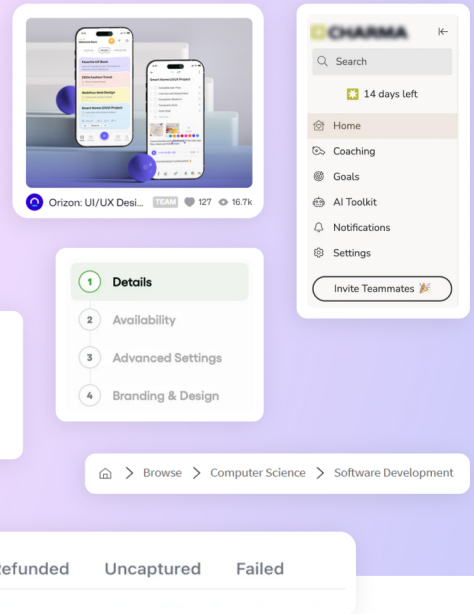


10 Common UI Patterns For Web Applications

September 2024

By Muralidharan, Veena K John, Sanchita Mathur



Introduction Patterns

- Hover Control
- Navigation Tabs
- Primary Actions
- Cards
- Accordion
- Breadcrumbs
- Carousels/Sliders
- Tooltips
- Steps
- Leaderboard

Leveraging UI Patterns Business Advantages Closing thoughts

Authors



Muralidharan
UI Designer



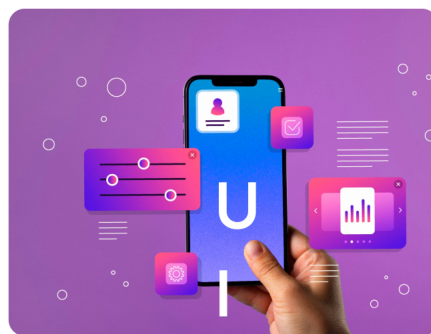
Veena K John
Head of Design



Sanchita Mathur
UX/UI Designer

In the ever-evolving landscape of digital design, User Interface patterns stand as guiding lights for designers navigating the complexities of crafting intuitive and engaging user experiences. These patterns, akin to time-tested blueprints, offer recurring solutions to common design challenges encountered in designing applications for web platforms.

As pillars of design wisdom, UI patterns serve not only as invaluable resources but also as standard reference points for seasoned designers seeking to streamline their creative processes and elevate the usability and accessibility of their creations.

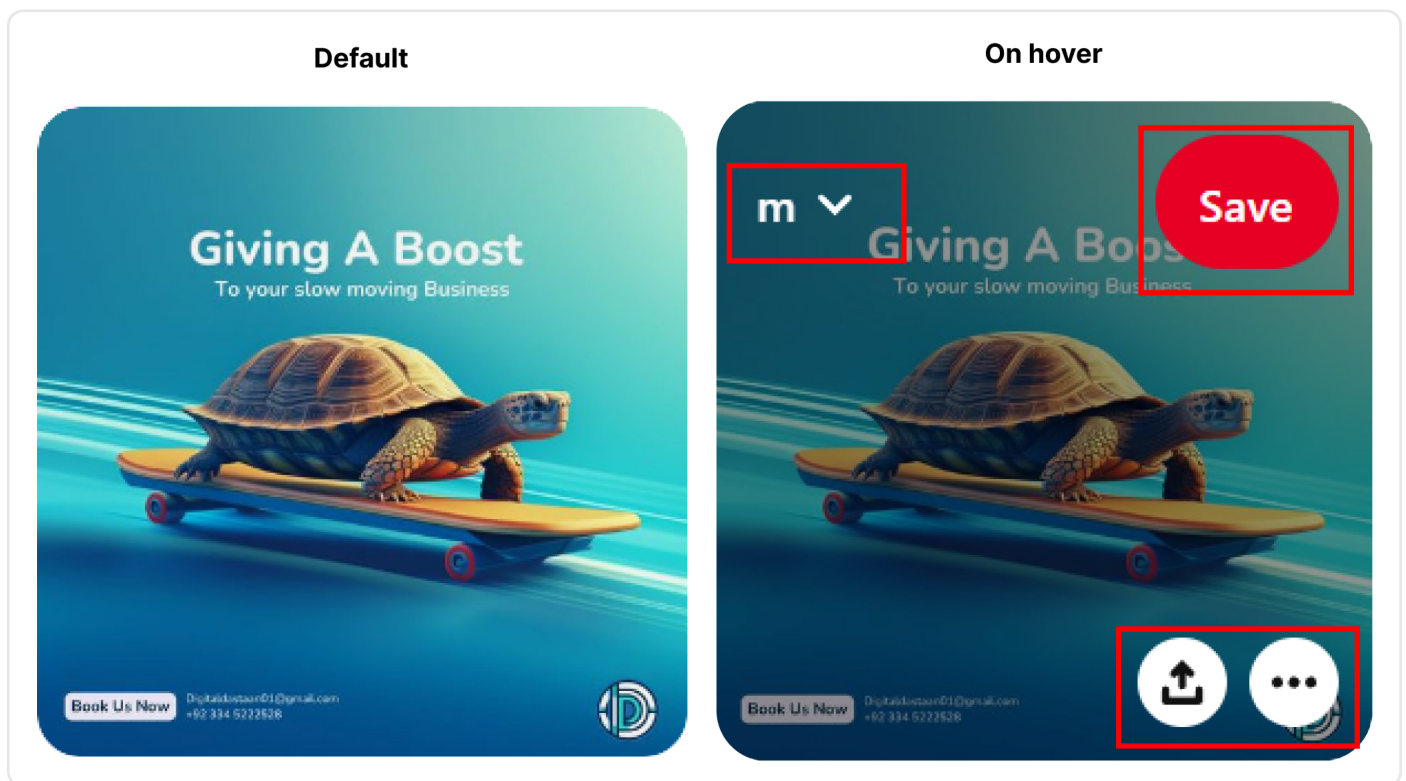


In this article, we embark on a journey to explore the significance, utility, and versatility of UI patterns, delving into their role as indispensable tools in the arsenal of every UI designer striving to deliver seamless and delightful digital experiences.

