



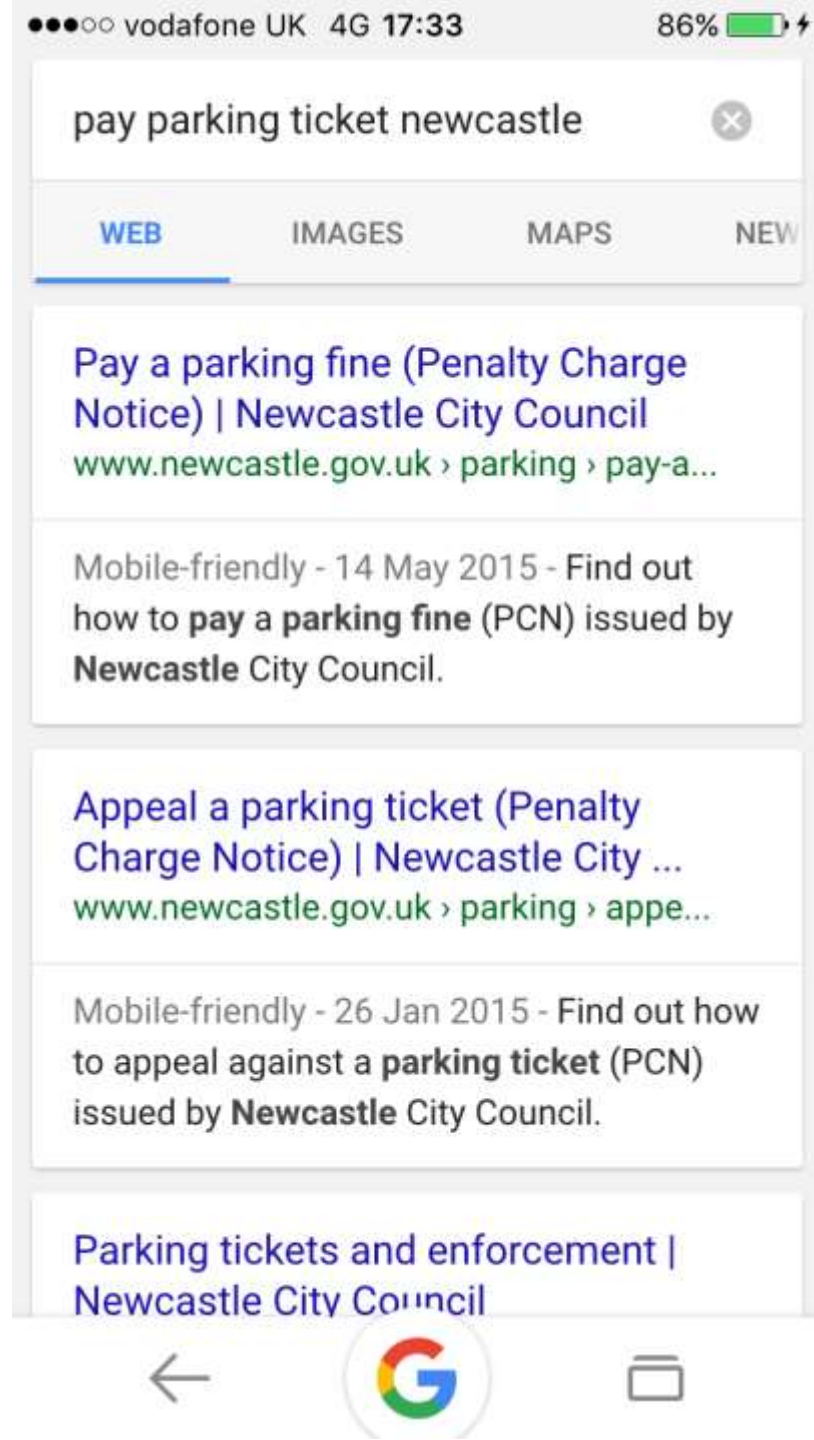
How to look at a form

Paying for a parking ticket

I need to pay
a parking ticket
in Newcastle.
I've lost the ticket.

