

SUZUKI RULE
 ACCESSIBILITY
 ADVANCE ORGANIZER
 AESTHETIC-USABILITY EFFECT
 AFFORDANCE
 ALIGNMENT
 ARCHETYPES
 ATTRACTIVENESS BIAS
 BABY-FACE BIAS
 CHUNKING
 CLASSICAL CONDITIONING
 CLOSURE
 COGNITIVE DISSONANCE
 COLOR
 COMMON FATE
 COMPARISON
 CONFIRMATION
 CONSISTENCY
 CONSTANCY
 CONSTRAINT
 CONTROL
 CONVERGENCE
 COST-BENEFIT
 DEFENSIBLE SPACE
 DEPTH OF PROCESSING
 DEVELOPMENT CYCLE
 ENTRY POINT
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 EXPECTATION EFFECT
 EXPOSURE EFFECT
 FACE-ISM RATIO
 FACTOR OF SAFETY
 FEEDBACK LOOP
 FIBONACCI SEQUENCE
 FIGURE-GROUND RELATIONSHIP
 FITTS' LAW
 FIVE HAT RACKS
 FLEXIBILITY USABILITY TRADEOFF
 FORGIVENESS
 FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION
 FRAMING
 GARBAGE IN-GARBAGE OUT
 GOLDEN RATIO
 GOOD CONTINUATION
 GUTENBERG DIAGRAM
 HICK'S LAW
 HIERARCHY
 HIERARCHY OF NEEDS
 HIGHLIGHTING
 ICONIC REPRESENTATION
 IMMERSION
 INTERFERENCE EFFECTS
 INVERTED PYRAMID
 ITERATION
 LAW OF PRÄGNANZ
 LAYERING
 LEGIBILITY
 LIFE CYCLE
 MAPPING
 MENTAL MODEL
 MIMICRY
 MNEMONIC DEVICE
 MODULARITY
 MOST AVERAGE FACIAL APPEARANCE EFFECT
 NORMAL DISTRIBUTION
 OCKHAM'S RAZOR
 OPERANT CONDITIONING

Universal Principles of Design

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rockport



100 Ways to Enhance Usability,
 Influence Perception, Increase Appeal, Make Better
 Design Decisions, and Teach through Design

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First published in the United States of America by:

Rockport Publishers, Inc.
100 Cummings Center
Suite 406-L
Beverly, Massachusetts 01915-6101
Telephone: (978) 282-9590
Fax: (978) 283-2742
www.rockpub.com

Library of Congress

Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Lidwell, William.

Universal principles of design :
a cross-disciplinary reference /

William Lidwell, Kritina Holden, and
Jill Butler.

p. cm.

ISBN 1-59253-007-9 (paper over board)

1. Design-Dictionaries. I. Holden, Kritina. II.
Butler, Jill. III. Title.

NK1165.L53 2003

745.4'03—dc21

2003009384

CIP

ISBN-13: 978-1-59253-007-6

ISBN-10: 1-59253-007-9

20 19 18 17 16 15

Design: Collaborated, Inc.

James Evelock

Tony Leone

Printed in China

Ockham's Razor

Given a choice between functionally equivalent designs, the simplest design should be selected.¹

Ockham's razor asserts that simplicity is preferred to complexity in design. Many variations of the principle exist, each adapted to address the particulars of a field or domain of knowledge. A few examples include:

- "Entities should not be multiplied without necessity."—William of Ockham
- "That is better and more valuable which requires fewer, other circumstances being equal."—Robert Grosseteste
- "Nature operates in the shortest way possible."—Aristotle
- "We are to admit no more causes of natural things than such as are both true and sufficient to explain their appearances."—Isaac Newton
- "Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler."
—Albert Einstein

Implicit in Ockham's razor is the idea that unnecessary elements decrease a design's efficiency, and increase the probability of unanticipated consequences. Unnecessary weight, whether physical, visual, or cognitive, degrades performance. Unnecessary design elements have the potential to fail or create problems. There is also an aesthetic appeal to the principle, which likens the "cutting" of unnecessary elements from a design to the removal of impurities from a solution—the design is a cleaner, purer result.

