



Las leyes de la simplicidad

John Maeda

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La sencillez y levedad de artilugios como el iPod han popularizado la simplicidad. Pero en ocasiones, nos vemos atrapados en una paradoja: deseamos algo sencillo y fácil de utilizar, pero que sea capaz de realizar todas aquellas cosas complejas que deseamos que haga. En *Las leyes de la simplicidad*, John Maeda proporciona las claves: diez leyes que equilibran la simplicidad y la complejidad en los negocios, la tecnología y el diseño, pero también en la vida, pues según Maeda este libro expresa su lucha por comprender el sentido de la existencia desde su condición de tecnólogo humanista. Escrito con los mismos principios que postula, *Las leyes de la simplicidad* es un libro que se lee de una sentada, divertido y audaz no sólo por su provocativo, libre y lúdico enfoque de los problemas derivados de un mundo cada vez más complejo, sino por una prosa directa y clara que encarna a la perfección la máxima ley, la número 10, que Maeda denomina LA ÚNICA: “La simplicidad consiste en sustraer lo que es obvio y añadir lo específico”.

Las leyes de la simplicidad Details

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From Reader Review Las leyes de la simplicidad for online ebook

Simon Bostock says

This is a kind of 'barely book' - it's slight, in every sense of the word, and I can barely recall any of it. But I wrote **oodles** in the margins. And I've thought 'through' the book many times.

Go figure.

Sophia says

The book starts off on a strong note with the first law of simplicity: thoughtful reduction. Reduction is achieved through the principles of shrinking, hiding and embodying. Technologies have been simplified through technological progress, which has allowed small objects to have the same technological capability as larger ones. The size of an object leads to surprise and awe and can be more forgiving than a larger one. An object can also be simplified by hiding features and leaving only the essential ones. When an object is small and features are hidden, it may be more difficult for someone to believe it is better. Therefore the last principle is to embed the object with value. This can be through actual materials which are superior, or through marketing tactics.

Maeda's next 9 laws lose the design focus of the first chapter and the examples he uses are not useful. For instance, Maeda's solution to organization (the second law) is to group tasks using sticky notes or creating a mind map. This isn't providing much of a solution to organization. Maeda draws heavily on Apple, which is probably a good example since everyone is familiar with the company's products. While his laws, like saving time (Law 3) make sense, his examples do not. Is Apple's shuffle only iPod really saving much time rather than fumbling around selecting a song?

Maybe Maeda's book is too generic; rather than trying to address design, technology, business and life, he should try to simplify by eliminating so many topics he is trying to cover. And, according to Law 4, "Learn", he should repeat often the main message of these at the end of each chapter as they are not so clear from the text.

Rob says

well, i was hoping for much more philosophy. turned out to be mostly about product design.

also, the register was often annoyingly sort of oprahish. explaining to the reader why certain objects make them feel certain emotions, with the implication that if you follow these instructions and buy objects satisfying the following guidelines, you'll soon be feeling better emotions.

that said, i actually really liked most of the 10 laws, and just wish that in the exposition he'd had more examples about buddhist monks and education, and less about ipods and google. also, i liked that he consciously applied his laws to his own efforts, limiting the book to 100 pages, etc. i'll always give you a star

for taking things to the next meta-level.

Mat Ranson says

I like Maeda, I have one of his old design books. This one started off well enough but quite soon I began to feel it wasn't really aimed at me. Maeda has a great capacity for summarising and shrinking information into simple, digestible phrases, but I couldn't help thinking with *The Laws Of Simplicity* he was shaping aesthetics and technology into metaphors aimed at middle managers looking for the latest self-help book.

T Cho says

John Maeda's *The Laws of Simplicity* is a delightful, tasteful read. It is a book about design, technology, art, feelings, philosophy, humans, nature, human nature, and everything in between.

First of all, when I saw the book nobly sitting on the shelf in the Museum of Art and Design in NY, I found myself immediately gravitating towards it. I was enticed by its slim size and sleek, fashionable cover. I can assure you that the book's impressive looks *are* matched by the impressive content and insights that reside within its pages.