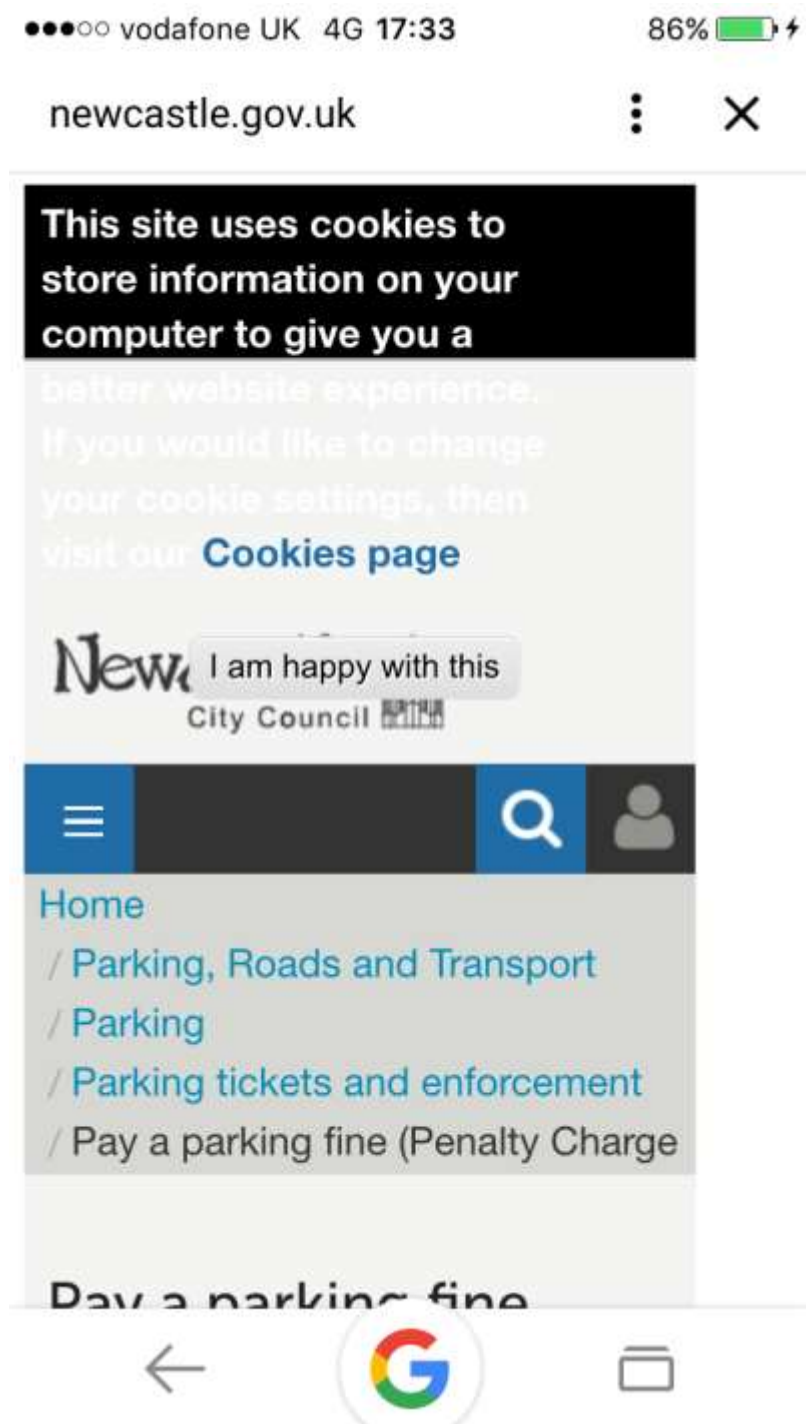
I need to pay
a parking ticket
in Newcastle.
I've lost the ticket.

Where does
the form start?



