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As tech evolves, web design gets more formalized, requiring standardization for seamless PC-to-mobile translation and easy navigation. Digital style guides set expectations and standards for a company's online presence, crucial for top-notch user experiences. In this post, we'll dive into what digital style guides are and explore impressive examples from famous companies like Apple, Google, and Starbucks. A digital style guide serves as a manual setting design standards for a brand's digital presence, ensuring consistency across all channels. Unlike traditional brand style guides, these guides focus on digital presentation, including UX/UI guidelines. As a UX designer, I've always been curious about the digital style guides of influential companies. Many make this information publicly available, but it can be hard to find. Here are some awesome examples: Apple's iOS style guide is fascinating, detailing how to design an entire operating system. Google's Material Design style guide combines benefits of Skeuomorphic and Flat Design while avoiding drawbacks. Starbucks' minimalistic style guide sets standards for its online presence. Given article text here The digital style guides of various companies offer valuable resources for developers and designers alike, providing an abundance of information on code structure, design principles, and branding. Atlassian's comprehensive style guide is a prime example, covering everything from foundational elements to components and pattern libraries. Mozilla's guide focuses on branding and communications, while incorporating its "privacy and open web" approach into its design. Buffer's small but concise guide demonstrates that simplicity can be effective in conveying essential points. Yelp's thorough style guide explains its Atomic Design system as a cookbook, providing detailed information on typography, layout, forms, and more. GOV.UK's simple yet informative design serves as a benchmark for clean and effective UX. DeviantArt's unique guide leverages bold visuals to immerse users in the brand experience, while Disqus keeps its guide short but well-organized. ****Unleash Your Creativity: Craft Your Own Digital Style Guide**** Now's your chance to shine! Implementing a digital style guide within your company enables seamless communication of your brand's design language to internal teams, agencies, partners, and even customers. Begin with the fundamentals (color palette, typography, logo, and imagery) and expand with usage guidelines ("dos and don'ts") and web components (modules, templates, code snippets) as needed. Draw inspiration from industry leaders to refine your approach. Your team will soon produce consistent designs with ease. ****The Hierarchical World of Style Guides**** Renowned publications rely on style guides to ensure content accuracy and consistency. These guides often follow a hierarchical structure. For instance, TidBITS consults its in-house guide for initial queries, then refers to the Apple Style Guide, and finally, The Chicago Manual of Style for unresolved matters. If all else fails, they research, establish a ruling, and update their internal guide. ****Internal Guidance, External Flexibility**** Remember, internal style guides serve as organizational directives, not externally mandated rules. For example, Apple's approach to trademarked product names (e.g., "iPhone supports...") differs from more conventional phrasing ("The iPhone supports..."). ****Apple's Updated Style Guide: A New Era of Accessibility**** Apple has recently updated its public style guide, a rare occurrence (twice yearly). Notably, this resource is now web-accessible, departing from its previous ebook format exclusive to Apple Books. The web version offers enhanced usability, featuring: * Streamlined browsing * Efficient searching * Direct linking to specific entries (e.g., [Internal link to iBooks entry](#)) ****Verification at Your Fingertips**** With the updated web guide, verifying style queries is more straightforward. For instance, confirming the correct terminology for Apple's ebook app (iBooks vs. Books) is just a click away. Apple Books style guide is confusing because it doesn't clearly explain how to link to any entry. The only way to do this in Safari is by using a complicated process involving inspecting elements and manually building the URL. To fix this, Apple should make linking easier on its website. I also think it would be helpful if search results persisted in a sidebar for better browsing experience. Currently, you have to click on each result individually because there's no quick navigation between them. Searching is still available but not as intuitive. One thing I noticed about the style guide was that it now includes a section called "Changes to the Guide." This is really useful for understanding how Apple thinks and reacts to new technologies or world events. For example, they recently changed their policy on capitalizing certain words. In terms of terminology, there's been some debate about what to call certain features like action sheets and share sheets. While Apple doesn't want people to use those exact terms in user materials, it's okay to use them when editing the content. It can be tricky knowing which terminology is correct for both iOS and iPadOS. Another thing that's changed is how you refer to devices. Instead of saying "iOS device," they now recommend referring to it as an "iPadOS device" if it specifically refers to an iPad, but still using "iOS device" when talking about the operating system itself. Use iPadOS. However, it is acceptable to say "Learn how to back up your iOS or iPadOS device" or even better "Learn how to back up your iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch". I am unhappy with the first solution because listing two items gets awkward after a couple of usages in running text. We will continue to ponder this on a case-by-case basis. recovery mode: When you hold down Command-R while your Mac starts up, you end up in what? We have been using "macOS Recovery" based on Apple's support article. However, a new recovery mode entry suggests that we should say "to boot into recovery mode". There is no entry for "macOS Recovery", but for now, we will stick with it because it is more specific and matches Apple's documentation. mode: Here's a can of worms. New in this revision are recovery mode and safe mode, both of whose entries note their casing. However, the February 2019 revision added Dark Mode, with its express capitalization, and a note that there is no comparable Light Mode. If the inconsistency perturbs you, you're not alone, and we've suffered from it too. What about modes like airplane mode, sleep mode, and target disk mode? All lowercase, according to Apple. Dark Mode uses initial capitals, as does Low Power Mode. But then we have Power Reserve mode, in mixed case, and Target Display Mode, which Apple uses both in lowercase and with capitals but doesn't include in the style guide. internet and web: Sometimes, you just have to stick to your guns. In its December 2019 revision, Apple fell in with the rabble that prefers to lowercase "Internet", adding it to the lowercase short form of "World Wide Web". We disagree vehemently and will continue to uppercase both "Internet" and "Web", partly out of respect for their power. However, we may start using "website" as one word, given that the W3C allows it. We've long lowercased other Web-related words like "webmaster" and "webcast", but we'll follow the W3C with "Web page" even though Apple combines it. If you've enjoyed some of the persnickety thinking that goes into making these decisions, I encourage you to browse through the Apple Style Guide.

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