Drawing from our past experience in UX & UI Design, we have identified 10 UI patterns for web applications that stand out as the most widely used across the industry. These patterns have proven their value repeatedly and are essential for any designer aiming to create effective and user-friendly interfaces.

Hover Control

The Hover Controls UI pattern reveals additional information or functionality when users hover their cursor over a specific screen element or component.



In Pinterest, a visual discovery platform founded in the United States, hovering over an image unveils options like saving to a board, sharing, or exploring similar images without opening a new window.

Why it's Useful

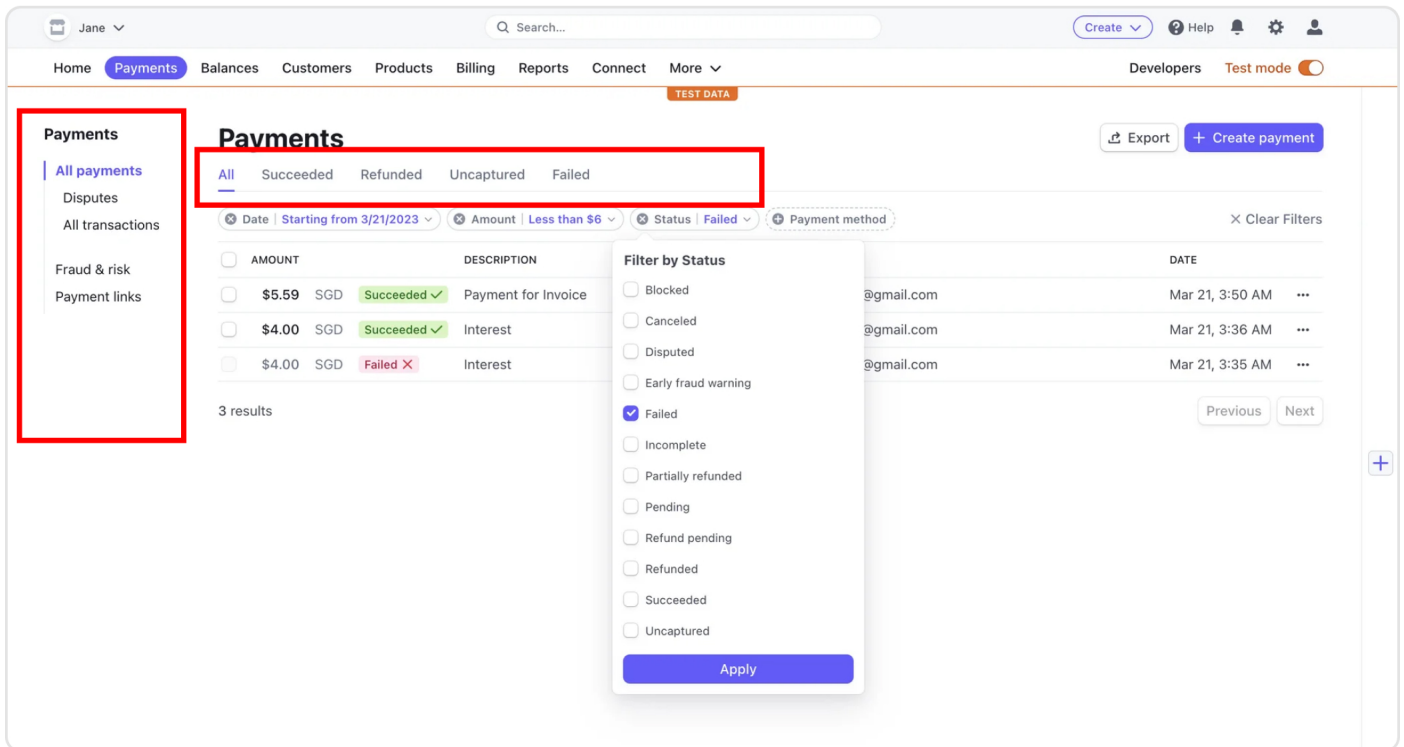
This pattern is effective in reducing clutter on the main interface by displaying details only upon user interaction. It allows designers to hide non-essential information, freeing up screen real estate, and preventing the initial view from being overwhelming.

Different Ways of Incorporating It

- 01 Implement tooltips for brief information.
- 02 Display quick view, action buttons or options upon hover.

Navigation Tabs

Navigation tabs are UI elements that allow users to switch between different sections or views within an application. They can be arranged horizontally or vertically and help organize content efficiently, making it easier for users to access and navigate different areas without leaving the main interface.



Stripe, a financial technology company headquartered in San Francisco, California, employs both vertical and horizontal navigation tabs to streamline user interaction. This design improves navigation and enhances user experience by enabling quick access to a wide range of features and tools without requiring users to leave the main interface.

Why it's Useful

Navigation Tabs are useful because they offer intuitive navigation, making it easy for users to understand the structure of the application and find specific information quickly. They reduce cognitive load by visually separating different sections, enhancing the user experience by providing direct access to relevant content without unnecessary navigation steps.

