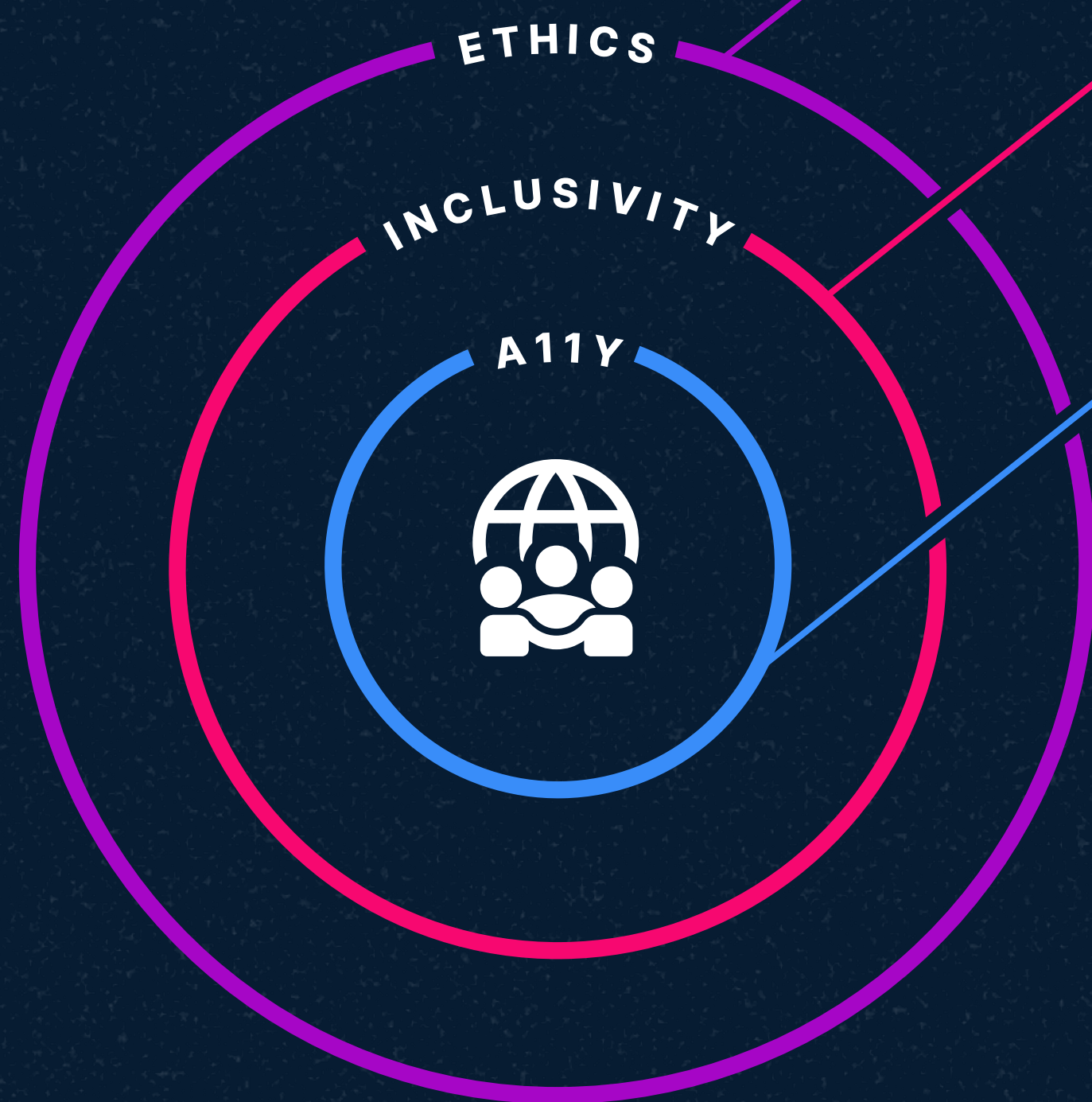


Impact Outlook

A guide for building humanity-centered digital products and services.

