Help Users Recognize, Diagnose, and Recover from Errors

Definition Error messages should be expressed in **plain language** (no error codes), precisely indicate the problem, and constructively suggest a solution.

Error messages should be presented with visual treatments that will help users notice and recognize them.

- **Tip:** Use *traditional* error message visuals, like bold, red text.
- **Tip:** Tell users what went wrong in language they will *understand* — avoid technical jargon.
- **Tip:** Offer users a *solution*, like a shortcut that can solve the error immediately.

1. **Wrong way sign**
   Wrong-way signs on the road remind drivers that they are heading in the wrong direction and ask them to stop.

2. **Internet connection error**
   Good internet connection error pages show what happened and constructively instruct users on how to fix the problem.

3. **No search results**
   Provide useful help when people encounter search-result pages returning zero results, such as popular topics.

www.nngroup.com/articles/error-message-guidelines/