

# Information Design

Content: [www.kelake.org](http://www.kelake.org)


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# Starting quote

- ▶ “Usable design and aesthetics should go hand in hand: aesthetics need not be sacrificed for usability.”


*Donald Norman, The Design of Everyday Things*

# What is Information Design?


- ▶ transforming data into information
  - ▶ making the complex easier to understand and to use
  - ▶ connects with:
    - Typography
    - Graphic Design
    - Applied Psychology
    - Applied Ergonomics
    - Computing etc.
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# How did it emerge?

As a response to people's need to understand and use such things as:


- ▶ Forms
  - ▶ Legal documents
  - ▶ Computer interfaces
  - ▶ Technical information
  - ▶ Other complex stuff
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# How it's done


- ▶ Information designers consider the selection, structuring and presentation of the information provider's message in relation to the purposes, skills, experience, preferences and circumstances of the intended users.
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# How it's done

Skills needed [nice to have]:

- ▶ Graphic communication
  - ▶ Typography
  - ▶ Psychology of reading and learning
  - ▶ Human Computer Interaction [HCI]
  - ▶ Usability research
  - ▶ Understanding of the potential and limitations of different media
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# Information Design vs. Information Architecture

- ▶ IA -> about cognition, how people process information and construe relationships between different pieces of information
  - ▶ ID -> about perception, how people translate what they see and hear into knowledge
  - ▶ IA -> abstract, mental structures
  - ▶ ID -> concrete, color/shape/etc.
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# Importance

- ▶ Printed and graphical information is now the driving force behind all of our lives!
- ▶ "The extent to which symbols and graphics affect our lives can be seen by the dramatic increase in IQ scores in all cultures which have acquired information technology: in the United States there has been an average increase of 3 IQ points per decade over the last 60 years, for a total of an 18 IQ point increase. There is no known biological explanation for this increase and the most likely cause is widespread exposure to text, symbols, and graphics that accompany modern life."

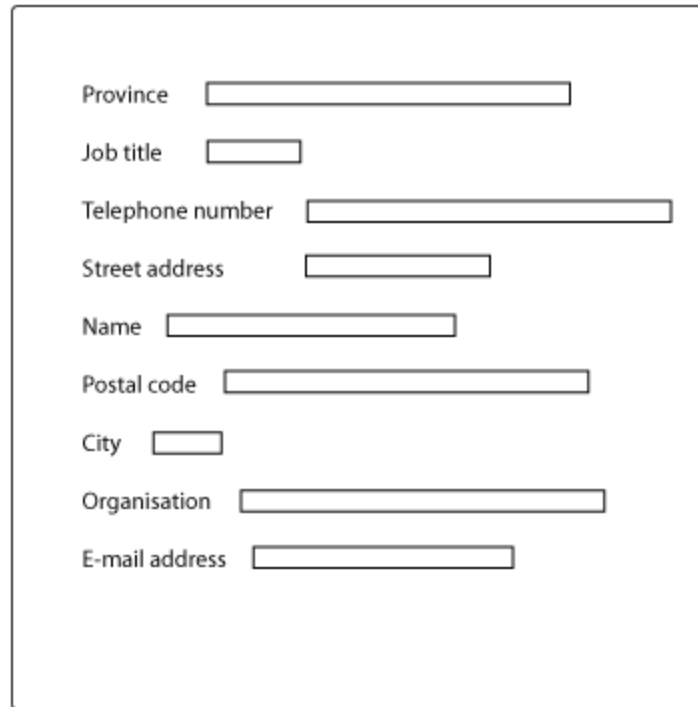


# Basic business concerns

- ▶ “Information design will also help a business to communicate effectively with its customers via its tender documents, brochures, technical specifications, instructions for use, publications, website, contracts, invoices, bills, etc. There is now the potential for customising many of these documents, but this introduces a new range of design challenges. **Badly designed documents cost money because they fail to elicit the response required, and they may frustrate and even alienate customers who have the option of shopping elsewhere.**” *Sue Walker*

# An example

- ▶ One of the most fundamental interactions on the web is the filling out of forms. This is one activity that information design plays a key role.
- ▶ Lets look at an example...



A form with ten input fields, each preceded by a label. The labels and their corresponding input fields are:

- Province
- Job title
- Telephone number
- Street address
- Name
- Postal code
- City
- Organisation
- E-mail address

# An example

- ▶ What have we done to improve the form?


Name	<input type="text"/>
Job title	<input type="text"/>
Organisation	<input type="text"/>
Street address	<input type="text"/>
City	<input type="text"/>
Province	<input type="text"/>
Postal code	<input type="text"/>
Telephone number	<input type="text"/>
E-mail address	<input type="text"/>

# An example


<b>Personal Information</b>	
Name	<input type="text"/>
Job title	<input type="text"/>
Organisation	<input type="text"/>
<b>Address Information</b>	
Street address	<input type="text"/>
City	<input type="text"/>
Province	<input type="text"/>
Postal code	<input type="text"/>
<b>Contact Information</b>	
Telephone number	<input type="text"/>
E-mail address	<input type="text"/>

Can we do more?

## General philosophy for increasing data comprehension

- ▶ High density is good
  - ▶ Clutter/confusion are failures of design and not complexity
  - ▶ In showing parallels, only the relevant differences should appear
  - ▶ Value and power of parallelism: once you have seen one element all the others are accessible
  - ▶ Graphics should emphasize the horizontal direction
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## General principles

- ▶ **Enforce visual comparisons.**
  - ▶ **Show causality.**
  - ▶ **Show multivariate information.**
  - ▶ **Integrate words, numbers and images.**
  - ▶ **Work with great content.**
  - ▶ **Make comparisons adjacent in space, rather than stacked in time.**
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# Thank you!

Questions?

