

Designing Web Interfaces

by Bill Scott and Theresa Neil

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Foreword

In architecture, *parti* refers to the underlying concept of a building.* Will it be an academic structure aimed at increasing cross-disciplinary collaboration or a theater flexible enough to support quick set changes? To bring a specific *parti* to life, architects must not only define its essence but also know how to manage the huge number of considerations that ultimately impact its construction.

Design principles are the guiding light for any architect's *parti*. They define and communicate the key characteristics of a building to a wide variety of stakeholders, including clients, builders, city planners, and engineers. Design principles articulate the fundamental goals that all decisions can be measured against and thereby keep the pieces of a project moving toward an integrated whole. But design principles are not enough.

Every aspect of a building from an attic to a Zen garden has a set of opportunities and limitations that can either add to or detract from the main concept or *parti*. These include standard dimensions, spacing requirements, aesthetics, physical limitations, and more. Architects who want to bring coherent visions to life need to learn the detailed ins and outs of these design considerations so they can select the best solutions from the options available.

This combination of design principles at the top and design considerations at the bottom is what allows architects to fill in the middle with meaningful buildings that enable people and organizations to interact, communicate, and get things done.

Those of us whose *parti* is bringing rich web applications to life can also benefit from a framework of design principles and considerations to guide us. In these pages, Bill Scott and Theresa Neil give us just that. Through 30 years of designing and developing software, Bill and Theresa have been the consummate taxonomists—naming, documenting, and sharing in loving detail what makes rich interactions succeed and fail.

* The term *parti* comes from Matthew Frederick's book *101 Things I Learned in Architecture School* (MIT Press).