Akendi Heuristics

SMART WATCH DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Interaction design for new wearable technologies can be daunting. After assessing several applications and running various UX experiments, our team at Akendi has developed a set of usability heuristics to help evaluate and design smart watch interfaces.

Give Them What They Need

Smart watch design should start from a human problem. From there you can evaluate several viable and appropriate solutions to address the true requirements. Avoid the temptation of simply using technology solutions for their own sake.

Glance Not Look

Smart watches are simply too small for one to spend long stretches of interaction time. Also, the wrist position required to hold up a watch is not as comfortable as holding a phone. Keep smart watch tasks down to 5 seconds or less.

Ensure Text Legibility

Clarity of information is key to the success of a wearable device. Imagine the frustration of having to hold your watch up at eye level because the interface is cluttered or the text is too small to read. Consider proximity and size in all design decisions.

Focus on Affordance

Many smart watches are gesture based and these gestures can be difficult to discover. Always make sure that interactions are clear so users don't feel lost and find themselves pressing buttons and swiping haphazardly.

Minimize Input

Smart watches have limited physical input mechanisms so it's important to allow for different modalities of use such as voice, gesture and movement. Make sure elements that can be tapped are large enough by using a minimum target size of 1cm x 1cm, and stick to a maximum of 4 targets on screen at a time.

Make Visual & Tactile Equal

Smart watch devices are in direct contact with the skin, and tactile feedback can be even more salient and communicative than visual. Remember that tactile feedback is just as important as the visual display.

Augment What Users Love, Automate the Rest

A wearable device should enhance users' favourite experiences, making them richer and more memorable. Using automation can create more time to do the things they love. Consider various automation mechanisms such as proximity-awareness, behavioural-awareness, and pattern recognition.

Learn more about how we can help with your smart watch design needs.

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