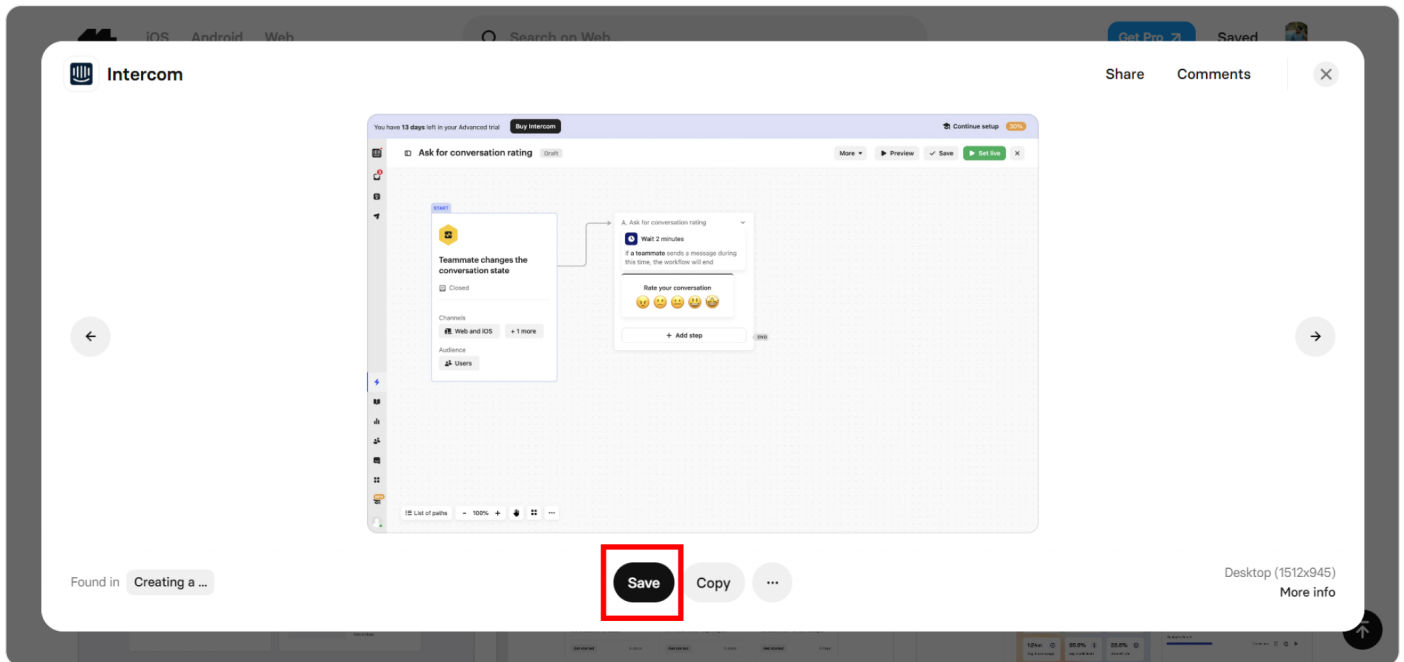
Different Ways of Incorporating It

01 Vertical tabs save horizontal space and accommodate more sections, making them ideal for admin dashboards and complex applications.

02 Horizontal tabs at the top of a page allow easy switching between content categories, ideal for web applications with few sections.

Primary Actions

Primary Actions highlight the most important action on a page to guide users effectively.



Mobbin, a design inspiration tool based in Singapore, uses the Primary Action UI pattern on its screenshot view page by prominently highlighting the "Save" button. This clear focus allows users to quickly save their favorite design inspirations, ensuring an efficient workflow.

Why it's Useful

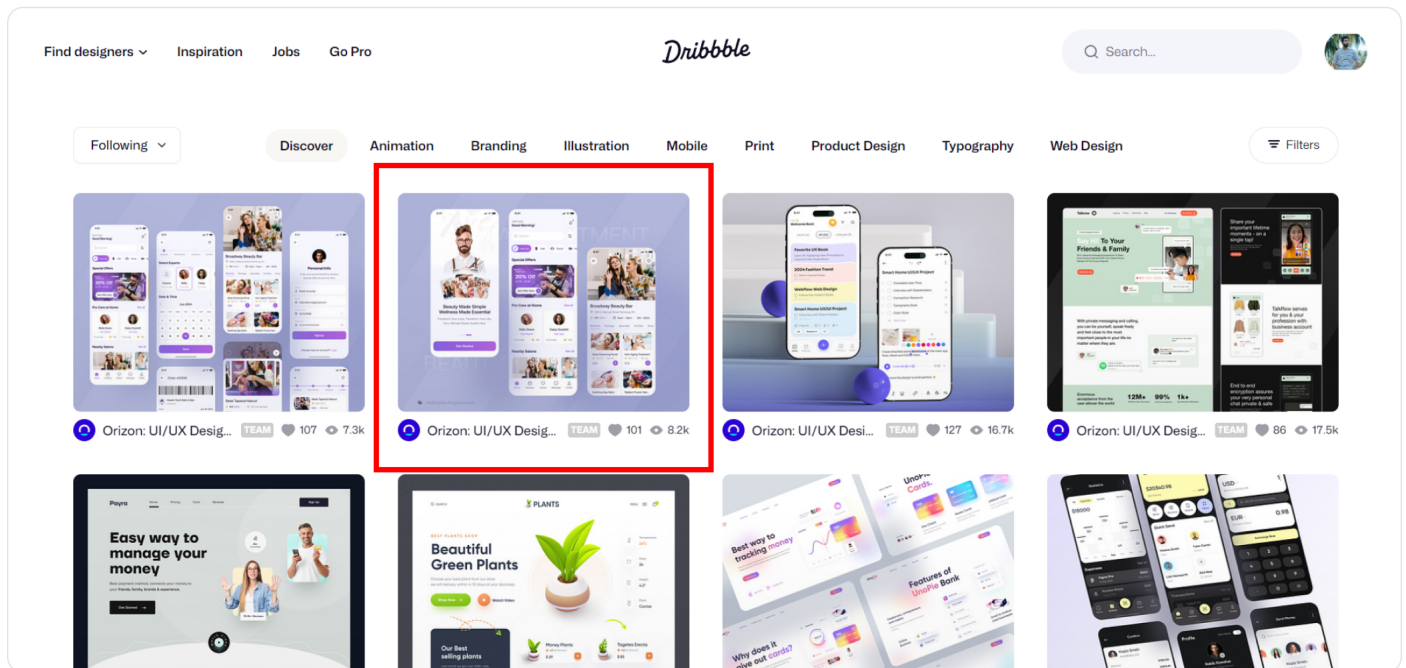
It reduces user confusion by emphasizing key actions, streamlines user flow, and enhances interaction. By emphasizing the primary action with vibrant colors or distinctive styles, users can easily discern what steps to take next