Maeda's personal insights are the heart of the book. He has mastered the art of story-telling, in which a "moral of the story" is included. The book is rather humbly written, not the least bit intimidating, and highly relatable. The book has no shortage of humor and wordplay. And can I just add that the visuals were great :-)

Maeda is the master of clarity and organization in writing. Don't be fooled by the book's succinctness. There's truly **deep stuff** in there. What I like is that you don't have to dig too deep to find the treasures in the writing. Maeda's has got them all laid out for you, in beautifully organized chapters and subheadings.

The only thing I would say is that the acronyms, which, according to Maeda, are implemented to help readers better understand his concepts, were a bit petty and unnecessary (for my taste), but nonetheless did not completely reverse my admiration for the book.

Ra La says

I was never able to move past that the author could not comprehend of people different from him. For people that need more than play and fast-forward for your media devices, you are not a part of his target audience.

Erika RS says

This short (100 page) book gives 10 laws and 3 key properties for designing simple systems. Maeda provides a hand summary of the laws and key principles:

Ten laws:

1. Reduce: The simplest way to achieve simplicity is through thoughtful reduction.
2. Organize: Organization makes a system of many appear fewer.
3. Time: Savings in time feel like simplicity.
4. Learn: Knowledge makes everything simpler.
5. Differences: Simplicity and complexity need each other.
6. Context: What lies in the periphery of simplicity is definitely not peripheral.
7. Emotion: More emotions are better than less.
8. Trust: In simplicity we trust.
9. Failure: Some things can never be made simple.
10. The One: Simplicity is about subtracting the obvious, and adding the meaningful.

Three key principles:

1. Away: More appears like less simply by moving it far, far away.
2. Open: Openness simplifies complexity.
3. Power: Use less, gain more.

I fail to see the difference between the laws and principles (maybe Maeda just didn't want 13 laws ;), but other than that, these feel like a good set of principles to keep in mind when designing. They capture many common design dilemmas. For example, systems are often designed for expert and novice users. The "Learn" principle can be used to frame this dilemma. A novice user has no knowledge about your system; an expert user has that knowledge. The system should provide necessary knowledge to the user while not getting in the way of the expert. By reducing the knowledge needed (law 1), possibly by relying on knowledge the user already has (law 4) this dual nature may be achievable. There may still be problems because some complexity is inherent in trying to cater to two user groups (law 9).

The Laws of Simplicity rings true. It is consistent with what I have read of Don Norman's work and with a good deal of what I remember from Jef Raskin's book *The Humane Interface*. It is also consistent with what I learned in HCI and my own experience.

One nitpick: the book tried too hard to push the associated website. Once at the end would have been enough. I can forgive it that quirk since it was, in general quite spiffy (and shiny, literally; the cover had pretty shiny bits).

lorinbocol says

mies van der rohe insegna: less is more. e con lui, tutti i più grandi.
munari diceva: complicare è facile, semplificare è difficile. e un paio di secoli prima, blaise pascal si scusava per la lunghezza di una lettera: «non ho avuto tempo di scriverne una più breve».
essere lineari non è (quasi) mai una conquista im-mediata.

Rafael Bandeira says

Good study on what simplicity, both real and perceived, are made of, and what to focus on to achieve it. For product design or business management, or even daily life, good concepts are present in the book to help simplify or better understand the complexity around these.

The book is written in a personal and casual tone, sometimes even funny, that transmits a lot about the author, John Maeda, and gives an enjoyable feeling to follow through, as sounds a lot like a conversation. The small size also helps a lot.

There are somewhat confuse parts, when you don't really know whether they fit on understanding complexity or striving for simplicity. Although a light and easy reading, a good deal of attention is required.

I read it in Portuguese, so maybe the translation didn't help much. Looking forward to re-read in English.

A great book, highly recommended!