Use Ockham's razor to evaluate and select among multiple, functionally equivalent designs. Functional equivalence here refers to comparable performance of a design on common measures. For example, given two functionally equivalent displays—equal in information content and readability—select the display with the fewest visual elements. Evaluate each element within the selected design and remove as many as possible without compromising function. Finally, minimize the expression of the remaining elements as much as possible without compromising function.²

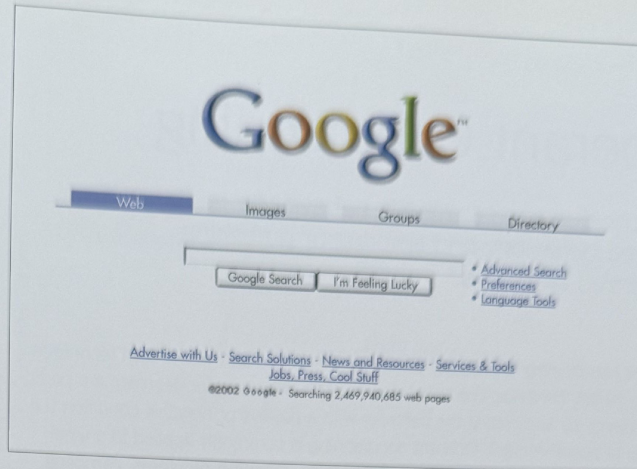
See also Form Follows Function, Mapping, and Signal-to-Noise Ratio.

¹ Also known as *Occam's razor*, *law of parsimony*, *law of economy*, and *principle of simplicity*. The term "Ockham's razor" references William of Ockham, a 14th century Franciscan friar and logician who purportedly made abundant use of the principle. The principle does not actually appear in any of his extant writings and, in truth, little is known about either the origin of the principle or its originator. See, for example, "The Myth of Occam's Razor" by W. M. Thorburn, *Mind*, 1918, vol. 27, p. 345–353.

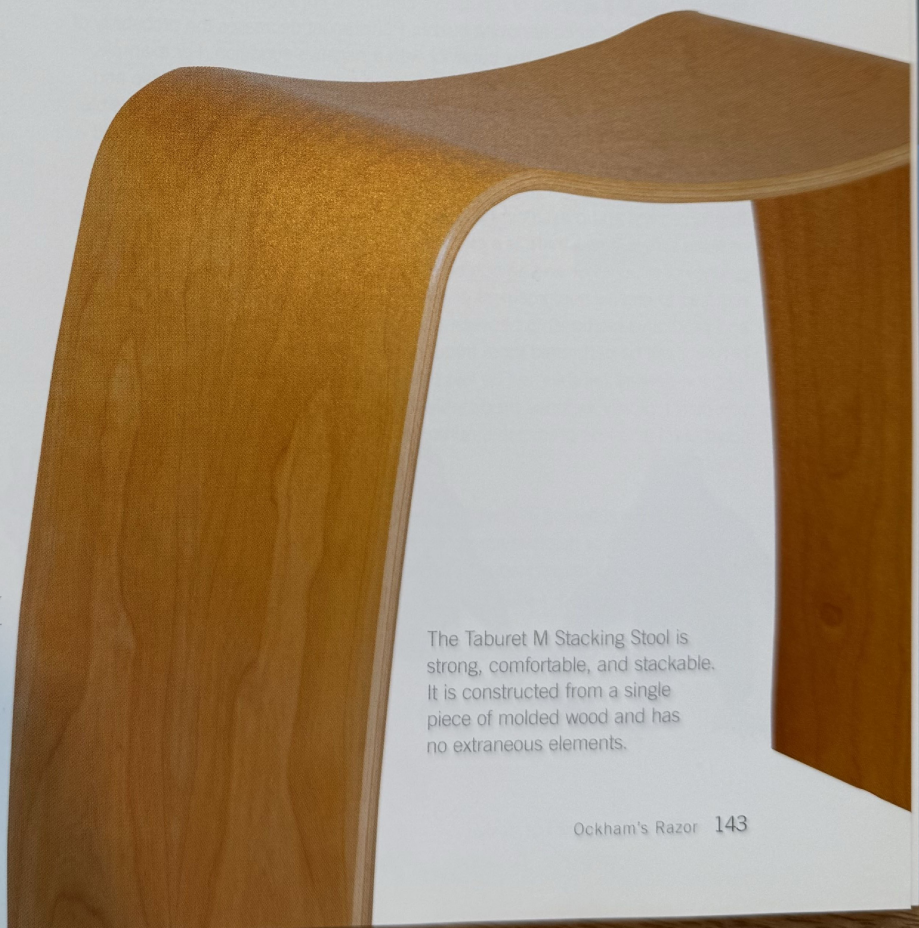
² "Make all visual distinctions as subtle as possible, but still clear and effective." *Visual Explanations* by Edward R. Tufte, Graphics Press, 1998, p. 73.



The Yamaha Compact Silent Electric Cello is a minimalist cello with only those portions touched by the player represented. Musicians can hear concert-quality cello sound through headphones while creating little external sound, or through an amplifier and speakers for public performances. The cello can also be collapsed for easy transport and storage.



While other Internet search services were racing to add advertising and ad hoc functions to their Web sites, Google kept its design simple and efficient. The result is the best performing and easiest to use search service on the Web.



The Taburet M Stacking Stool is strong, comfortable, and stackable. It is constructed from a single piece of molded wood and has no extraneous elements.

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