Different Ways of Incorporating It

- 01 Use contrasting colors or larger buttons for primary actions.
- 02 Limit the number of primary actions displayed on a page.

Cards

Cards present content in a visually appealing and organized manner, resembling tangible cards.



Dribbble, a platform for designers founded in the United States, uses card-based designs to create a visually cohesive and organized experience for showcasing portfolios and creative work.

Why it's Useful

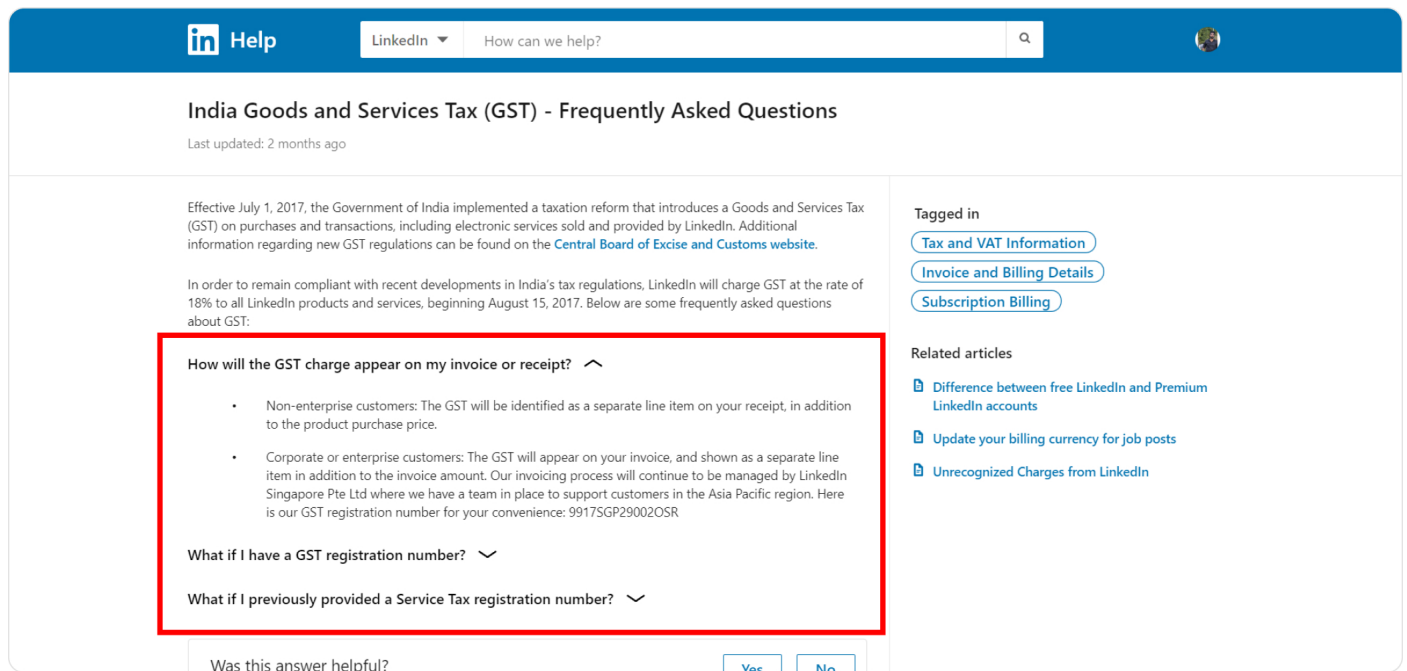
It maximizes space utilization, enhances content discoverability, and provides a familiar and intuitive user experience. Cards are ideal for displaying content composed of different elements like images, movies, and text.

Different Ways of Incorporating It

- 01 Use cards for displaying varied content types such as images, text, and videos.
- 02 Incorporate interactive elements or CTAs within cards.

Accordion

The Accordion UI pattern organizes content in expandable and collapsible sections, allowing users to view only the information they're interested in while keeping the interface clean and uncluttered.



LinkedIn, a professional networking platform founded in the United States, uses accordions in its Help Center to organize frequently asked questions and support topics. Each category can be expanded to reveal more detailed answers, ensuring users can quickly find the information they need without being overwhelmed by too much content at once.