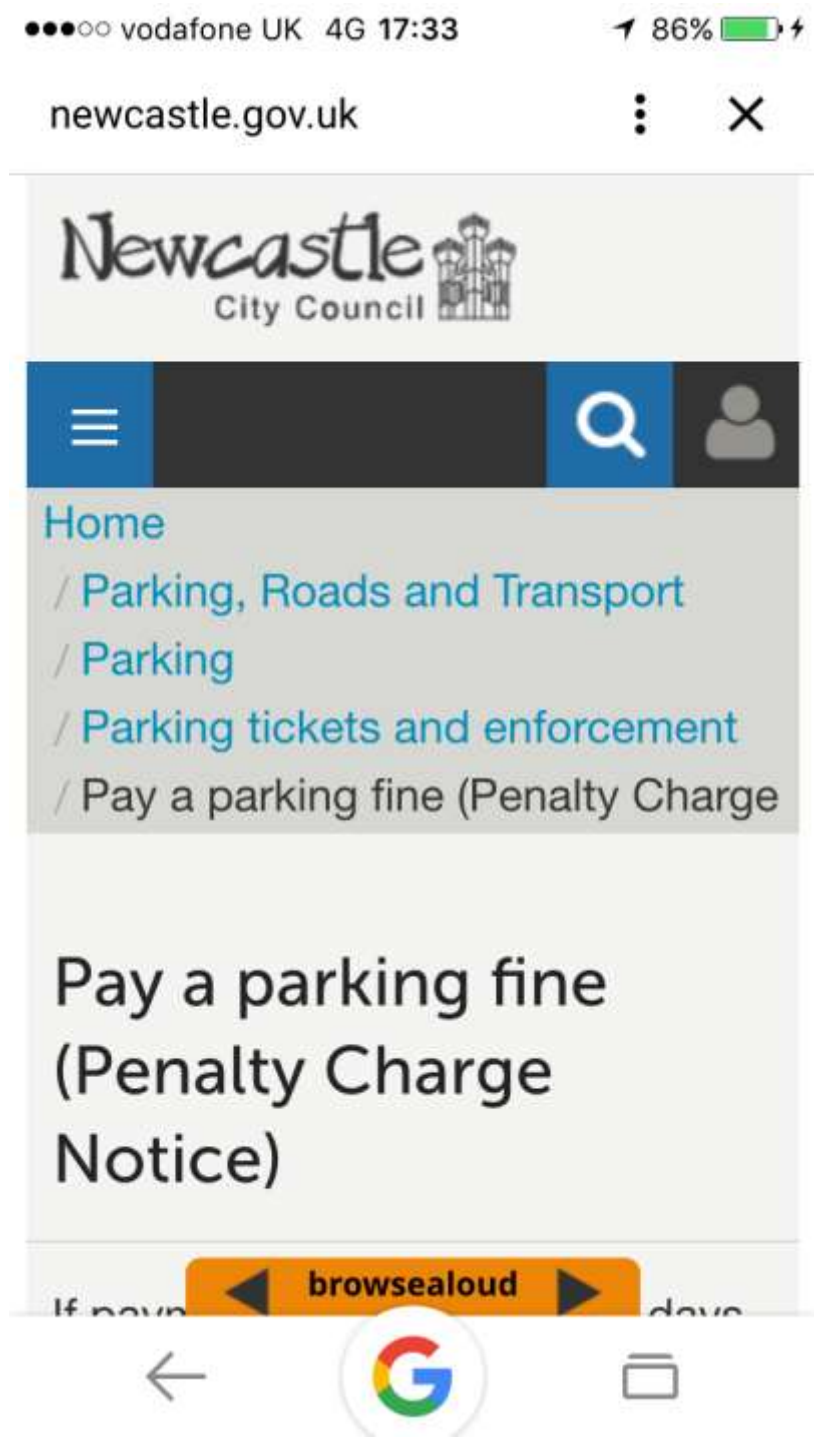
I need to pay
a parking ticket
in Newcastle.
I've lost the ticket.

Here?



I need to pay
a parking ticket
in Newcastle.
I've lost the ticket.

Or here?



I need to pay
a parking ticket
in Newcastle.
I've lost the ticket.

Is this it?

Pay a parking fine (Penalty Charge Notice)

If payment is made within 14 days of the date that the PCN was served a discount of 50% of the penalty charge is applicable (that is £25.00 or £35.00 would be due).

Where a PCN has been issued following enforcement by the ANPR car (that are PCNs beginning with NU90) the 50% discount is available for 21 days after the joint PCN/Notice to Owner is served.

Pay online

I need to pay
a parking ticket
in Newcastle.
I've lost the ticket.