Dave Sanders says

This is a sort of "Zen and the art of Being Simple." It's not full of practical advice, but more of a thought-process and style that you should apply to everything to make it simple. Some good underlying principles for those who are designers or who need to communicate ideas, but quite lacking in practical application.

Amusing book for a limited audience I think.

Jay says

This is really a list of 10 or 13 laws/principles of simple design, with a little discussion and a few examples under each. The laws seemed pretty simple, so simple they seemed either self evident or not a large leap to extrapolate from experiences. I didn't find anything groundbreaking, but it is good to have a list like this to think about when you hit a design issue. I listened on audio, and this had the issues of most books focusing on lists - it gives the listener too much to remember. I'd say the paper book would be better, but this is short, and you can find the list of laws on the internet, including in a top review on Goodreads.

Mahrour says

With fast progress in technology, I think we shouldn't read self-help books about technology that was written more than 2 years ago from the reading time.

The Ten laws:

1. Reduce: The simplest way to achieve simplicity is through thoughtful reduction.
2. Organize: Organization makes a system of many appear fewer.
3. Time: Savings in time feel like simplicity.
4. Learn: Knowledge makes everything simpler.
5. Differences: Simplicity and complexity need each other.

6. Context: What lies in the periphery of simplicity is definitely not peripheral.
7. Emotion: More emotions are better than less.
8. Trust: In simplicity we trust.
9. Failure: Some things can never be made simple.
10. The One: Simplicity is about subtracting the obvious, and adding the meaningful.

Neither all the laws were well-explained nor the examples were related and interesting.

The writer promised What He Couldn't Deliver.

Ettore Pasquini says

If this book was supposed to make me a better designer, it failed. It's a collection of thoughts on design taken from a more abstract/holistic point of view. This wouldn't be a bad idea in itself, if only these reflections were a little more insightful. For some (most?) of them I failed to read between the lines. Example: What good is to explain how the TAB key works and how powerful it is in organizing data? Or forcing gratuitous acronyms upon your readers and pretending they'd remember them?

Speaking about acronyms: what do they have to do with design anyway? The author discovers new ones in every page, and it gets annoying quickly.

However, I liked the idea of "laws," or abstract guiding principles. I think it would have been better to be more schematic and simply discuss examples of each one. When Iwata does so he's pretty good, for example explaining the iPod UI evolution across the years. What's wrong with keeping it... simple and just do that?

Mabel says

I really liked this book and its wry sense of humor. The ideas are well...simple but complex. It's interesting and full and makes me hmmm about his ideas and the kinds of ways that they reflect and challenge how I think. I enjoyed this immensely and I think it's a worthwhile quick read.

Brynn says

"Simplicity is about the unexpected pleasure derived from what is likely to be insignificant and would otherwise go unnoticed." (2)

"The Pareto Principle is useful as a rule of thumb: assume that in any given bin of data, generally 80% can be managed at lower priority and 20% requires the highest level. Everything is important, but knowing where to start is the critical first step." (14)

"The best designers in the world all squint when they look at something. They squint to see the forest from the trees- to find the right balance. Squint at the world. You will see more, by seeing less." (21)

"At the end of the day, there is an end of the day. Thus choosing when to care less versus when to care more

lies at the heart of living an efficient but fulfilling daily life." (26)

"Knowledge is comfort, and comfort lies at the heart of simplicity." (29)

"Design starts by leveraging the human instinct to relate, followed by translating the relationship into a tangible object or service, and then ideally adding a little surprise at the end to make your audience's efforts worthwhile." (39)

"The opportunity lost by increasing the amount of blank space is gained back with enhanced attention on what remains. More white space means that less information is presented. In turn, proportionately more attention shall be paid to that which is made less available. When there is less, we appreciate everything much more." (56)

"The best art makes your head spin with questions. Perhaps this is the fundamental distinction between pure art and pure design. While great art makes you wonder, great design makes things clear." (70)

"Marc poignantly surmised that memories are all that matter in the end." (100)