Version 1 | August 2023



Using this toolkit and guide

Impact Outlook is intended to be an approachable toolkit for embedding ethical considerations within the products and services we make. Integrate this toolkit into your product design process and even in early sales conversations. Being more intentional, earlier will allow for a foundational and ethical base that is more likely to translate into positive impacts for humanity that directly set up positive returns for businesses as well.

The [strategic model](#) uses the visual metaphor of an hourglass to illustrate how to bring this guide and toolkit into practice. Get familiar with the practical strategy to understand how intentional inputs that inform future outcomes can lead to more experiences with positive impacts on humanity. In this guide you'll find detailed definitions and values based on the three core areas of humanity-centered design.

1 Ethical Reflection

[Detailed view](#)

At the outset, we want to understand whether a product or service contributes to the well-being of individuals, society and the world.

2 Product Inclusivity

[Detailed view](#)

After reflecting, we should challenge our biases, collaborate and create experiences that promote a sense of belonging for people across as many dimensions of diversity as possible.

3 Accessibility

[Detailed view](#)

At the core, we implement and build products according to [WCAG](#) and the [POUR principles](#) to mitigate ableist, harmful experiences and make it so that everyone, first and foremost people with disabilities have accessible and usable digital products to use.



Lookout Moments

Before researching, designing and developing a feature, product or service, use lookout moments to think about the potential impact it could have on society and the people using what you create.

[View Lookout Moments by Discipline](#)

< Ethical Reflection

At the outset, we want to understand whether a product or service contributes to the well-being of individuals, society and the world.

[View Lookout Moments](#)



 Intentionality

 Equity

 Privacy

 Sustainability

 Transparency



Intentionality



“When we concentrate on the essential elements in design, when we omit all superfluous elements, we find forms become: quiet, comfortable, understandable and, most importantly, long lasting.”¹

– Dieter Rams

Whether we're talking about communication, visuals, product, interface, or systems design, it is important to clarify the problem at hand and provide a best-case scenario or solution. Additionally, we must critically analyze our output's value to the organization and people. Take care to only add the necessary level of complexity or detail.



Tips & Resources

- Design without intention is decoration
- Content without intention is filler
- Data without intention is intrusive
- Interface without intention is clutter
- Systems without intention are oppressives

1. [Dieter Rams: Design by Vitsoe](#)



Equity



“Through our designs, we are asking—persuading—people to involve themselves in achieving a goal: both to satisfy their needs, wants and desires and also, for our benefit, to win their custom, favor, and loyalty, etc. With the “give and take” in mind, we will offer better user experiences and, thus, with a greater likelihood that those users will become consumers and repeatedly so.”¹

Our goal is to ensure the balance between the outcome people receive from their input is in proportion to the outcome a business receives for its input. Equitable design is a matter of defining and continually working to understand how we balance our needs with the needs of people, in a way that’s fair and mutually beneficial.



Tips & Resources

1. [Equity Theory – What’s in it for UX designers](#)



Privacy



“Do not underestimate the risks of data misuse and abuse. Good intentions will not be good enough, especially when we have an ethical and mission-driven obligation to our beneficiaries. Even the smallest movement toward a human-centred approach to privacy can make a huge difference.”¹

While it's true that in the ultra-connected era, privacy feels like a relic of the past, people must maintain agency, and control of their personal information, whether digital or physical. If for no other reason than the fact that privacy is a human right; in this way, we must remain vigilant and intentional in our approach to ensuring this agency and control.

People should be able to make informed decisions and trust that their choice to share, or not share their private information will be respected without penalty or exclusion.



Tips & Resources

1. [Essential Actions: A Human-Centred Global Approach to Privacy Rights](#) by Sebastian Manhart and Christine Kim



Sustainability



“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”¹

As defined by the United Nations, when we speak of sustainability we perceive it in the three distinct, but largely connected, contexts: Environmental, Economic, and Social. As early as possible, we should analyze how our solutions align to not only business needs, but humanity’s needs, and our ability to meet both needs in perpetuity.

