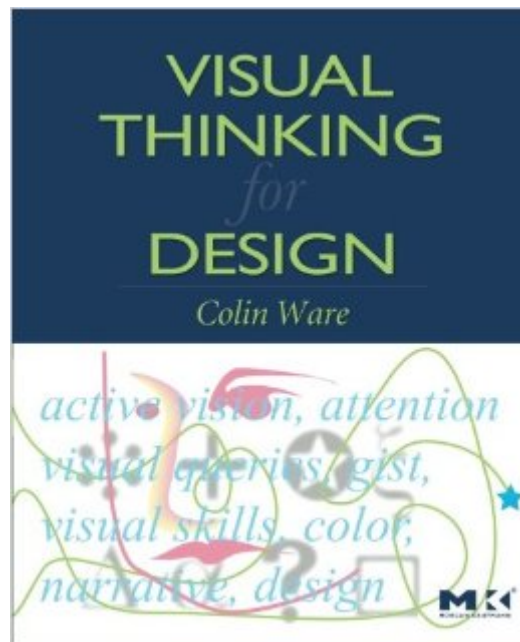


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Visual Thinking For Design (Morgan Kaufmann Series In Interactive Technologies)



Synopsis

Increasingly, designers need to present information in ways that aid their audience's thinking process. Fortunately, results from the relatively new science of human visual perception provide valuable guidance. In *Visual Thinking for Design*, Colin Ware takes what we now know about perception, cognition, and attention and transforms it into concrete advice that designers can directly apply. He demonstrates how designs can be considered as tools for cognition - extensions of the viewer's brain in much the same way that a hammer is an extension of the user's hand. Experienced professional designers and students alike will learn how to maximize the power of the information tools they design for the people who use them. *Visual Thinking for Design* presents visual thinking as a complex process that can be supported in every stage using specific design techniques. It provides practical, task-oriented information for designers and software developers charged with design responsibilities. It includes hundreds of examples, many in the form of integrated text and full-color diagrams. It is steeped in the principles of "active vision," which views graphic designs as cognitive tools.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Colin Ware's *Visual Thinking for Design* is a good book, especially for visual designers who are curious to know the explanations of human perceptions in visual design. It is fascinating how he uses science and his experiences in visual design to teach and guide the designers in improving

their design. Although I learned a lot from Colin Ware's book, there are number of improvements that I think would benefit the readers of the book: *Adding a section addressing the issues concerned with intellectual property, copyright, fair use and open source or Creative Commons designs. I think that this is an important section, one that needs to be mentioned in any book of visual design. Designers can be pre-occupied with scoping, designing, testing, and other things, and it is easy to forget about protecting their work and themselves from legal actions. *Colin Ware may have discussed other designers in his other books, but it would have been a good addition to see a designer's name he identifies with. There has got to be at least one designer that influence most of his design work. If there are multiple influences or if everything is original - that would have been good to see from the book too. *Adding a section discussing a web style most beneficial to the users and that designers should adopt. Although he discussed some elements to help improve design in general, I did not see enough application with the web. *It would be good to emphasize that there could be a setback on relying on colors alone. Samples showing this scenario could intensify the value of color coding and using it appropriately with texts and/or other elements. *Adding some discussion on how people with certain handicaps vary in their visual thinking.

I found this book provocative at multiple levels. At the strategic level, although I have known about and followed Elsevier for decades, I am beginning to perceive a more coherent publishing strategy, and was pleased to see notice of their collaboration with BookAid and the Sabre Foundation to create libraries in developing countries. At the operational level, I found this book to be a fascinating easy to read and understand integration of cognitive science (what is the brain doing to "see" different forms of visual cues (colors, shapes, groups, etcetera), psychology, art, design, and ultimately engineering of both larger than human structures, and computer graphics. At the tactical level, the book is clearly a superior collection of critical information and easily a required text for those who would design for the human eye. At this level I would have liked to see more depictions of both buildings and environments, and more depictions of computer screens. The absence of Library of Congress cataloging data was also a disappointment. The Library of Congress is becoming archaic, I believe publishers are amply competent to provide their own cataloging data, and this is especially important when a book crosses disciplines, e.g. cognitive science, visual intelligence, art, design, computer graphics, etcetera. Indeed, in the process of assigning cataloging data, the publisher might discover areas where the book is weaker than intended, and send it back for enhancement. I recommend this book be expanded to add a chapter on "decision support" and an appendix on great practitioners of the visualization of information.

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