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.

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/