Why it's Useful

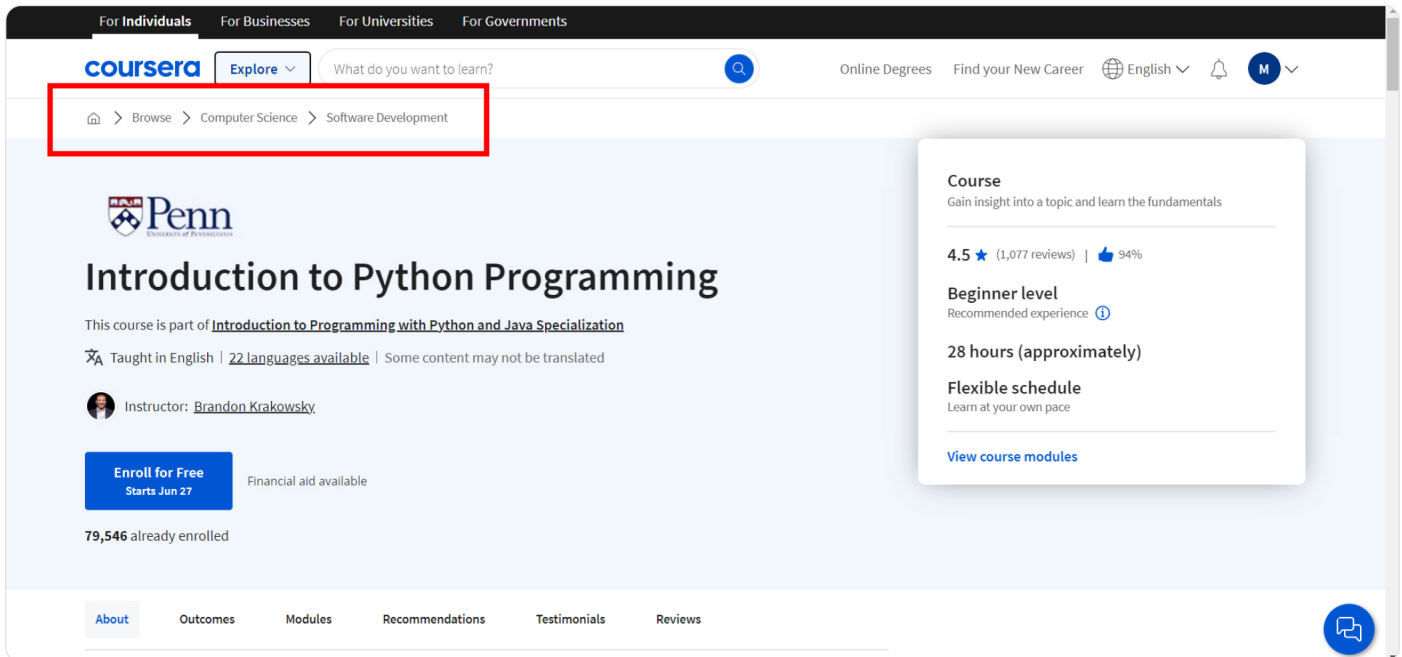
Accordions improve the user experience by reducing information overload and making navigation easier. They allow users to focus on specific content without being overwhelmed by too much information at once.

Different Ways of Incorporating It

- 01 Use accordions for FAQs, where each question can be expanded to reveal the answer..
- 02 Implement accordions in forms with multiple sections, where users can expand and fill out one section at a time.

Breadcrumbs

Breadcrumbs provide a navigational trail to show users exactly where they are within the application.



Coursera, a leading online learning platform based in the United States, uses breadcrumbs to navigate users from broad categories to specific courses. This enhances navigation and simplifies content discovery across their extensive catalog.

Why it's Useful

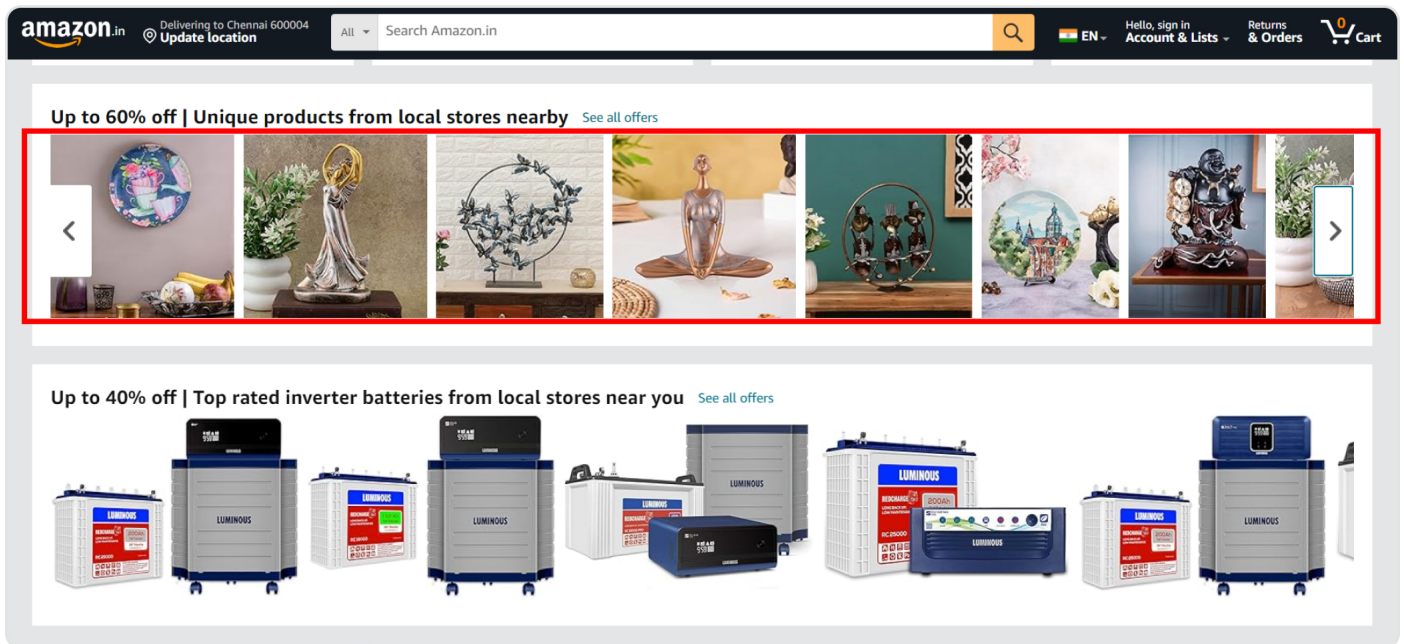
It helps users understand the application structure, facilitates easy navigation, and prevents getting lost. Breadcrumbs serve as a trail of clues, ensuring users don't lose their way while exploring digital spaces.