Or this?

vodafone UK 17:34 86%

parking.newcastle.gov.uk

Newcastle City Council

PCN Details

You can use this site to pay for a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN), to submit an appeal or to view information about the contravention. Details regarding a PCN will usually appear 1 working day after the PCN was issued or 3 days in exceptional circumstances.

PCN details

Vehicle Registration Number

Penalty Charge

I need to pay
a parking ticket
in Newcastle.
I've lost the ticket.

Oh dear.

vodafone UK 18:28 100%

parking.newcastle.gov.uk

Newcastle City Council

PCN Search > PCN Details

PCN Details

⚠ You must type Penalty Charge Notice

PCN Details

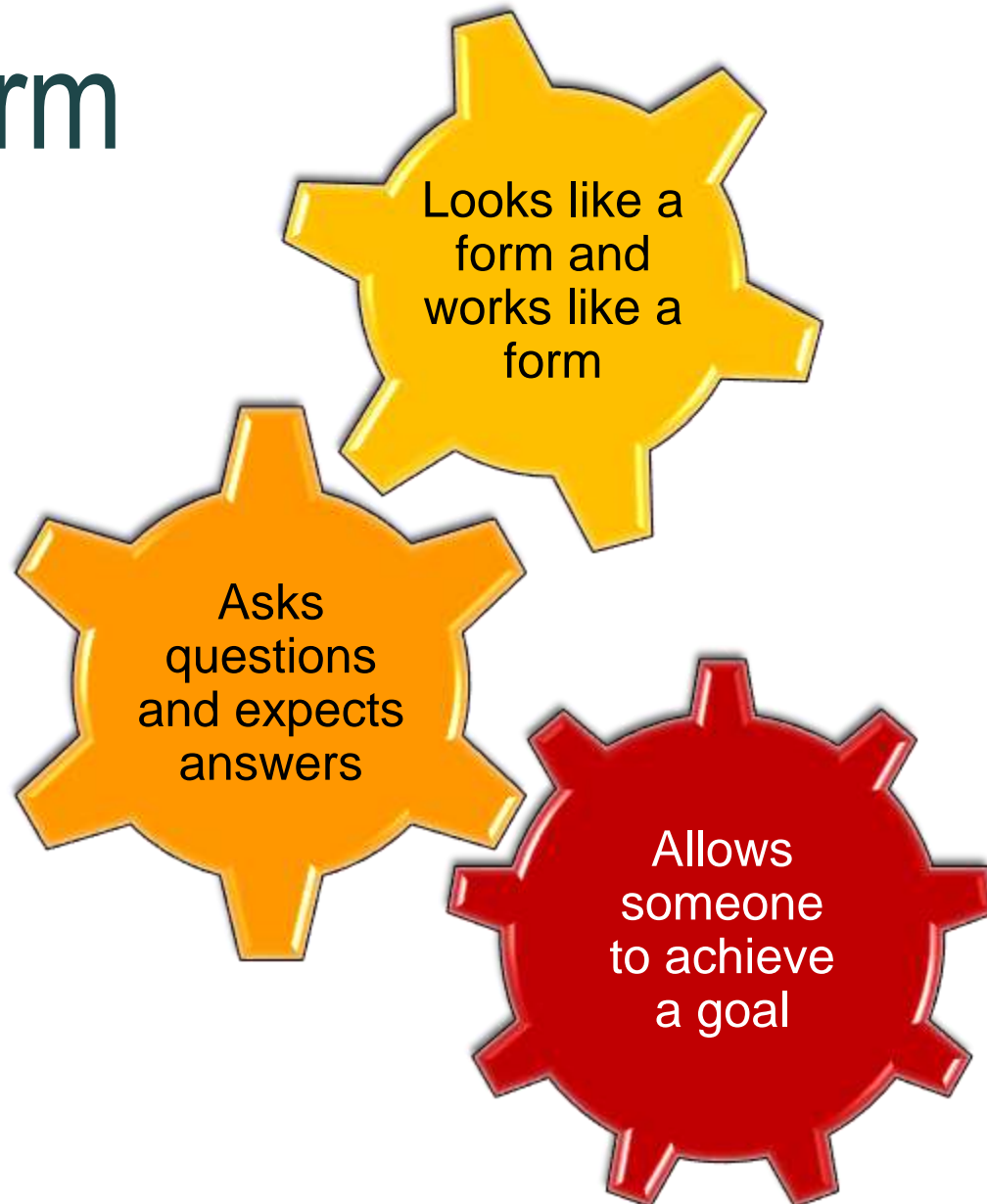
Vehicle Registration Number

Penalty Charge Notice

Search

← G →

It's a form if it ...



