(20) UX Resource Take-Aways

1 Reduce the decisions your user has to make. Decisions increase errors.

2 Make choices self-evident. Choices == decisions == errors.

3 Structure your app around your user's compelling context. They don't care about being awesome at your app; they care about being awesome at their compelling context.

4 Conform to common UI patterns. Trying to re-invent the wheel just frustrates people.

There's lots of great resources for UI patterns: Inspired UI, Mobile Patterns, UI Patterns are a few.

5 Outline a series of milestones that takes your user from newbie to expert.

Having a path to follow increases motivation.

6 Design for Zero Data instead of Lots of Data.

We used to get support calls about the "White Screen" in one of our apps. It was a screen the user saw when they had no data ready. After adding a "Hey there's no data, here's what to do." message, support calls have reduced.

7 Choose smart defaults on form fields.

If they've provided the data before, use it. If you can make a best guess, do it.

8 Explain rather than assume the obvious.

What's obvious to one is completely opaque to another. Read more here

9 Make things self-explanatory rather than explaining. When explaining, get. to. the. point. You user doesn't have time for your babbling!

Yes this kind of conflicts with the above. There's a time for each; choose the "right" one by watching how your users interact, and use their feedback if they give any.

10 Web design team debates are a waste of time. They are religious debates, no one's changing their mind.

The antidote is to measure your own particular use case. Do your users using your app prefer X over Y? Only one way to find out.

11 Anticipate what will derail your users and compensate by telling them that it's OK to struggle. They're exactly where they should be.

12 Help your users learn through Deliberate Practice.

Don't introduce too many things at once. Take them through exercises that help them get a skill or task to 95% reliability in 1-3 45-90 minute sessions.

For examples of this, see [Canva's Design School.](#)

13 Reduce distractions. Don't have a bunch of links to other sections of your app if your user has one task they need to do at the time.

14 When you must explain, make instructions explicit. Don't say "Choose a strong password". Say "Choose a password a least 12 characters long with..."

15 Maintain consistency. Don't visually alter logos/layout/navigation if your user is going through a sequence of steps. That's confusing!

16 Use clear, concise, human "microcopy" on form fields. Explain what input you're asking for and why.

17 Use recognition instead of recall.

If users have previously selected something, show that as an option instead of making them choose from a fresh list.

If the user is selecting something from a subset, show common choices rather than a blank type-in box.

18 Your user only has so many cognitive resources.

Confusing UIs and bad docs are a resource drain.

That's less concentration and willpower they can spend learning your app. Yes, every cognitive task drains from the same pool.

19 Break user milestones into 30 minute chunks.

What can the user accomplish in the first 30 minutes that will make them say "Man, I rock!"? What about the next 30 minutes?

20 Love your user as yourself. It's normal to hate your users sometimes. If you do, take a break. You will make better decisions from a place of empathy and care.