Different Ways of Incorporating It

- 01 Integrate breadcrumbs into the header or navigation bar to keep them consistently visible across all pages, enhancing user awareness of their location within the application.
- 02 Incorporate sticky breadcrumbs near the main header to keep them visible as users scroll through content, providing a constant point of reference.

Carousel

The Carousel allows multiple pieces of content to be displayed in the same space, rotating through images, text, or other elements to highlight various items or messages.



Amazon, the e-commerce giant founded in the United States, employs carousels on its homepage to showcase various product categories, deals of the day, and recommended items. These allow users to browse through multiple options within the same section, providing a dynamic shopping experience without requiring users to scroll endlessly.

Why it's Useful

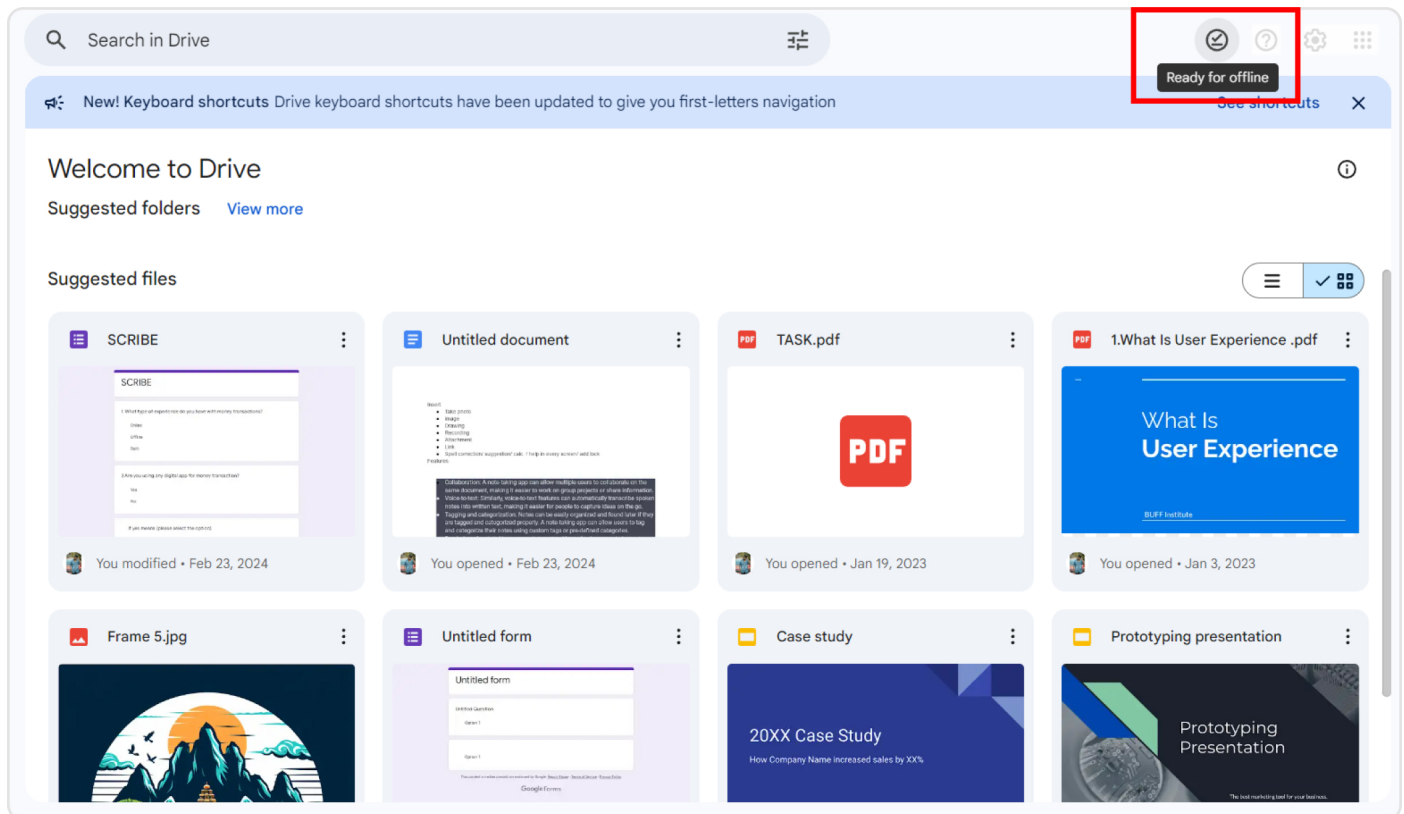
Carousels save space by displaying multiple pieces of content in a single area. They are particularly useful for showcasing featured products, promotions, or important announcements, keeping the interface dynamic and engaging.

Different Ways of Incorporating It

- 01 Use a carousel on the homepage to rotate through featured products or services.
- 02 Implement a carousel in a portfolio section to showcase different projects or case studies.

Tooltip

The Tooltip UI pattern provides additional information or context when users hover over or click on an element, helping to clarify the purpose of that element without cluttering the interface.



