DESIGNING WITH ZUSE DEEP DIVE

By thinking about basic design principles while creating our pages in Zuse, we can create websites that look better and provide our information to visitors more efficiently.

Using Contrast

Use contrast meaningfully to highlight the most important information on your site. Balance your use of contrast - both pages with too much emphasis and those with not enough are hard to use.

HEADINGS

Use headings to break up a page and make it easier for visitors to skim and find what they are looking for. Avoid using too long or too many headings.

BOLD TEXT

Use bold text to highlight key concepts. Overuse of bold text (like bolding whole paragraphs) or using it for stylistic reasons (because it looks good), makes it less powerful.

CALLOUTS

Use callouts to call attention to important content. Avoid putting content in callouts just for how they look.

Crafting Content

Writing content that is meant for the web helps people find what they are looking for. People have short attention spans when browsing the internet. Avoiding overly wordy content helps them find what they are looking for quickly. However, adding context to your page is also important, because if someone clicks on a link in Google and ends up on your page needs to be able to figure out what is going on.

CALLOUTS

Callouts should almost always include content to explain the link so site visitors can decide if they would like to follow the link.

LIST OF LINKS

Including context with a list of links helps site visitors understand why they are relevant.

LISTS

Only use bulleted lists when there is a reason. Often, content is better formatted as paragraphs with headings. If you are using lists, include introductory and conclusive paragraphs.

Consistency

Using Zuse features, like callouts, styling, and headers, in the way they were meant to be used is important for a couple reasons. First, consistent use of styles across our site makes it easier for visitors to understand and makes our site look more professional. Second, the style of the website will change in the future. The new styles will be based on the assumption that features are being used the way they were intended. Finally, if something does look bad, it allows the Web Team to catch mistakes and improve our theme.

HEADINGS

Headings should be used across the site to label sections of your content. Avoid making headings all caps and adding extra line breaks. Use heading styling instead of bold text or callouts as headings. Don’t put document links in headings.
TABLES
To make your pages mobile friendly, tables should be used for tabular data. Use table styles to add shading and heading styles to make your tables easier to read.

Page Length
Long pages with proper headings can be easier to scan and find information than information that is on multiple pages or split into tabs or accordions.

SHORT PAGES
Consider combining short pages to make navigation easier and reduce clicks for visitors to your site. Take an inventory of short pages and see if any of them are related. Combine these pages, or add information on really short pages to your homepage so visitors can use fewer clicks to find what they need.

TABs & ACCORDIONS
Tabs and accordions can make it hard to scan your site by obscuring the content. Before implementing tabs or accordions, consider what the page would look like without them. Is it easier to scan and find information?

Usability & Expectations
Site visitors should not have to learn how to use our site. Building a site that is intuitive works in the expected way and improves visitor’s experience of our site.

CAROUSEL
Use carousels to highlight content, events or news on your site. Carousels should always have more than one image in them.

CALLOUTS
Use buttons on callouts as a call to action. A button (instead of a link in the heading) makes it clear to visitors that they can click to find out more.

UNDER CONSTRUCTION
Do not include “Under Construction” or “Coming Soon” pages on your site, as they are frustrating for visitors to the site.

Icons
Icons can provide visual representation of meaning on your page. Use them to provide meaning as a link indication (for example a calendar icon with a calendar link), or to represent trends in a table. They shouldn’t be used instead of bullets or images.

Below is a list of the appropriate usage for each icon. Be sure to use icons consistently across your site. If you are interested in using icons for some other purpose, please reach out to the web team.

RATING & ARROWS
Use these icons with keys to indicate trends and ratings, for example in a table.

- Open Circle - Used in tables, shows rating, support or inclusivity
- Filled Circle - Used in tables, shows rating, support or inclusivity
- Half Filled Circle - Used in tables, shows rating, support or inclusivity
- Check - Used in tables to show feature
- Check Alt
- Check 2
Ex - Does not have feature, often used in tables
Ex Alt

Minus - Used in table to show does not have feature, does not include, to show rating
Minus Alt 2
Minus Alt

Plus - Used in tables to show feature, does include, or something is in addition to
Plus Alt 2
Plus Alt

N/A Not Applicable - Often used in tables where a feature doesn’t not apply

Open Star - Show rating
Filled Star - Show rating
Half Star Outline - Show rating
Half Star - Show rating

Down Arrow - Show trend of movement, not to be used to draw attention or as page navigation
Left Arrow - Show trend of movement, not to be used to draw attention or as page navigation
Right Arrow - Show trend of movement, not to be used to draw attention or as page navigation
Up Arrow - Show trend of movement, not to be used to draw attention or as page navigation

EMPHASIS
Use these icons to highlight urgent or noteworthy content.

Information - Denotes a informative notice; not urgent
Attention - Denotes caution or an urgent notice
Question - Highlight a question or decision
Flag - Indicated flagged item, use sparingly
Pencil - Take note of
Clock - Indicate time sensitivity

LABEL
Convey the type of information using these types of icons.

Telephone - Indicate telephone number
Email - Indicate email address
Calendar - Used as a link to full calendar, or indicates a date
Calculator - Shows calculations, or indicated calculations need to be done
Search - Indicates search or keywords users should look up
Attachment - Indicate supporting documents and pages, not to be used on a single document

OTHER ICONS

Locked - Protected area, requires log-in
Unlocked - Does not require log-in or special access
Pinned Note - Often used when something is out of sequential order, pinned to the top of list
External Link - Indicates to user that they are leaving wisconsin.edu
Conversation - Join the conversation, social media
Comment - Have a comment or feedback
Users - Indicates a group of people, user group, family, department, council
User - Indicates an individual