

This edition looks at The Design of Everyday Things by Don Norman.

- a collection of visual literature reviews combining research, reflection, and design. This project reimagines academic literature reviews as something personal, tactile, and creative. Each zine in the series explores a single book or theme through illustrated spreads, diagrams, and design elements rooted in fieldwork, annotation, and care.

THE LIT REVIEW PROJECT



THE DESIGN OF EVERY-DAY THINGS

the lit review project
zine #7

this zine is part of the lit review project
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zine #7 - designed & illustrated by
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AFFORDANCE (n.)

The relationship between an object and a person, what the object seems to invite you to do. A chair affords sitting. A plate handle affords pulling. A plate affords having a meal on. Affordances exist whether or not they are perceived.

FEEDBACK (n.)

Confirmation that an action has occurred. The click of a button. The whoosh of a sent email. The light that turns on. Without feedback, the user is left wondering: did it work? Should I try again? Poor feedback, or none at all, is one of the most common failures in design.

MAP.PING (n.)

The relationship between a control and the result it produces. Good mapping is spatial and intuitive. Bad mapping forces the user to memorize arbitrary relationships. A classic failure: four stovetop burners, four knobs in a row, no obvious connection between them.

CONCEPTUAL MODEL (n.)

The mental image a person forms of how something works. Not the real mechanism but just a simplified story that is good enough to use confidently. A thermostat is not a valve. But imagining it as one works fine. Good design guides users toward accurate conceptual models. Bad design leaves them inventing wrong ones.

HUMAN ERROR (n.)

A label applied when a person fails to operate a machine correctly. Norman argues the label is almost always wrong. Machines that require perfect human performance will always fail. It is the duty of machines and those who design them to understand people. It is not our duty to understand the arbitrary, meaningless dictates of machines.