

The Psychology Of Everyday Things

Even the smartest among us can feel inept as we fail to figure out which light switch or oven burner to turn on, or whether to push, pull or slide a door. The fault, argues this book, lies not in ourselves, but in product design that ignores the needs of users and the principles of cognitive psychology. The problems range from ambiguous and hidden controls to arbitrary relationships between controls and functions, coupled with a lack of feedback or other assistance and unreasonable demands on memorization. The book presents the VCR, computer and office telephone, all as models of how not to design for people. But good, usable design is possible. The rules are simple: Make things visible, exploit natural relationships that couple function and control and make intelligent use of constraints. – from the publisher

"By recounting scads of devastating and often hilarious anecdotes about how people and devices can go wrong, he pinpoints mental mechanisms and psychological concepts that have gone unnoticed for far too long by the people who design our doors, faucets, typewriters, refrigerators, cars, computers, airplanes, power plants, and on and on. If taken seriously by designers and engineers, this charming and utterly commonsensical little book has the potential to profoundly improve the everyday human environment—and I hope it will."—**Douglas R. Hofstader**, author of Gödel, Escher, Bach and Metamagical Themas

"A boon for thing watchers, people like me who are forever looking for new ways to see and think about the everyday world." - Seymour Papert, Professor of Media Technology, MIT

By Donald A. Norman

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