THE PRINCIPLES* OF USER EXPERIENCE

Richard Dalton, July 22nd, 2009
mauvyrusset.com

*prin-ci-ple: n. A fundamental, primary, or general law or truth from which others are derived

In his closing plenary at the 2009 IA Summit in Memphis, Jesse James Garrett challenged the attendees to develop a language of critique for user experience. "Useful, Usable and Desirable" have long been touted as the signs of a "good" user experience, however, they're too abstract to be useful criteria. This - the third in a three-part diagram - defines the **principles** that drive how experiences are constructed, those things all user experiences must consider and excel at to be useful, usable and desirable.

Google maps is more than "just a map". It has **connections** to user generated maps, photos, restaurant reviews and more.

maps.google.com

Netflix successfully **connects** pieces of its experience across channels (web, email, mail) to create a coherent system.

netflix.com

CONNECTED

A good user experience satisfies by supporting expected connections between objects and activities and delights by revealing unexpected ones.

Google Maps is an excellent example of immediate feedback as you **control** the position and zoom level of the map.

maps.google.com

PicLens' image browsing experience provides intuitive ways to **control** the motion and zooming of the "wall".

www.piclens.com

CONTROLLABLE

A good user experience provides an appropriate and intuitive degree of control.

RELEVANT

A good user experience is relevant to user needs, business goals, the date/time and the environment.

COMPREHENSIBLE

A good user experience allows a user to perceive what is meant and grasp the information conveyed.

AESTHETIC

A good user experience is aesthetically appropriate, encouraging enjoyable sensations and emotions.

Google's sparse homepage maintains its focus on search, the thing most **relevant** to its users. Their holiday logos also add a sense of timeliness.

google.com

The Crisis of Credit video makes a complicated topic **comprehensible** by using simple language, analogies and humor.

www.crisisofcredit.com

mint.com's soothing and refreshing **aesthetic** implies a new, credible method of easily managing your finances without stress.

mint.com

Wikipedia entries are sometimes updated within seconds of an event happening, providing highly detailed, **relevant** (and ad free) information to users.

wikipedia.org

TurboTax's use of progressive disclosure, simple language and embedded help makes the tax system easier to **comprehend**.

turbotax.com

The iPhone's sleek **aesthetic** with Apple's iconic "rounded corners" permeating the casing and interface implies "simple yet sophisticed".

apple.com/iphone