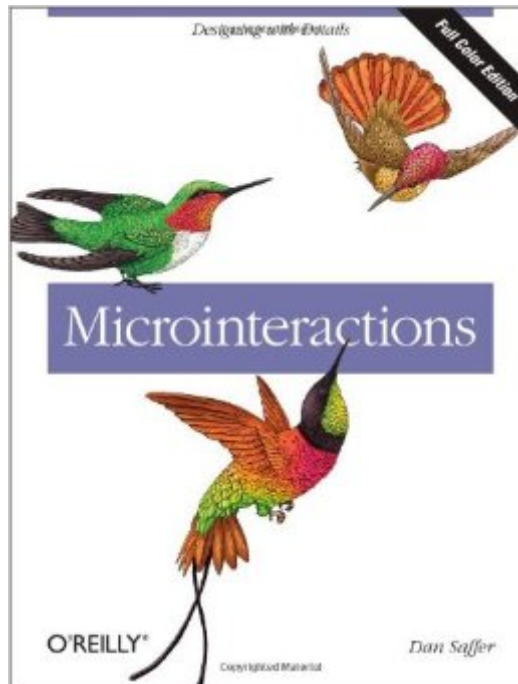


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Microinteractions: Full Color Edition: Designing With Details



Synopsis

It's the little things that turn a good digital product into a great one. With this full color practical book, you'll learn how to design effective microinteractions: the small details that exist inside and around features. How can users change a setting? How do they turn on mute, or know they have a new email message? Through vivid, real-world examples from today's devices and applications, author Dan Saffer walks you through a microinteraction's essential parts, then shows you how to use them in a mobile app, a web widget, and an appliance. You'll quickly discover how microinteractions can change a product from one that's tolerated into one that's treasured. Explore a microinteraction's structure: triggers, rules, feedback, modes, and loops. Learn the types of triggers that initiate a microinteraction. Create simple rules that define how your microinteraction can be used. Help users understand the rules with feedback, using graphics, sounds, and vibrations. Use modes to let users set preferences or modify a microinteraction. Extend a microinteraction's life with loops, such as "Get data every 30 seconds" •

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Customer Reviews

They say the devil is in the details, but the angels are in there too. That is, if you have a clue about what you're doing. People who want to design things have large egos and presume that they're skilled enough to work on large, grand ideas. But so rarely do designs in this world get the small things right, and if the small things, the little pieces that get used the most, are broken, what is the point of being large? Dan Saffer's book *Microinteractions* is the best book I've read about design in

ages. I've been working in design for 20 years and often have younger designers ask me for advice, or how to achieve their grand design dreams. Most books about design are similarly grand and presume that everyone knows the basics well enough to do the little things well. The world proves this not to be true. Spend an afternoon strolling around town with a gaggle of caffeinated interaction designers and you'll hear an endless commentary on the details the designers of the world have gotten wrong. The book itself is a wonderfully self-consistent: it's short, concise, well designed and brilliant. The fun and salient examples nail Saffer's points, and his writing is sharp, incisive and with just enough comedic curmudgeonry to keep you smiling most of the way through. The book's ambitions, like any good design project, are clear. Shaffer's focus is on the small sequences of interactions he calls, surprise, microinteractions. Ever been frustrated by entering your password? Leaving a comment on a blog? You've been let down by a microinteraction design. Perhaps the majority of design frustrations in the technological world are micro, not macro.

When you're writing a book about how important it is that designers get the small details right, it's important to get the small details right. Unfortunately, this book all too often gets those details wrong. The photos and screenshots, most of which were pulled from a website called "Little Big Details", are the most common source of problems. The mistakes here run the gamut-- pictures that are: - too dark (e.g. black text on a near-black background) - too light (insufficient contrast), - too small (cannot see details) - too large (irrelevant content) - low resolution (print is 300+ DPI but most screenshots are 96dpi) The book was printed in black and white, but includes images which depend on the reader's ability to see color. A few even purport to demonstrate animations, an impossibility in print. A handful of the images are like those puzzle games your grandparents play in the Sunday paper ("Which tiny details are different between these two pictures?"). In addition to the technical problems with the photos themselves, the text all too often refers to figures inappropriately (e.g. the picture doesn't demonstrate the point made in the text). In addition to a handful of typos (some amusing "Hammers, like most tools, are very good for a few discreet [sic] activities"), the book suffers from clarity problems in some parts. These include such gems as "The invisible trigger should be nearly universally available, or alternatively, available under particular conditions". One sentence included no fewer than 4 parentheticals. Generally, the publisher/editor should help flag problems such as these, but if anything, they made it worse.

After defining the topic as "single use-case features [of a user interface] that do one thing only" with a light switch as the iconic example, arguing for the importance of getting the features of user

experience right, setting the goal of "dissect[ing] microinteractions in order to help readers design their own", and a mostly-irrelevant but well-told introductory story about a cell-phone ring-tone destroying a musical performance, the author quickly establishes an analysis framework, dividing interactions into Triggers, Rules, and Feedback, and devotes early chapters to explaining each of the components. The book, unfortunately, doesn't fulfill this promising (minus that story) start. Rather than an intensive and systematic dissection of single-use-case interactions, we're given example after example (after example) of Triggers, then of Rules, then of Feedback, almost all drawn from postings to a single Website ("Little Big Details"), accompanied by a narrative which, by rapidly changing point of view and underlying metaphor, makes the analytical context confusing and causes all of these examples (and there are a LOT of examples) to just pile together, conceptually. There are good ideas -- use smart defaults, don't start from zero, recognize "signature moments" -- but they are presented in mind-numbing breadth rather than depth, with many, many examples but little analysis of why these rules might apply exactly this way in this particular context. The barrage of examples, to me, grew tiresome. You might have figured that out already. Mr. Saffer tells us how to judge a successful feature -- "what you're striving for is a feeling of naturalness, an inevitability, a flow..." -- and it's a shame he didn't apply that simple measure to his book.

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