

Humane Design Guide

How can we design products that are more sophisticated about human nature?

1 Identify a product or feature to design:

What is it? _____

What value should it bring to the user? _____

What is your measure of success? _____

2 For each vulnerability below, plot where your product currently lies on each spectrum of humane design:

Emotional & Physical

What we feel in our bodies and minds.

Inhibits or Exploits

Supports or Protects

Design causes stress, lack of sleep, fear, or emotional exhaustion.

Design supports calm, balance, safety, and circadian rhythms.

Look Out For: Creating artificial scarcity Signaling urgency
 Requiring constant monitoring Optimizing for screen-time

Attention

How and where we focus time and energy.

Inhibits or Exploits

Supports or Protects

Design draws, fragments, or overwhelms attention.

Design enables more focus and mindfulness.

Look Out For: Frequent context-switching Undifferentiated choices
 No stopping cues (ie: infinite scroll) Unnecessary movement

Sense-Making

How we integrate what we perceive and know.

Inhibits or Exploits

Supports or Protects

Design promotes out of context, confusing, or manipulative information.

Design enables us to consider, learn, express, and feel grounded.

Look Out For: Facts out of context Over-personalized filters
 Equating virality with credibility Deceptive authority (ie: ads vs content)

Decision-Making

How we align our intentions and actions.

Inhibits or Exploits

Supports or Protects

Design manipulates behavior and independent choice.

Design enables agency, purpose, and mobilization of intent.

Look Out For: Avatars to convey authority Stalking ads and messages
 Push content modules Serving preference over intent

Social Reasoning

How we navigate personal relationships.

Inhibits or Exploits

Supports or Protects

Design manipulates status, relationships, or self-image.

Design enables safe, authentic connection with others.

Look Out For: Quantified social status Viral sharing
 Implied obligation Enabling impersonation

Group Dynamics

How we interact with society and groups.

Inhibits or Exploits

Supports or Protects

Design excludes, divides, or mobilizes through fear.

Design develops a sense of belonging and cooperation.

Look Out For: Suppressing context and nuance Enabling hate speech
 Enabling viral outrage Lack of agreed-upon norms

③ Develop an action statement for Humane Design using your evaluation from the previous page:

1. In what ways does your product/feature *currently* interact with human vulnerabilities?

Consider:

*Which vulnerabilities are engaged with which feature?
How is the value proposition delivered?
Which specific elements might warrant redesign?
Are the success criteria in tension with any vulnerabilities?*

2. How might your product/feature *protect or support* human vulnerabilities?

Consider:

*Where are humans naturally brilliant at manifesting the value proposition?
How might a design element change to better support that brilliance?
With social vulnerabilities, could the design encourage people to meet the goal in real life?
Do any success criteria need to shift to support human vulnerabilities?*

3. Write an action statement to guide your product or feature toward humane design.

Consider:

*What is one thing you want to learn more about?
What would you like to discuss with your team?
What would you like to design or prototype?
Are there any new design principles you might employ?
Use extra space for text, diagram, wireframes...*