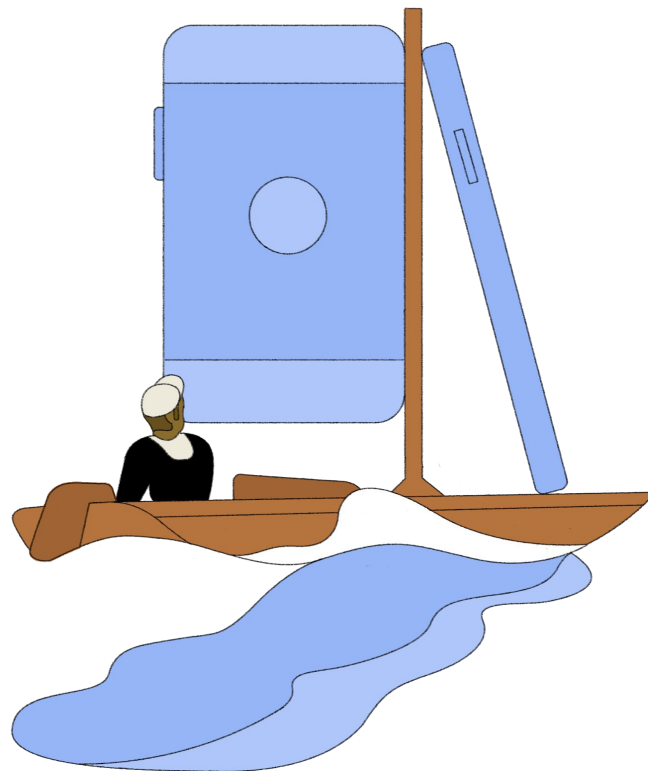


Digital Wellbeing: UX principles

A definition of digital wellbeing and its 4 principles, complete with guidelines and case studies




About the definition and principles

The definition and 4 UX principles offer a foundation that you can use to build supportive product experiences.

We based our understanding of digital wellbeing on UX research that points to [intention](#) as a key driver of wellbeing. From there, we designed principles to stand the test of time.

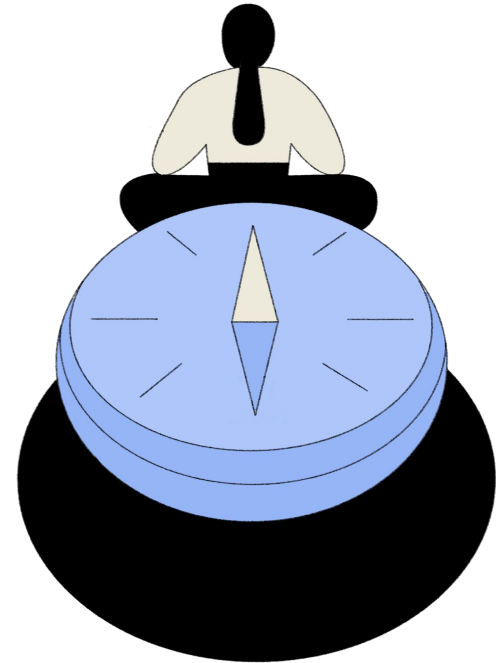
Let these guidelines serve as a friendly consultant or trouble-shooting guide when you want to verify or evaluate your product experiences for wellbeing.

 **Go deeper:** Put the principles into action with the [Digital Wellbeing workshop activities](#), and be sure to explore the companion activity, Assess your product.

Read up: Get real world [examples](#) of the principles in action, and [more context](#) about why they work. Or [learn how](#) to build engaging, safer experiences for kids.

