

DON'T LET YOUR INTERFACE GET IN THE WAY OF YOUR USER

Five Rules for Designing Effective
E-Learning User Interfaces



TAKE ADVANTAGE OF VISUAL CUES

Using text emphasis and treatments, contrasting colors, and arrows or lines are just a few of the ways you can create visual cues within your courses and overall course interface.

The visual layout of each page in your course should contain a logical hierarchy of information that makes it easy for the learner to process the content. For example, use text size, weight, and color to make titles, headings, and your calls to action stand out. This improves overall readability, and organizes the content for the learner.



2 REMOVE REDUNDANT NAVIGATION

Make the learner's decision easy. If you focus a learner's navigation options, you can lead him in the right direction, and he won't even realize it.

Consider the alternative. If you provide several different navigation options, some that may even be redundant, then you're forcing the learner to make too many decisions about navigating the course. Ultimately, this takes focus away from the content. At the same time, be consistent with the placement of buttons, menus, and links that are used throughout your course. Let your learners become familiar with the interface, so they know what they can expect as they move forward.

3

ENCOURAGE INTERACTION + USE STATES TO PROVIDE INSTANT FEEDBACK

Interactive elements should stand out immediately. They should be inviting and draw the learner's attention. How do we do that? Use contrasting colors and design elements to highlight the primary call to action.

Further, use changing states to provide instant feedback to the learner. For example, a button highlight will confirm that the button is interactive and showing a checkmark next to a chapter name will indicate its completion.

USE TRANSITIONS TO EASE LEARNERS INTO CHANGING CONTENT

We use transitions within written content, spoken content, video content and more. Why not in our e-learning content?

Transitions simply help learners adjust to abrupt changes. Whether this means transitioning from one page to the next, or sliding in that menu instead of showing it out of nowhere, transitions give the learner time to adjust to the change in content. And let's be honest, they make everything look much more sophisticated too - as long as they're not overused.

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MAKE IT INTUITIVE SUCH THAT IT DOESN'T REQUIRE INSTRUCTIONS

The best interface is the one that doesn't require instructions on how to use it. It should be obvious to the learner how to navigate the course. It should invite interaction while providing predictability, expose options while keeping focus, and organize information while remaining consistent.

Use the previous four tips and you'll be well on your way to achieving this final goal!