

When proven web design methods no longer work

WordCamp Vienna 2026

Little
Language
Models



About me

- **Delfina Hoxha** (she/her)
- Information architecture consultant
- Founder of Little Language Models
- Building with WordPress since 2015

Bad IA

- Long time to find info
- Unclear terms
- Unintuitive content hierarchy
- Frustrated users

bad for business

About my work

- Led the navigation redesign of 30+ enterprise websites
- Managed thousands of URLs and hundreds of terms
- Made quite a few mistakes along the way
- Went against proven methods and “best practices” many times

“A best practice is a standard or set of guidelines that is known to produce good outcomes if followed.”

<https://techtarget.com/searchsoftwarequality/definition/best-practice>

We often rely on best practices and heuristics.
Like customer satisfaction scores.

★☆☆☆☆ 5 months ago

YES I KNOW I SAID 1 STAR. I do not like the colour yellow so I always rate 1 star so that there is less of it on my screen. THIS IS A POSITIVE REVIEW. NOT A BAD REVIEW, I AM RATING ONE STAR TO PREVENT YELLOW

THANK YOU

Best practices save time and help us prioritize our efforts—but is there a limit to their usefulness?

In this presentation, I'll share some unconventional UX decisions I had to make when proven web design methods no longer worked.

Anti best practices examples

Unclear labels in navigation

TOPICS

MEMBER CLUBS (189)

COOPERATION PARTNERS (22)

CLUB ACADEMY (3)

basiskultur.at

The screenshot shows the Atlassian website with a navigation bar at the top containing the Atlassian logo and links for Products, Solutions, Why Atlassian?, Resources, and Enterprise. A search icon is located in the top right corner. The main content area features a large banner for 'team'2' with dates 'May 5 - 7' and location 'Anaheim'. Below the banner is a 'Register now' button. To the right of the banner is a vertical navigation menu with categories: Featured, Developers (highlighted), Product Managers, IT professionals, Business Teams, and Leadership Teams. Further right is a 'Software Collection' section with a 'See all apps' link. The featured products are displayed in a grid:

- Jira**: Flexible project management
- Bitbucket**: Source code and CI/CD
- Rovo Dev**: Agentic AI for developers
- Pipelines**: Scalable CI/CD automation
- DX**: Measure productivity and AI impact
- Compass**: Software catalog for teams

atlassian.com

Obscure names are common in website navigation structures.

Reusing internal jargon is an abdication of responsibility that someone, *somewhere*, is suffering the consequences of, whether that's the user, customer service reps, or sales.

WHAT

Public library website redesign

I put a cryptically named Whimsy Wonderland* item in the website navigation.

*not the real name

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Public library website redesign

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*not the real name

WHY

- Famous yearly event – excitement, traditions built around it
- Brand equity

Anti best practices examples

Hiding "Sign in"



Secure elec- tronic registration

Further information on electronic identity verification
can be found [here](#)

To register



Login with ID Austria

Your ID Austria (electronic identity) is your highly secure
key to the online services of the Austrian Social Insurance

Simple, secure and free.

Further information about ID Austria can be found [here](#).

Login with ID Austria and use of the "ID Austria" app

All information on using and activating the "ID Austria" app
can be found [here](#).

Login in representation

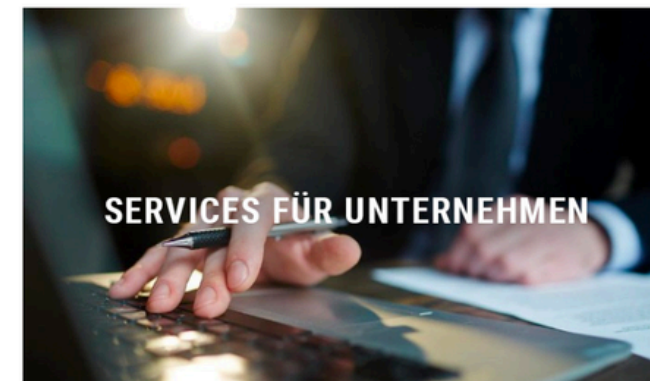
From now on, the online services of the Austrian Social
Insurance can also be used on behalf of another person:


[Granting power of attorney and login as representative](#)

If you have any questions, please contact the
oesterreich.gv.at Service Center :

oesterreich.gv.at Service Center: [+43 50 233770](tel:+4350233770) (Monday
to Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.)

hilfe@oesterreich.gv.at



 Unternehmensservice
Portal



SV Social insurance provider login screen translated to English

WHAT

Financial services firm replatform

I hid the “Sign in” button by only placing it in the footer.

WHAT

Financial services firm replatform

I hid the “Sign in” button by only placing it in the footer.

WHY

- Aggressive timeline
- Ruthless prioritizing of key audiences and user needs
- Content format preferences

Anti best practices examples

Duplicate content

Duplicate content often falls through the cracks, resulting in outdated, misleading information.

We want every word or action on a platform to serve a purpose that makes user and/or business goals easier to reach.

WHAT

Pathology clinic website redesign

**I repeated the same term 4 times
on the website navigation.**

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Pathology clinic website redesign

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on the website navigation.**

WHY

- Building a powerful and easy-to-use test directory (250+ tests) was a key goal
- Highlighted the test directory as an L1 item and as an L2 under each of the three main pathology specialties, linking to the specialty-specific test filters, e.g., Neuropathology tests

L1 - Level one navigation item (displayed)
L2 - Nested navigation items

Anti best practices examples

Encouraging users to leave the site

External links provide users with the option to leave the site, which may result in them not returning to your site.