Economic and Social Sustainability incorporates risk-management (i.e. ensuring our solutions can be sustainably maintained by the business), and foundational human-centered design practices (i.e. ensuring solutions solve real problems and meet users where they are) so as not to create untenable systems that lead to unnecessary physical or resource waste.



Tips & Resources

1. [World Commission on Environment and Development. Our Common Future](#)



Transparency



“We have a unique opportunity to seek consumer trust and a short window of time to realize this opportunity. We should demonstrate to people that they can trust us, they can trust us going forward because we will deal with their data in the right way. We will not take their privacy for granted, we will not misuse their personal data, we will not infer things about them from the data we have that they would consider inappropriate.”¹

–Michael Natusch

Ethical design practices allow users to make informed decisions by providing transparency throughout an engagement. Whether providing/removing personal data, signing up for a service, or simply clicking links on a website, people should have clarity of how their actions impact their experience and the result of these actions.



Tips & Resources

1. [Taking a Human-Centered Approach For Building Ethical and Transparent AI with Capgemini Research Institute](#)

< Product Inclusivity

After reflecting, we should challenge our biases, collaborate and create experiences that promote a sense of belonging for people across as many dimensions of diversity as possible.

[View Lookout Moments](#)



 DEI

 Bias

 Empathy

 Co-creation

 Society



DEI



Diversity, equity, and inclusion are cultural concepts with many interpretations. Creating a shared vocabulary of DEI for Think Company was important so we have a common understanding of what we're committing to. At the same time, it allows us to hold ourselves and the organization as a whole accountable for the agreed-upon goals.

Diversity is actively working toward a more balanced workforce made up of Thinkers from many demographic groups at all levels of the company. **Equity** is eliminating internal barriers that Thinkers from marginalized groups face when trying to access opportunities and resources within Think Company. **Inclusion** means employees feeling a sense of belonging and ability to contribute unique perspectives that are valued by colleagues.



Tips & Resources

- [Think Company DEI Principles](#)
- Evaluate the makeup of each Think project team for diversity — at all levels.
- When forming teams, conducting research and creating design solutions, ask the question, "Who might we be excluding?"

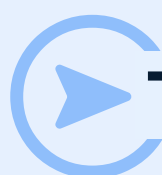


Bias



Challenge the biases, assumptions and/or decisions that stem from your individual life experiences and identity.

As humans, we all have biases, making it important that we are aware of the assumptions we make and default states of mind that can cause undue harm. We always need to be cognizant of who may not be present in the discussion, in an effort to identify the risks and impacts of unintentional exclusion. Whether it's people with disabilities, historically marginalized groups, those with different cultural or life experiences, or beyond. Product Inclusivity or Inclusive Design is about recognizing personal biases and respecting the diversity of the human experience.



Tips & Resources

- [Design for Cognitive Bias by David Dylan Thomas](#)
- Analyze work with your team to identify hidden biases and assumptions, potential harms as well as innovation opportunities.



Empathy



In a general sense, empathy is our ability to see the world through other people's eyes, to see what they see, feel what they feel, and experience things as they do. Of course, none of us can fully experience things the way someone else does, but we can attempt to get as close as possible, and we do this by putting aside our own preconceived ideas and choosing to understand the ideas, thoughts, and needs of others instead.

Design involves finding balance between business, resource, and human needs, in an effort to develop solutions—whether visual, physical, experiential, or intangible—to the mutual benefit of all parties involved. Empathy plays a key role in the process, as it is critical to providing an understanding of not only the “what”, but more importantly the “why” and “how”.



Tips & Resources

- Why is an outcome important to the business?
- Why is the solution beneficial, and useful to our users?
- How feasible is the solution within our capability and technical resources?



Co-Creation



Seek out, center, and create with perspectives from “target” AND excluded demographics, especially people from groups/communities who are historically underrepresented.

By involving people from a variety of communities and backgrounds throughout the design process, we can focus on the spectrum of worst-case scenarios when it comes to identifying pain points, and continue the relationship back and forth over time to ensure decisions are validated. Resulting in more innovative and impactful solutions that include people from a broadly diverse set of circumstances.