Google Drive, a cloud storage service founded in the United States, utilizes tooltips throughout its interface to guide users, particularly when interacting with new features or icons. For instance, hovering over an unfamiliar icon will display a tooltip with a brief description of its function, helping users understand the interface without cluttering the screen with text.

Why it's Useful

Tooltips enhance usability by offering contextual help where needed, making interfaces more intuitive. They are particularly useful for explaining icons, buttons, or complex functionality without taking up extra space on the screen.

Different Ways of Incorporating It

- 01 Add tooltips to form fields to provide guidance on what input is required.
- 02 Use tooltips on icons and buttons to explain their functions without adding text labels.

Steps

The Steps provides users with a clear overview of their progress within a multi-step process, such as signing up or completing a purchase.

The screenshot shows a web form titled "New Event Type" with a "Cancel" button and a green "Continue" button. On the left, a vertical progress bar contains four steps: "1 Details" (highlighted with a red box and a green circle), "2 Availability", "3 Advanced Settings", and "4 Branding & Design". The main content area is titled "Step 1: Add details to your event type". It includes the following fields:

- Event Name:** A text input field containing "Consultation call".
- Event Type:** A dropdown menu set to "Video Conferencing".
- Video Type:** A dropdown menu set to "Google Meet".
- Duration:** A text input field set to "30" and a dropdown menu set to "Minutes".
- Calendar:** A dropdown menu set to "janesmith1.mobbin@gmail.com".
- Event Link:** A text input field containing "app.hellobonsai.com/s/joe-doe-10/" and a text input field containing "consultation-call".
- Description / Instructions:** A large text area containing "Let's kick off our meeting with a quick call."
- Checkboxes:** A checked checkbox labeled "Send confirmation email to client".

Below the form, a red dot indicates the current step in the process.

Bonsai, a platform for freelancers founded in the United States, offers a feature for creating custom event types with a step-by-step process. On the left side of the screen, a vertical navigation bar guides users through each step, highlighting the current step and indicating progress.

Why it's Useful

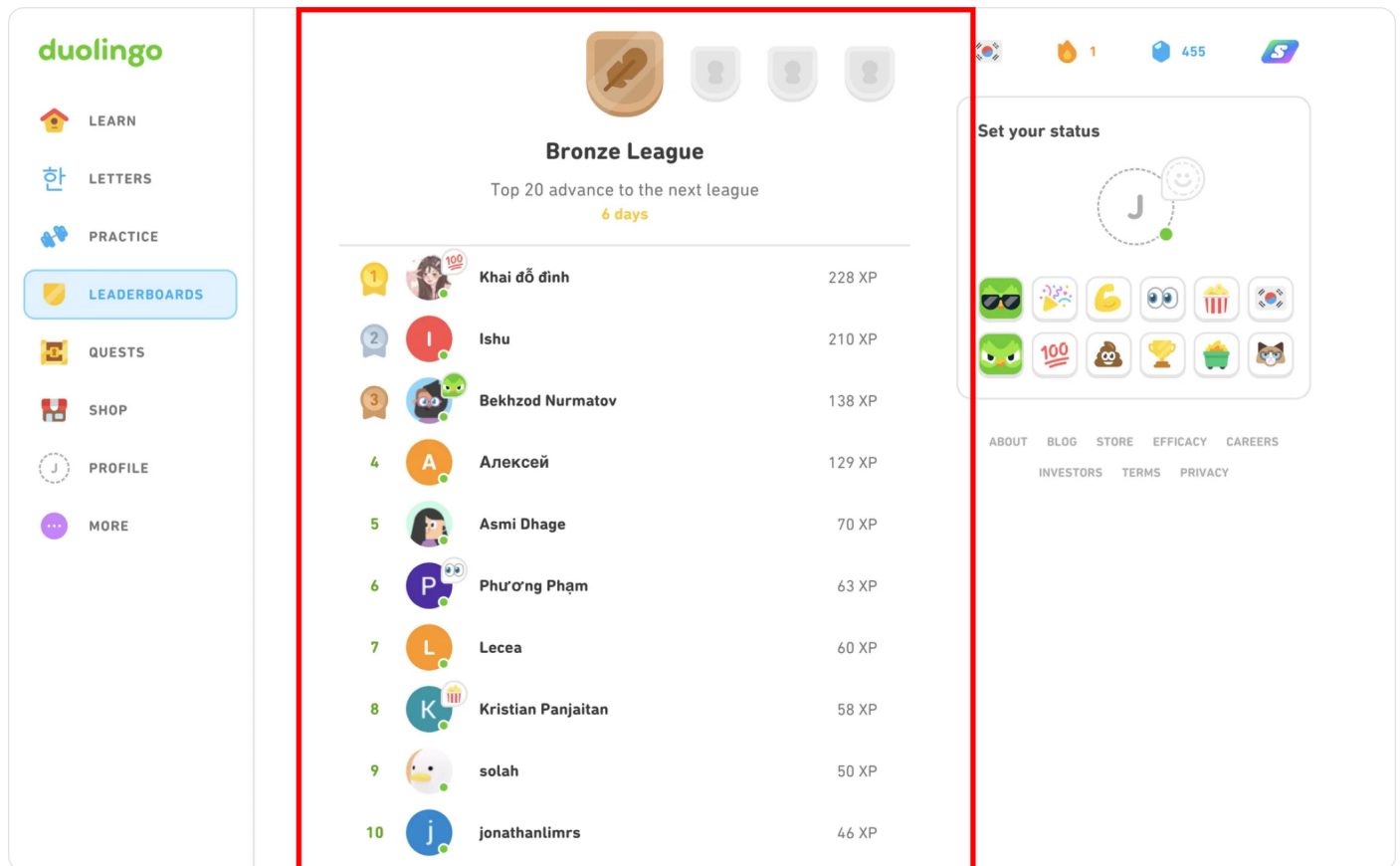
It visually communicates how far users have come and how many steps remain, reducing user anxiety and enhancing completion rates. This pattern is particularly useful for guiding users through complex workflows or lengthy processes.