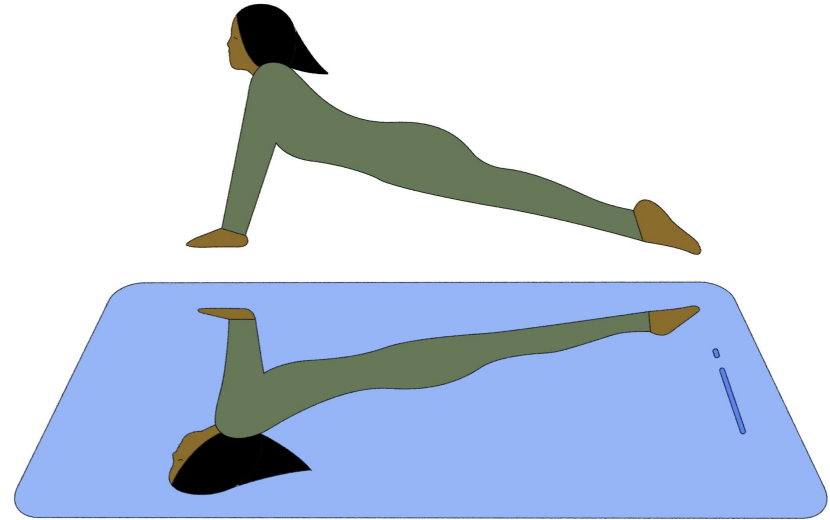
Wellbeing:

A good or satisfactory condition of existence; a state characterized by health, happiness, and prosperity



Digital Wellbeing:

A state of satisfaction that people achieve when digital technology supports their intentions



G Digital Wellbeing UX principles

When designing for digital wellbeing, support people's intentions by applying these 4 principles

01 Empowerment
Start with supportive defaults

02 Awareness
Illuminate behaviors and goals

03 Control
Provide transparent settings

04 Adaptability
Build context-aware experiences

G Empowerment

Start with supportive defaults

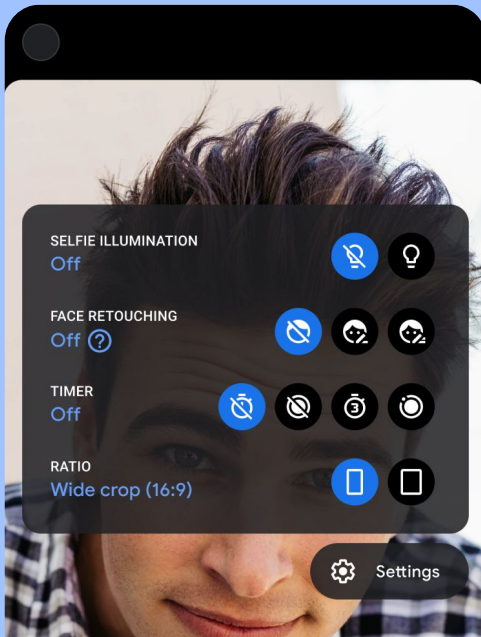
Research insight

We know the difficulty in changing behavior – decades of behavioral economics research show the power of defaults over information alone for changing behavior. Defaults have effectively influenced choices in arenas such as finance (401Ks) and health (organ donations). This finding suggests that defaults are a great opportunity to make an impact within product experiences.

Guideline

Consider product defaults that support people's wellbeing. When offering a set of options or adjustments, use a default setting that best supports a person's goal. People still have the agency to change these features if desired.

[Source:](#) Thaler, Richard H. and Sunstein, Cass R. and Balz, John P., Choice Architecture (April 2, 2010).



Case study

To support self-esteem, Pixel's camera app sets all face retouching features to off, empowering each person to choose how their image will appear