Tips & Resources

- Consider if there is an opportunity for you create “with” people instead of “for” them.
- Broaden scope of your research and validation participants via accessibility testing platforms like [Fable](#)



Society



“I don’t think you could look at Instagram or Facebook as inherently unethical; though I do think there are ethical challenges in terms of the outcomes we see in the world as a result of using social platforms. Their decisions that have surfaced and prioritized disinformation is an unethical outcome. The better way of looking at it is trying to anticipate what could happen as a result of your decision making and determine whether those outcomes are good for humanity or not.”¹

– Sheryl Cababa

This value can be briefly summarized as taking care to inquire, “What could go wrong?” or “At what cost?” Where the value of Intentionality is centered around setting expectations for how we hope our solutions will work to the benefit of the business, and people interacting with our products, services and experiences.



Tips & Resources

1. [All Tech is Human interview with Sheryl Cababa](#)

< Accessibility

At the core, we implement and build products according to WCAG and the POUR principles to mitigate ableist, harmful experiences and make it so that everyone, first and foremost people with disabilities, have accessible and usable digital products to use.

[View Lookout Moments](#)



 **Disability**

 **Usability**

 **POUR Principles**

 **Influence**

 **Mental Health**



Disability



“How people *think* about disability affects how they *feel* about disability. Although people have various individual perspectives on disability, these viewpoints can be categorized into three overarching models of disability—moral, medical, and social (Olkin, 2002). Each model addresses the perceived causes of disability, appropriate responses, and deeper meanings.”¹

In the moral model, disability is seen as having meaning about the person’s or the family’s character, deeds, thoughts, and karma.¹

In the medical model, disability is perceived as an impairment in a body system or function that is inherently pathological.¹

In the social model, disability is seen as one aspect of a person’s identity, much like race/ethnicity, gender, etc. From this perspective, it is mismatches (physical and social environment) that creates the handicaps and barriers, not the disability.

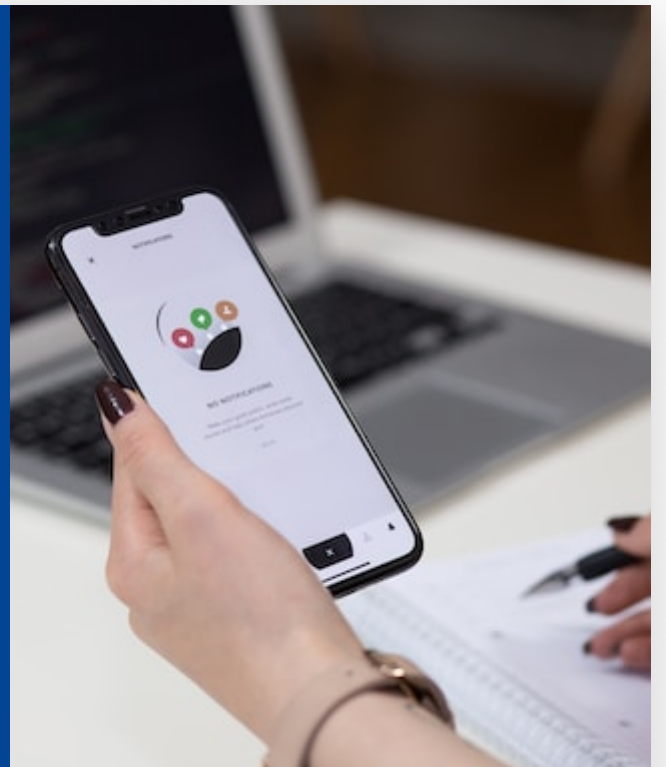


Tips & Resources

1. [Conceptualizing disability: Three models of disability](#)



Usability



“Users should feel immersed and in control of products/designs that predict their actions and help them get things done properly and fast. If they stop to think about what you’re showing them, they’ll start losing trust. Overall, they should find it all satisfying—if not pleasing.”¹

Providing a usable experience isn’t one that allows people to meet our (business) end goals, but one that gives people agency in their engagement. In this way, an interface shouldn’t misdirect or mislead, content shouldn’t be misrepresented, obfuscated, or overcomplicated, and interaction shouldn’t be intentionally limited to reduce anyone’s ability to control their own destiny.