Interaction
Design



Content
Design



Service
Design

Where you
put the pixels



The questions
you ask



The answers
you need



Users'
needs

(and business ones)

A great form works well across all three layers

Appearance

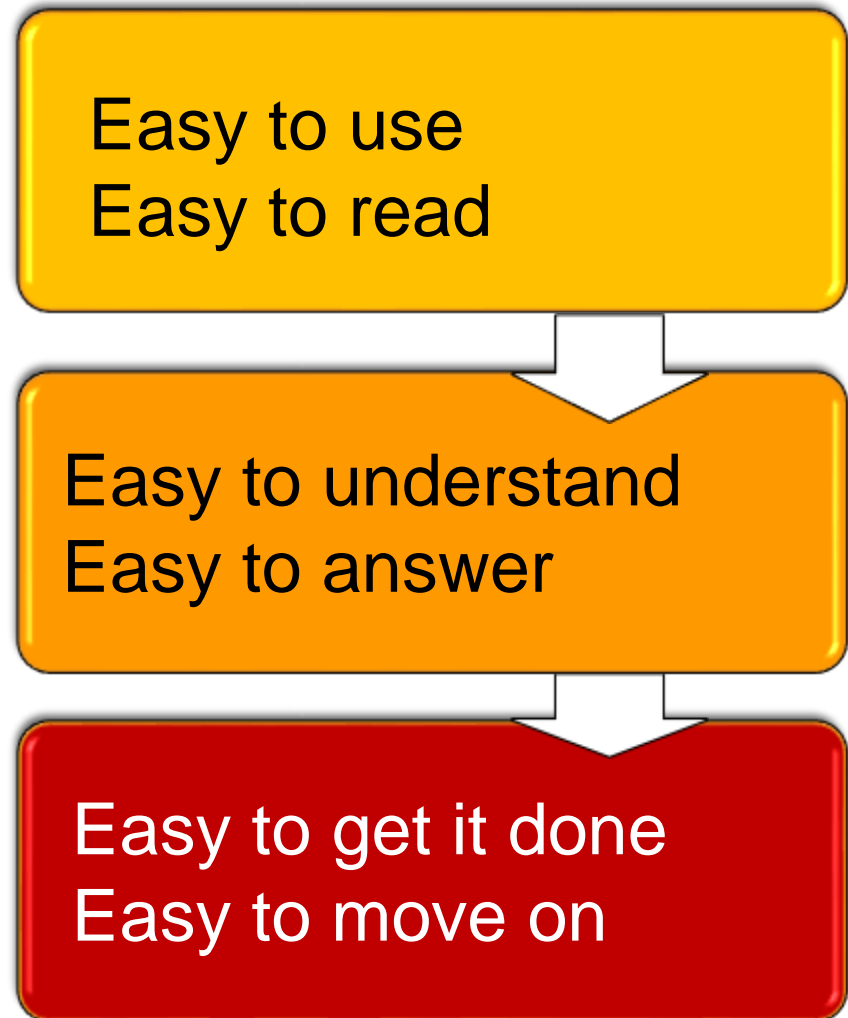
Easy to use
Easy to read

Conversation

Easy to understand
Easy to answer

Relationship

Easy to get it done
Easy to move on



How to look at a form

Step 1

Don't look at it

yet

Step 2

Choose a persona

Write the story of why that
persona is filling in the form

write down
your assumptions

“I want to work with children”



Image credit: Milton Keynes Museum
@mkmuseum used with permission

Step 3

Fill in the form
as that persona,
as honestly as you can

keep notes

Step 4

Now look at it

How did it work across
the three layers?

Appearance
Conversation
Relationship

Step 5

Do user research

Appearance:	How do users interact in practice?
Conversation:	What words do users actually use?
Relationship:	What are the real users like?
	What are their needs?

How to look at a form

1. Don't look at it.
2. Choose a persona and write the story of why that persona is filling in this form.
3. Fill in the form as that persona, as honestly as you can.
4. Now look at it.
How did it work across the three layers?
5. Do user research
Investigate your assumptions

Now you try it

Tip

Be kind.