The LinkedIn algorithm is an example of this.

<https://blog.hootsuite.com/de/wie-der-linkedin-algorithmus-funktioniert>

WHAT

B2B resource center IA redesign for a consumer electronics company.

I prioritized an external link in the website navigation.

WHAT

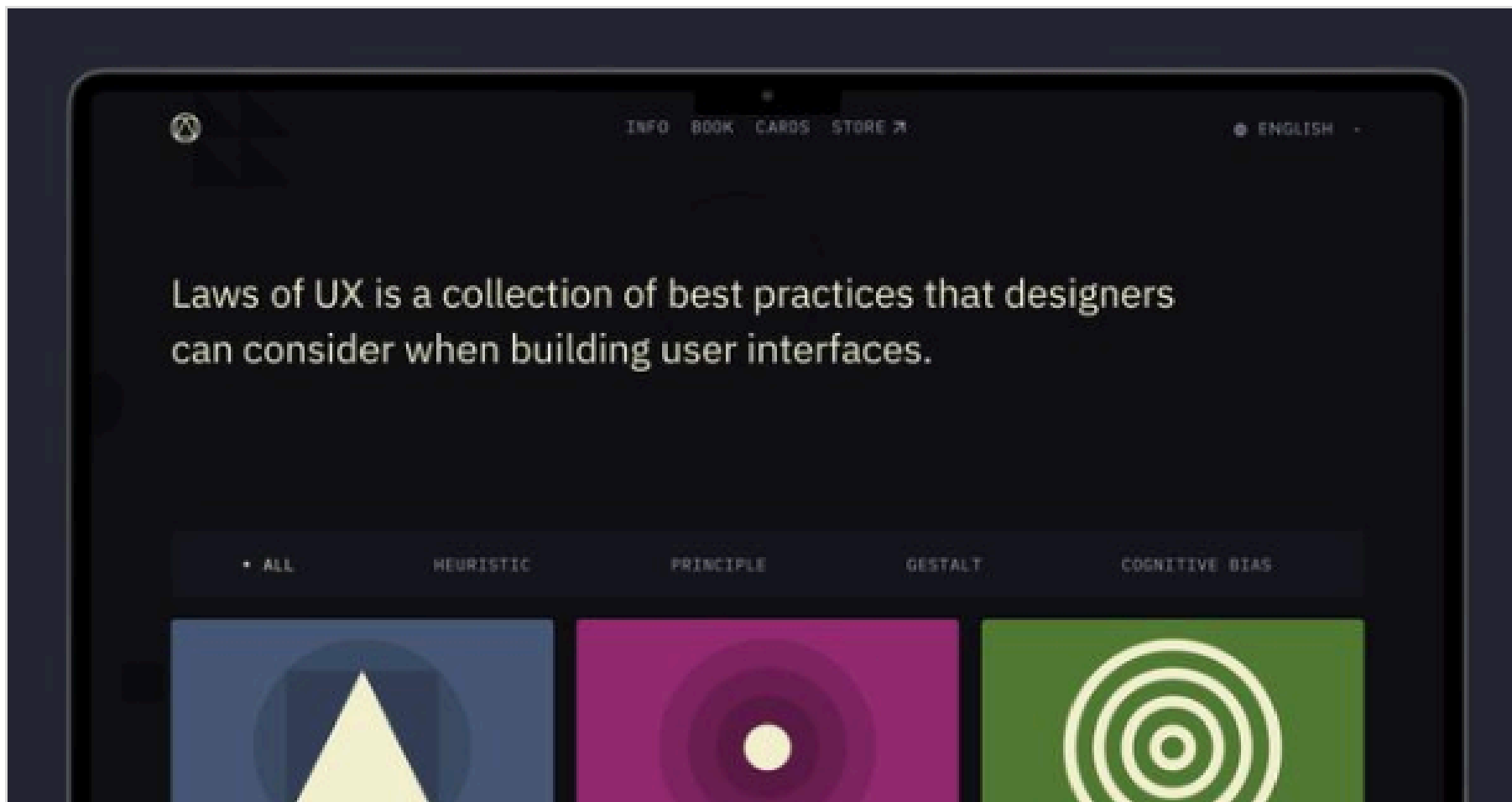
B2B resource center IA redesign for a consumer electronics company.

I prioritized an external link in the website navigation.

WHY

- Highlighting the e-commerce site in the navigation helped reach key business goals (increased sales)
- Using analytics data to match user search intent

These were a few examples when I went against best practices, and here are my favorite collections of best practices.



Home

Laws of UX is a collection of best practices that designers can consider when building user interfaces.

 Laws of UX /



1,300+ Examples of Exceptional UX

Discover the best library of UX examples that showcase ideas, tricks, experiments and nudges. Convert better and churn less by copying the pros.

 Built for Mars

Key takeaways

- The unsexy work of structuring your content properly is a competitive advantage.
- Best practices without context do more harm than good.
- Always learn the rules first.
- What matters most is what you learned and who you talked to, not the decision itself.
- Being generous with your knowledge benefits everyone.

Free ebook

A Beginner's Guide to Intuitive Information Architecture

littlelanguagemodels.com/media

password: camp



Thank you!

Little Language Models

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