data scream

People want data: pictures, graphics, drawings, visualizations, words, numbers, and sounds—they are all data. The reason people use software is to get the data they want, in the right way, with as little delay or distraction as possible.

Your mission is to understand the data, be the data, and figure out how to make that data not just be, but to scream.

Go high fidelity with real data fast as possible

Telling a good story requires craft and attention.
Data is the story in applications, so making it as rich as possible as early as possible will radiate through the entire design, elevating your product's quality.

If Everything is Important Nothing is Important

Trying to make every single thing attention-grabbing is a classic design mistake.
What you consider most important should - certainly, clearly, undeniably - be the single most important aspect of your design.

Real data is truth

Shortcuts make design more efficient. Sometimes, they also make it worse.
Injecting Lorem Ipsum and other dummy data into design during the creation process sucks. Dummy data leads to dummy design. As a designer, you must get your mitts on real data early in the creation cycle. Data will alter your design brain.
Great design surfaces Truth, and real data is Truth.

Prototype like crazy

It is impossible to evaluate design ideas properly without a prototype that approximately conveys the final functional form factor.
For industrial designers, that means creating objects with the correct form factor using materials as close as possible to the final envisioned product.
In software, that means creating with code. Code early, code often, and test and evaluate through a working prototype. There is no better way.

Design is not a theoretical exercise

Too often, software designers get mired in unrealistic represent- ations such as wireframes, paper prototypes, and even pixel-perfect screen prints.
Software is a kinetic, interactive medium, and the only way to design for it properly is to go from theoretical design artifacts to real, working prototypes as quickly as possible

Gantt charts are the illusion of management

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Project management is not about documents and process that appear orderly and require attention. Project management is about focusing on the product.
Communications, communications, and communications make the best project management.
1. A straightforward to-do list trumps fancy dependency graphs any day.
2. Have the whole team focused on the evolving prototype.
Talk about the prototype. Critique the prototype. Use the prototype. Have others bang on the prototype. Sleep with the prototype.

Prototypes aren't the end; they're the means

The first generation of digital designers got comfortable with their paper prototypes and static mock-ups. Code meant production; prototype meant we're almost done.
The reality is, prototypes are where it starts. You can't evaluate, much less test, software properly until it is behaving in the same environment and context as it will eventually live in.

Industrial designers get this. Graphic designers get this. So should you.

What Interface?

The best interface is not just beautiful. It is not only elegant and usable and innovative. The best interface is invisible.
The ultimate interface is integrated, or subsumed, or invisible. It is designed away. The user interface is a direct path between the users and what they want to do with your product. That should be your goal.

Build as minimal an interface as possible to suit your users. Put the beauty, usefulness, and usability into the actual data experience.

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Let the ink, UI, and lines disappear

Most of the time in interface design, less is more. Achieving it can be a very Zen-like process.

Clear your mind of your vision for the user interface. Close your eyes. Re-imagine solving the problems required by the interface as if you were constrained to having no UI at all.

Be one with the interface.

Reduce the distance between users & content

The primary expectation most users must have for their digital experiences is getting at the content.

That is why they´ve come, and it is why they stay. It is far too easy to put clutter like movies, ads, and candy between the users and the content they thirst for.

All of those things have a time and a place, but, when in doubt, always minimize the time to act - clicks, screens, windows, steps, and other interface mechanics - to reduce the distance between users and content

Forget pretty pictures help user do what they want

Great design should be appropriately beautiful. Yet, too often, designers let their fascination with beauty undermine great design. Ultimately design is about creating something for use. Beauty is part of the equation, but usability and usefulness are even more important.

Know thy Code

An industrial designer who isn't deeply knowledgeable about metals and polymers is currently unemployed.

To be a great designer, you must have intimate knowledge of your construction materials. If you want to design software interfaces, you've gotta know a lot about code.

14 You should be as familiar with code as design

Design skills and tools are important. After all, you can't design well without them.

However, you also can't design well without understanding how and what you make will be manifested. In interface design, that means code.

You may not like to code; you may not want to code. But if you don't invest the time to educate yourself in code to a similar degree as you were educated in design, you will not realize your potential

15 Make Things

It really is just that simple: if you are a designer, you need to always be making things. As soon as the idea fits into your head, the pencil or marker or stylus should be in your hand.

Designers make. Makers ship. Shippers change the world. Always, always be making

16 Don't design it if you don't know

Don't design it if you don't know how it's going to be built
For many designers, the details, nooks, and crannies of truly taking a design to "done" are the hardest part of the process.

Great design requires the focus, commitment, and attention to detail inherent in any craft. That means sticking with your design through every agonizing moment, ensuring the design integrity of your vision lives on in the product.