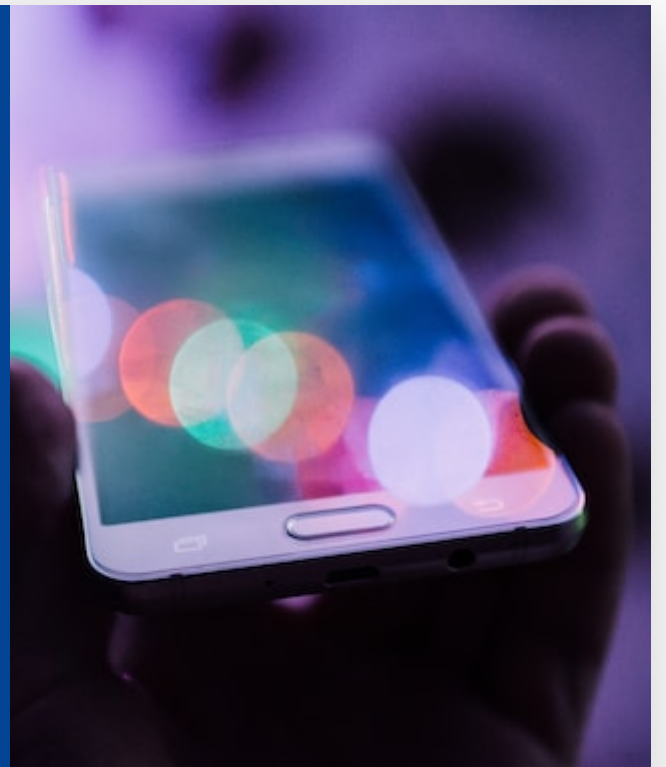


Tips & Resources

1. [Interaction Design Foundation: What is Usability?](#)



POUR Principles



POUR, the four user-centered principles of accessibility introduced by WCAG 2.

By emphasizing principles rather than techniques, developers should approach the process conceptually. Conveniently, these principles spell out an acronym that is relatively easy to remember: POUR. The idea is to create a POUR web site, so to speak. The pun may be a bad one, but if it helps developers memorize the principles, then it has served its purpose.¹

- **Perceivable** - Web content is made available to the senses - sight, hearing, and/or touch
- **Operable** - Interface forms, controls, and navigation are operable
- **Understandable** - Information and the operation of user interface must be understandable.
- **Robust** - Content must be robust enough that it can be interpreted by a wide variety of user agents, including assistive technologies



Tips & Resources

1. [Constructing a POUR Website](#)



Influence



“As a part of our daily routine, user experience designers “hack” into the thought patterns of their users to create in-demand products. However, how do we know whether hacking into the thought patterns of our users is ethical? And how do we know whether we are using knowledge for good or bad?”¹

– Kristyn Maguire

Good user experience design is about providing the users with seamless, enjoyable interactions with products. It has the user’s best interest in mind, and is not deceptive or sneaky. In contrast, Bad UX is manipulative.



Tips & Resources

1. [Kristyn Maguire: Ethics in UX—What Are They Good For?](#)



Mental Health



“Think about what you know about your users – What other areas in their lives could be putting strain on their emotional and mental state? What platforms are they familiar with? What level of education do they have around your product content and services? What are all the possible ways, both in and outside of the product’s control, the happy path could take a southern turn?”¹

– Cara Brashears

Mental health may seem like an overreach, or even self-aggrandization of the control the design and tech industry has as a practice, however, part of the world we occupy as creators of all disciplines is using our understanding of people’s thought patterns, preferences, and needs to elicit their support. Psychology and behavioral economics play a large role in our scoping, conceptualization, and empathizing with our users.



Tips & Resources

1. [Inclusive UX in an era of anxiety](#)