Whenever we're looking at a form,
we know that people have worked hard
to improve it from the previous version.



Remind yourself of the story

[http://selby.ac.uk/
school-leavers-vocational/application-form/](http://selby.ac.uk/school-leavers-vocational/application-form/)

<http://bit.ly/indconftryit>


Tip

Pick the most important thing

1

2

3

A yellow rounded rectangle with a thin black border and a slight drop shadow, containing the text "Easy to use" and "Easy to read".

Easy to use
Easy to read

Even simple questions can go awry

Gender ☐ Male

☐ Female

Date of Birth

dd/mm/yyyy

Tip

Don't put hints inside text boxes

<http://www.uxmatters.com/mt/archives/2010/03/dont-put-hints-inside-text-boxes-in-web-forms.php>

The screenshot shows the UXmatters website interface. At the top is the UXmatters logo and the tagline "Insights and inspiration for the user experience". Below this is a navigation bar with links: Home, Articles by Topic, Issues, Glossary, Authors, About UXmatters, and Contact Us. On the left side, there is a "New on UXmatters" section listing several articles. The main content area features the article "Don't Put Hints Inside Text Boxes in Web Forms" by Caroline Jarrett, published on March 21, 2010. The article is part of the "Good Questions" column, which is highlighted with a green checkmark icon. The article text begins with "This is my first Good Questions column for UXmatters. In this column, I'll be writing about questions. When communicating with users in one direction, we typically ask them questions—often through forms or surveys. When communication goes in the other direction, we try to respond to users' questions—both through the design of our Web applications and other products and, sometimes, in assemblies of what we hope will be their Frequently Asked Questions."

UXmatters

Insights and inspiration for the user experience

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- Articulating Design Decisions
- What the Past Five Years Have Taught Me About UX Design, Part 1
- Defining Clear Product Requirements | Viewpoints for Design Reviews
- Five Best Practices for Becoming a Data-Driven Design Organization, Part 2
- The User's Journey: Storymapping Products That People Love

Don't Put Hints Inside Text Boxes in Web Forms

Good Questions

Asking and answering users' questions

By Caroline Jarrett

Published: March 21, 2010

This is my first *Good Questions* column for UXmatters. In this column, I'll be writing about questions. When communicating with users in one direction, we typically ask them questions—often through forms or surveys. When communication goes in the other direction, we try to respond to users' questions—both through the design of our Web applications and other products and, sometimes, in assemblies of what we hope will be their *Frequently Asked Questions*.

Tip

Actually, don't put anything
inside text boxes

<http://www.uxmatters.com/mt/archives/2013/02/dont-put-labels-inside-text-boxes-unless-youre-luke-w.php>

The screenshot shows the UXmatters website interface. The header includes the UXmatters logo and the tagline "Insights and inspiration for the user". A navigation bar contains links for Home, Articles by Topic, Issues, Glossary, Authors, About UXmatters, and Contact Us. A sidebar on the left lists "New on UXmatters" with several article titles. The main content area features the article "Don't Put Labels Inside Text Boxes (Unless You're Luke W)" by Caroline Jarrett, published on February 4, 2013. The article text discusses the author's experience with a "Don't Put Hints Inside Text Boxes in Web Forms" article and their decision to change their views. A "Good Questions" box highlights the question "Asking and answering users' questions" with a green checkmark. A quote box on the right states: "If you're designing for a cramped mobile screen, space is at a premium. It almost seems wasteful to leave text boxes empty just because people need to type into them."

UXmatters

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Don't Put Labels Inside Text Boxes (Unless You're Luke W)

Good Questions

Asking and answering users' questions

By Caroline Jarrett

Published: February 4, 2013

Recently, I received the good news that one of my columns is in the *UXmatters* All-Time Top 25: "Don't Put Hints Inside Text Boxes in Web Forms." That was an unusual article for me because I came straight out and said, "Don't." Not "It depends"—just "don't." And it generated a lot of discussion—none of which changed my views.

So, I'm going to do it again and say, "Don't put labels inside text boxes." Well, okay, what I'm actually going to say is, "Don't put labels inside text boxes unless you're Luke W."

