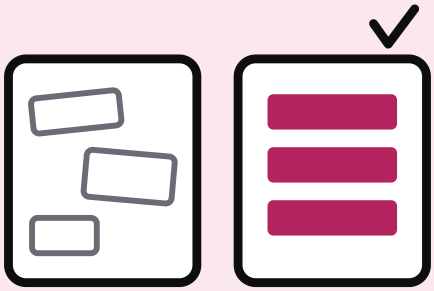
Concept

# Aesthetic-usability effect

People tend to judge an interface they find attractive as easier to use, even when its actual usability is the same as that of a less polished one.



In Spanish
*Efecto estético-usabilidad*

Origin
Kurosu and Kashimura (1995); Tractinsky (1997) and Tractinsky, Katz and Ikar (2000)

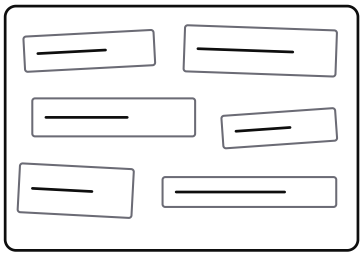
## What problem it addresses

Explains why a beautiful design looks easy before it is used, and why opinions about it can hide usability problems.

## An example

An illustrative example: two ATM screens with the same options.

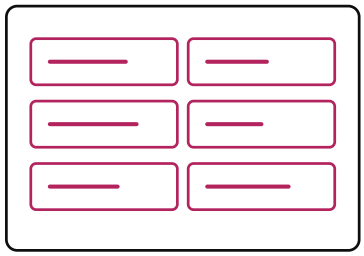
### No order



Same options, no order

The same buttons, in different sizes and poorly aligned. **It looks hard.**

### Well composed



Same options, well composed

The same buttons, aligned, the same size and with breathing room. **It looks easy, before you touch it.**

With the same actual usability, the more attractive screen is judged easier to use.

## Why it happens

1 

**At first sight,** appearance is judged before how something works.

2 

**That good impression** spreads to other qualities, such as ease of use.

3 

**And after using it,** aesthetics can still weigh more than actual usability.

## Applications in design

### Use it like this

Take care of appearance: it affects how easy your interface seems from the first impression.

### Avoid

Relying on what people say about a beautiful design to know whether it is usable.

### Don't fall for it

A screen that looks easy is not necessarily easy: watch people use it.

## 0.59 → 0.92

### What the research says

With 26 ATM screen designs, perceived beauty and perceived ease of use correlated at 0.59 in Japan (Kurosu and Kashimura, 1995) and at 0.92 when repeated in Israel (Tractinsky, 1997).

●●○ **Debated evidence.** What is measured is perceived ease, not actual ease, and the strength of the relationship changes with culture. With a simulated ATM that people actually used, aesthetics still had an influence after use (Tractinsky, Katz and Ikar, 2000).

## Connections

Used in

- UI design
- UX design

Related to

- Emotional design
- Design hierarchy of needs
- Form follows function
- Data-ink ratio
- Usability

# Authors and works

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1995 | **Masaaki Kurosu and Kaori Kashimura** | With 252 people and 26 ATM designs, they saw that perceived ease of use was more closely tied to beauty than to the design's actual usability. |
| 1997 | **Noam Tractinsky** | Repeated the study in Israel and the relationship came out even stronger, also when changing how the questions were asked and the designs shown. |
| 2000 | **Noam Tractinsky, A. S. Katz and D. Ikar** | Measured opinions before and after using a simulated ATM; after use, aesthetics influenced perceived ease of use and actual usability did not. |

## Sources

### Original sources


- Kurosu, M., & Kashimura, K. (1995). Apparent usability vs. inherent usability: Experimental analysis on the determinants of the apparent usability. In CHI '95 Conference Companion (pp. 292–293). ACM. View source (https://chi1995.chistatic.hosting.acm.org/proceedings/shortppr/mk_bdy.htm)
- Tractinsky, N. (1997). Aesthetics and apparent usability: Empirically assessing cultural and methodological issues. In Proceedings of CHI '97 (pp. 115–122). ACM. View source (https://chi1997.acm.org/proceedings/paper/nt.html)
- Tractinsky, N., Katz, A. S. e Ikar, D. (2000). What is beautiful is usable. Interacting with Computers, 13(2), 127–145. View source (https://doi.org/10.1016/S0953-5438(00)00031-X)


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