







Design for Form Factors Cheat Sheet




Posture

Why is it important? It tells you whether the user is on the go, rests, can use one or two hands to operate the device. Furthermore this gives you an idea what physical activity will feel natural – think of hand or arm movement. It could also be the user's belly hiding or even touching the bottom bit of the display :)

| | Phone | Tablet | Laptop | Desktop |
|---|-------|--------|--------|---------|
|  | ✓ | | | |
|  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
|  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
|  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
|  | ✓ | ✓ | | |
|  | ✓ | ✓ | | |






Usage Time

Why is it important? It tells you about the attention span you can expect from the user. This gives you valuable information about the possible level of complexity you can implement in your design. If you need to cover a broader range of usage time make sure that you add more complex functionality in a way that doesn't interfere if users don't want to get into that level of complexity.

| | Phone | Tablet | Laptop | Desktop |
|---|-------|--------|--------|---------|
|  | ✓ | ✓ | | |
|  | | ✓ | ✓ | |
|  | | | ✓ | ✓ |








Light Conditions

Why is it important? It tells you whether you should go for a high contrast colour palette, a bright interface or a dark one. It also allows you to estimate the level of reflection you're dealing with or how visible fingerprints will appear on screen. Bear in mind that light conditions could also change over time.

| | Phone | Tablet | Laptop | Desktop |
|---|-------|--------|--------|---------|
|  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
|  | ✓ | ✓ | | |
|  | | | ✓ | ✓ |
|  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
|  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |

Location

Why is it important? It tells you a lot about the situation the user finds himself in. Are there potentially other people around? Locations can tell you about the likelihood of network conditions – whether WiFi will be present, cellular signal only or even no signal at all. It also might be just too cold or appears to be raining which is why one wouldn't pull the device out of the pocket. Furthermore consider if your design needs to work with multiple or changing locations.

| | Phone | Tablet | Laptop | Desktop |
|---|-------|--------|--------|---------|
|  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
|  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
|  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
|  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
|  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
|  | ✓ | | | |
|  | ✓ | ✓ | | |

Device Features

Interfaces are not limited to a graphical interfaces. Especially with devices with limited screen sizes it gets even more important to consider how other device features can be utilised to create easy-to-use interfaces.

Orientation

Landscape
Portrait
Bottom Up
Upside Down
It can change!

Touch-Gestures

Pan, Pinch, Swipe or custom
Avoid similar gestures
Up to 11 simultaneous touches (iPad)

Accelerometer

Tilt
Rotate
Shake
Custom motion gestures
Orientation to gravity

Location (GPS)

User's location
Movement
Current speed
Precision of approx. 2m

Proximity

User holds phone next to ear

Camera

Live Image
Still Image
Colour Detection
Shape Detection

Sound Input

Volume
Frequency
Particular Sounds/Noise