"If you're designing for a cramped mobile screen, space is at a premium. It almost seems wasteful to leave text boxes empty just because people need to type into them."

Easy to understand
Easy to answer

Even simple questions can go awry

Gender ☐ Male

☐ Female

Date of Birth

dd/mm/yyyy

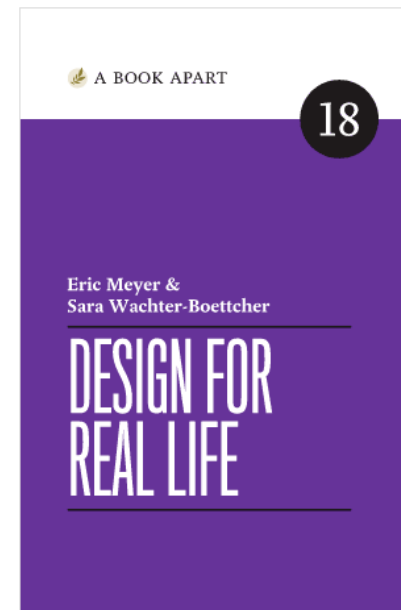
Many “easy” questions can trigger stress

Every time a website asks: “Male or Female?” and offers no opt-out, no “It’s complicated,” I pause. I have to think about what I want to answer and why. Do I check “female” to match the name I still give and the socialization I received? Or do I check “male” and risk someone noticing the discrepancy, because this reflects myself?

From “Design for Real Life”

Eric Meyer and Sara Wachter-Boettcher

<https://abookapart.com/products/design-for-real-life>



Better?

Gender <input type="text"/>
Date of Birth dd/mm/yyyy <input type="text"/>

Simple language isn't always plain language

Are you working with any support agencies?

Please tick any that apply

☐ Social Services

☐ Foundation Housing

☐ Youth Justice

☐ Young Careers

☐ Mental Health Team

☐ Family Support Services

☐ REOTAS/Rubicon Targetted

Youth Support

Not listed above?

Language is plain if we can...



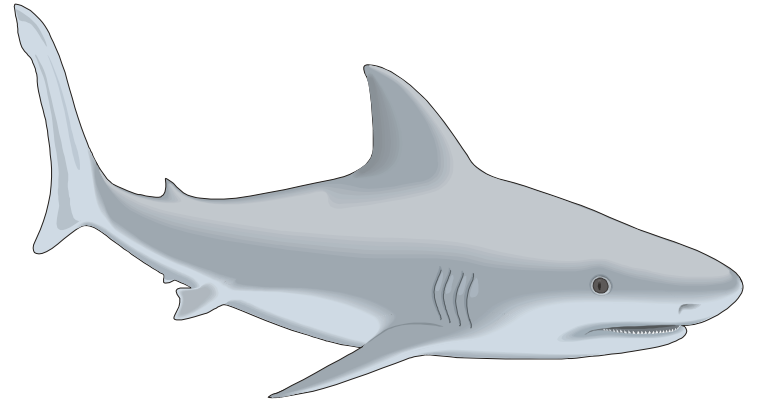
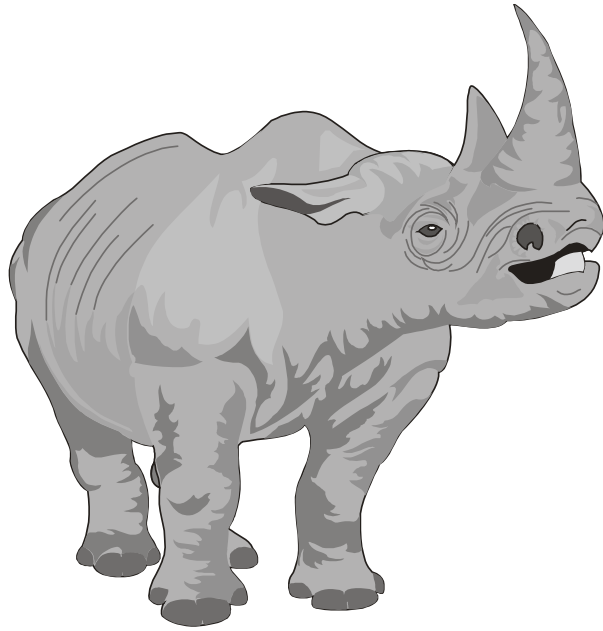
Tip

Test your forms with people

Ask them to explain to you what the questions mean to them, and what answers they would like to give.



