Match between System and the Real World

Definition: The design should speak the users’ language. Use words, phrases, and concepts familiar to the user, rather than internal jargon. Follow real-world conventions, making information appear in a natural and logical order.

Tip: Ensure users can understand meaning without having to go look up a word’s definition.

Tip: Never assume your understanding of words or concepts will match those of your users.

Tip: User research will help you uncover your users’ familiar terminology, as well as their mental models around important concepts.

1. Stovetop controls
   When stovetop controls match the layout of heating elements, users can quickly understand which control maps to each heating element.

2. “Car” vs. “automobile”
   If users think about this object as a “car,” use that as the label instead.

3. Shopping cart icon
   A shopping cart icon is easily recognizable because that feature serves the same purpose as its real-life counterpart.