Artifact

Design principles

A short set of rules, drawn from research and the project's values, that guide design decisions so they are consistent.



In Spanish

Principios de diseño

Origin

Widespread practice; a much-cited example: GOV.UK (2012)

What it's for

It helps many people make consistent decisions without having to check everything.

Key elements

Few

A short set the team can remember.

Grounded in research

They come from the project's insights and values.

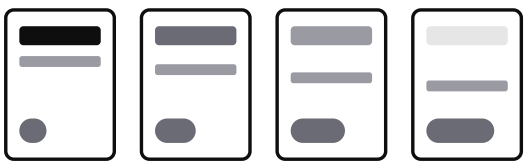
Useful for choosing

Each one helps decide between two real options.

An example

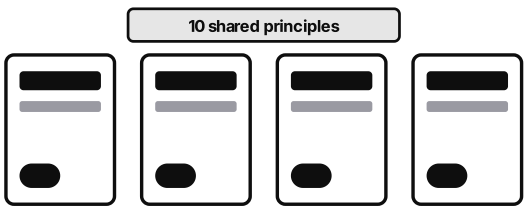
A large team redesigns a government's digital services.

Without principles



Each team decides in its own way: different tones, steps and priorities. **Inconsistent.**

With principles



Ten shared rules, starting with "Start with user needs". **Consistent.**

The UK Government Digital Service published ten design principles in 2012 that still guide GOV.UK.

How it's done

1

They are drawn from insights and from the project's values.

2

Write only a few, clear and easy to apply.

3

They are used to decide and to review the work.

Applications in design

When to use it

When several teams make decisions about the same product and those decisions start not to fit together.

Avoid

Writing principles so general that anyone would agree ("be easy to use").

Don't fall for it

Test each principle against a real project decision: if it doesn't help you choose, rewrite it. And review them when you learn something new.

Connections

Builds on

- Ten principles for good design
- Insight
- Design synthesis

Used by

- UI design
- AI design

Related to

- Design system

Authors and works

2012	**Government Digital Service**	Published the UK Government's ten design principles.

Sources

Original sources

- Government Digital Service (2012). Government design principles. GOV.UK. View source (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/government-design-principles)

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