Illuminate behaviors and goals

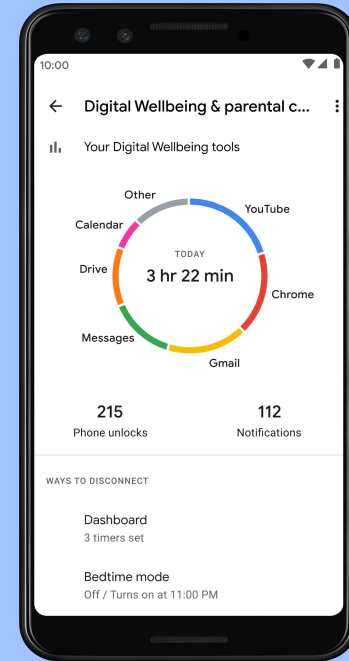
Research insight

Reflection helps people become more aware and intentional about how they're spending their time. Also called 'knowledge of results' or 'self-awareness', reflection plays a significant role in behavior change because it helps people self-regulate as they strive to reach their goals. This concept is demonstrated to be valuable in multiple studies that focus on sleep, exercise, and nutrition.

Guideline

Consider engaging ways that usage data can encourage people to reflect on their current behaviors and desired goals. Examples include usage dashboards, data visualization, behavior-specific insights, and links to relevant content.

[Source:](#) Michie, S., Abraham, C., Whittington, C., McAteer, J., & Gupta, S., Effective techniques in healthy eating and physical activity interventions: a meta-regression (2009).



Case study

To encourage mindful smartphone use, Android's Digital Wellbeing dashboard provides usage data with a clean and inviting design

G Control

Provide transparent settings

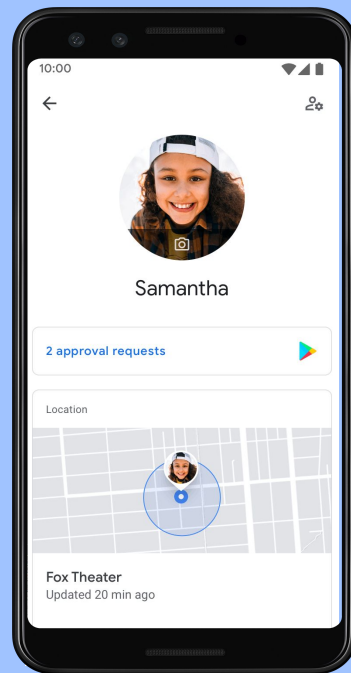
Research insight

According to a 2019 study, 1 in 3 people made or attempted to make changes to their tech use in order to address undesired effects that they had experienced. 80+% of those who took an action found it to be helpful.

Guideline

Consider providing people with granular controls that anticipate diverse needs, abilities, and backgrounds. Explain thoroughly and transparently how the feature functions, including how data is collected and used.

Source: Google-commissioned study with third-party vendor, YouGov



Case study

To provide transparency and control, Family Link gives parents access to their kids' activity and schedules

G Adaptability

Build context-aware experiences

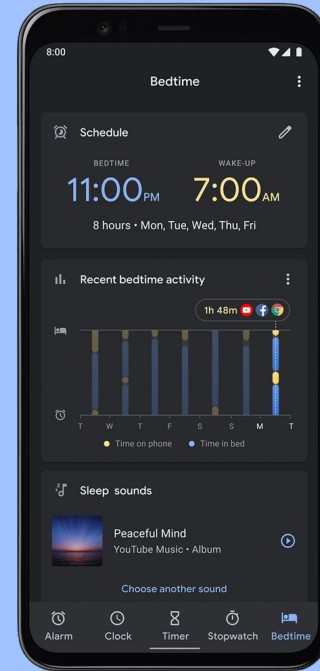
Research insight

A 2019 study explored how tech affects people when it hinders or supports their goals. When people's goals were hindered by tech, they felt annoyed, tired, and even ashamed. On the other hand, when people's goals were supported by tech, they felt happy, proud, calm and excited.

Guideline

Consider features that adapt to people's diverse contexts, such as individual goals, abilities, and backgrounds. Take into account the cumulative effects of tech on a person's day. It can help to consider how to unify an experience across time, location, and/or device.

Source: Google-commissioned study with third-party vendor, dScout



Case study

To adapt to people's need for sleep, Bedtime mode uses Clock to set a preferred schedule, which then activates features like grayscale and Do Not Disturb

wellbeing.google