If you're a dolphin,
are you more like a rhino or a shark?





Easy to get it done
Easy to move on

Questions with only 'yes' and 'no' answers can be tricky

Have you applied for or will
be applying to any other
colleges for a course in
2016?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Some possible answers to the question

Are you applying for any other courses?

- Yes, in 2016
- It depends on whether this application is successful
- Maybe, in 2017
- No, this is the only course I want to do
- No, because this is the only college near enough to my home
- Why are you asking? Will the answer affect my application?

Tip

Track a sample of forms through your process to find out how you use the answers



A great form works well across all three layers

Appearance

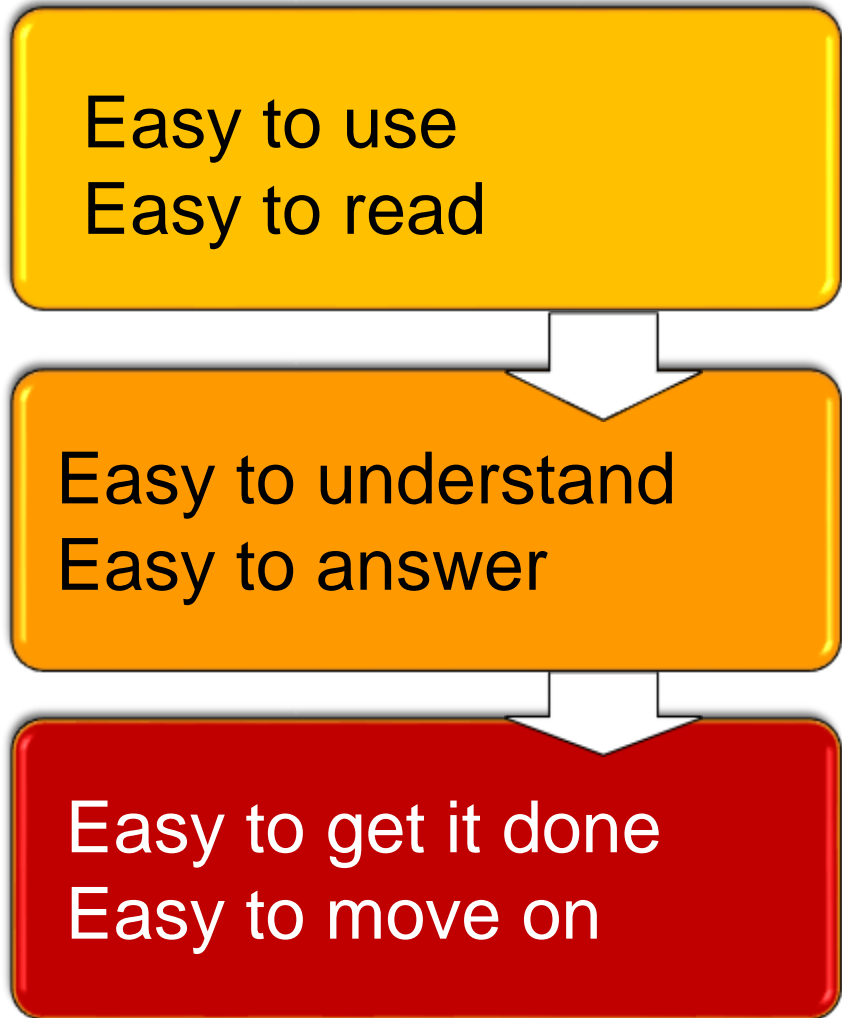
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More slides <http://www.slideshare.net/cjforms>

Forms that work

Understanding forms to
improve their design

Design tips for surveys 2012

Caroline Jarrett

User Interface Engineering / Rosenfeld Media Seminar



Design tips for complex forms Malta 2012

Caroline Jarrett



Design tips for complex forms 2011

Caroline Jarrett

J.Boye Conference Denmark



Caroline Jarrett

twitter @cjforms

caroline.jarrett@effortmark.co.uk

www.effortmark.co.uk