Different Ways of Incorporating It

- 01 Use a progress bar or percentage indicator to show completion status and highlight the current step and provide clear instructions for each step.
- 02 Minimize distractions by removing unnecessary elements like extra navigation or advertisements.

Leaderboard

The Leaderboard UI pattern displays a ranked list of users or entities based on specific criteria, fostering competition and engagement.



Duolingo, a language-learning platform founded in the United States, shows users their rank, points, and friends' positions on a leaderboard, promoting engagement and competition.

Why it's Useful

It encourages user participation, motivation, and provides a sense of achievement and progress. Leaderboards can be implemented in various contexts beyond gaming, such as fitness apps, educational platforms, or social networking sites.

Different Ways of Incorporating It

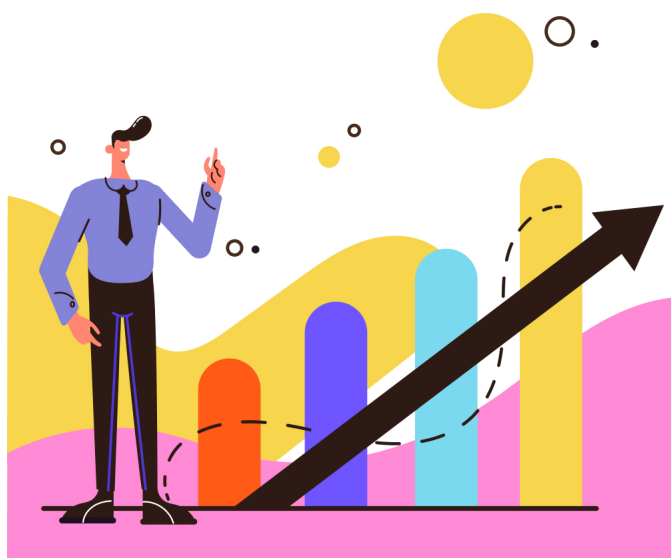
- 01 Highlight user rankings and scores.
- 02 Implement rewards, badges, or achievements for top performers.

Leveraging UI Patterns

Here are some tips for leveraging UI design patterns effectively:

- ✦ Grasp the unique design challenge and the context in which UI design patterns will be applied.
- ✦ Delve into available UI design pattern libraries, resources, and case studies to gain deeper insights into various patterns and their practical usage.
- ✦ Tailor and personalize the chosen pattern to suit the specific requirements of your project.
- ✦ Prioritize user research to ensure that the selected UI patterns meet user expectations and contribute to a positive user experience.
- ✦ Maintain consistency in implementing patterns throughout the UI to enhance coherence and usability.
- ✦ Continuously iterate and refine the patterns based on user feedback and ongoing observations to optimize their effectiveness.

Business Advantages



Efficiency in Design

UI patterns provide pre-established solutions to common design problems. By leveraging these patterns, designers can streamline the design process, saving time and resources for the business.

Consistency

Consistency is key to building a strong brand identity and fostering user trust. UI patterns help maintain consistency across different screens, platforms, and devices, ensuring a cohesive user experience. Consistency also reduces cognitive load for users, making interactions more intuitive and predictable.

Cost-effectiveness

Implementing UI patterns can lead to cost savings for businesses by reducing the need for extensive custom design work. Since UI patterns are well-tested and widely used, they minimize the risk of design errors and iterations, ultimately saving time and money in the long run.

Faster Time to Market

With UI patterns, designers can quickly prototype and iterate on designs, accelerating the development cycle. This faster time to market allows businesses to stay ahead of the competition and respond swiftly to changing market demands.

Improved User Satisfaction

UI patterns are grounded in principles of usability and user-centred design. By integrating these patterns into web applications, businesses can create interfaces that are intuitive, efficient, and enjoyable for users. Enhanced user satisfaction leads to increased engagement, productivity, and long-term retention.

Reduced Learning Curve

Consistent use of UI patterns makes it easier for users to learn and navigate new interfaces. When users encounter familiar design elements across different applications, they can quickly understand how to interact with the interface, reducing the learning curve and improving overall usability.

Data-Driven Decision Making

UI patterns are based on extensive research, best practices, and usability principles. By leveraging established patterns, businesses can make informed design decisions backed by data and user feedback. This data-driven approach minimizes the risk of design guesswork and ensures that design choices align with user needs and preferences.

In essence, UI patterns serve as valuable tools for businesses and stakeholders in UX by promoting efficiency, consistency, cost-effectiveness, and user satisfaction. By embracing these patterns, businesses can create compelling digital experiences that drive engagement, loyalty, and ultimately, business success.

Closing Thoughts

As our digital landscape expands, so do the complexities of crafting intuitive and engaging interfaces. UI patterns serve as critical reference points, offering tested solutions to recurring design challenges, and empowering designers to create seamless experiences.

However, simply knowing these patterns isn't enough. Effective UX design requires understanding the unique challenges and contexts of each project and tailoring these patterns accordingly. It's about empathizing with users, conducting thorough research, and iterating relentlessly to create experiences that truly resonate.

As UX/UI designers, our mission is to bridge the gap between human needs and technological capabilities. UI patterns are our allies in this journey, offering a foundation upon which we can build delightful, accessible, and user-centric interfaces. By embracing these patterns, adapting them to our needs, and continuously refining our craft, we can shape digital experiences that enrich the lives of millions. So, let's wield these patterns wisely, for they are the blueprints to a brighter, more user-friendly future.