Responsive Enabling

## Best Practice: How to Implement Responsive Enabling

The gradual process of enabling users to interact with certain user interface elements as and when they need them is referred to as 'responsive enabling'. Initially, the user is shown all of the information and user interface elements, such as checkboxes, radio buttons, and input fields, in one panel, window, or page, but only those items necessary for the *first sub-component* of the task are enabled (i.e., active or 'interactable'). As the user makes a selection, more options are enabled, while other, redundant options are deactivated (but still visible). Implementation of this design pattern can be improved by following these steps:

1 | **Arrange the different information and user interface elements** necessary to complete a task into one panel, window, or page.

2 | **Decide which elements are necessary for each component of a task** or each sub-task. Place the information and user interface elements relevant to a particular stage in a task close together.

3 | **Connect items** so that selections result in the activation of relevant user interface elements and information and the disablement of irrelevant elements and information.

[Continued on next page]

4 | **Distinguish enabled items** from disabled options using color. When the user arrives, the elements and information required to complete the first stage should be active, while all other elements should be disabled. If there are a number of possible first stages, such as choosing one of the 'Formatting' options or inputting a customized 'User Style Sheet' in the example above, allow the user to select any one of these options from the moment they arrive. Once again, when a selection has been made, disable the elements that are now redundant.

5 | **Allow the user to reactivate disabled elements** by selecting another user interface element. For example, when the user has inputted a customized 'user style sheet', in the 'Accessibility' panel below, he or she can revert back to the other 'formatting' options by clicking one of the checkboxes arranged vertically.
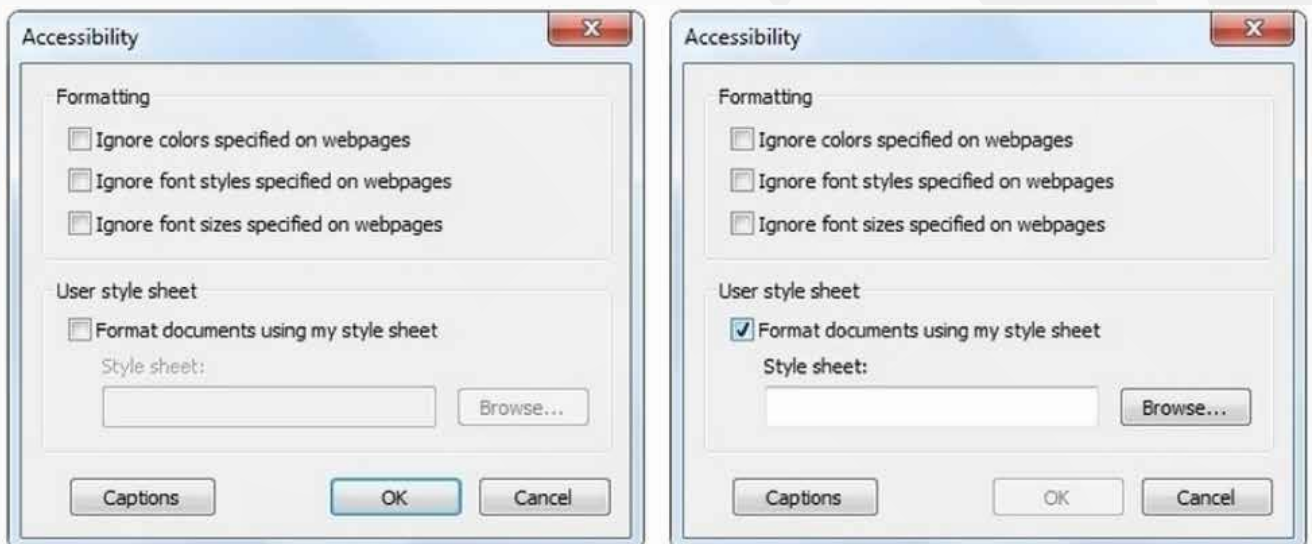
6 | **Ensure that there is a natural flow** to the active and inactive elements, so as to coax the user through the task(s) as quickly and efficiently as possible. User testing is a great way to achieve this.

Do you want to learn more?

Learn how to use this template to your best advantage in our online course **UI Design Patterns for Successful Software**. Sign up for it today and learn how you can create user interfaces that work just right if you haven't already started the course.

UI Design Patterns for Successful Software

◧▫▫ **Beginner course**

User interface (UI) design patterns can be a designer's best friend, allowing you to build excellent user experiences with structure and speed. When used in the wrong way, however, they can quickly lead to experiences that confuse your users... and no-one wants that! Our course **UI Design Patterns for Successful Software** will equip you with the knowledge required to master UI design patterns and secure them as one of the best attributes in your designer's toolkit. You'll be guided through best practices relating to content organization, navigation, data entry, and social integration—all with detailed templates that you can use in your daily work. You'll also analyze and critique popular websites to see how the best of the best utilize UI design patterns to achieve great UX design. If you found this template useful, then this course is a treasure trove of resources and guidance that will continue to enhance your knowledge of UI design.

[Learn more about this course >]

How to advance your career with our online courses

Take online courses by industry experts.

Lessons are self-paced so you'll never be late for class or miss a deadline.
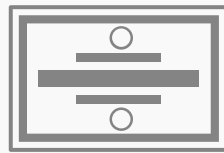
Get a Course Certificate.

Your answers are graded by experts, not machines. Get an industry-recognized Course Certificate to prove your skills.

Advance your career.

Use your new skills in your existing job or to get a new job in UX design. Get help from our community.

See all our courses >

About the Interaction Design Foundation

INTERACTION DESIGN FOUNDATION

With over 66,000 alumni, the Interaction Design Foundation is the biggest design school globally. Industry leaders such as IBM and Adobe train their teams with our courses, and universities such as MIT and the University of Cambridge include our courses in their curricula. Our online courses are taught by industry experts and cover the entire spectrum of UX design from beginner to advanced. We give you industry-recognized course certificates to advance your career. Since 2002, we've put together the world's biggest and most authoritative library of open-source UX Design literature created by such noted authors as Don Norman and Clayton Christensen.