



Icon Design



Principles of Good Icon Design

- Clarity
- Readability
- Alignment
- Brevity
- Consistency
- Personality

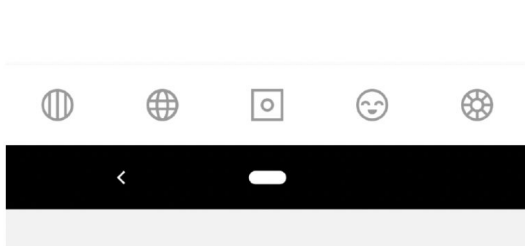
Clarity

An icon's primary goal is to communicate a concept quickly.

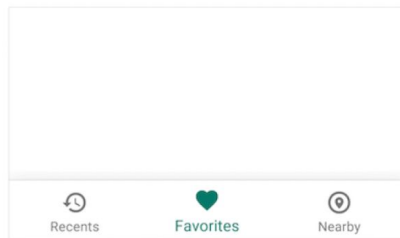


Clear

Hazy



VSCO icons - somewhat unclear and abstract



can add supporting type if unclear



icons that have built up familiarity over time



Readability

Once you have an understandable symbol, make sure it's readable.



 20 min

 36 min

 1 hr 42

 21 mi



Station



Train Number



Tue , Jan 7



20 Jay St, Brooklyn, NY 11201



20 Jay St, Brooklyn, NY 11201



Show upcoming events...

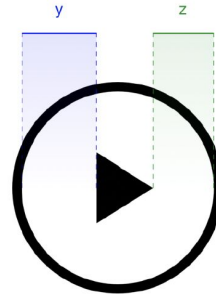
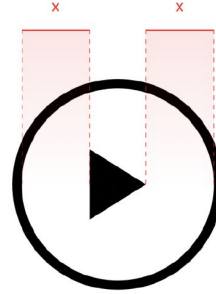


Show upcoming events...



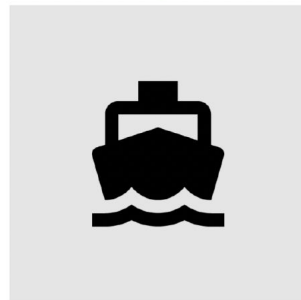
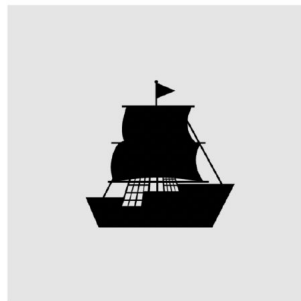
Alignment

To make sure each icon feels balanced, align its elements optically.



Brevity

Use the right amount of detail for your icons and don't use more than you need.



New Group



New Secret Chat



New Channel



Contacts



Calls



Saved Messages



Settings



Invite Friends



Pizza



Mexican



Chinese



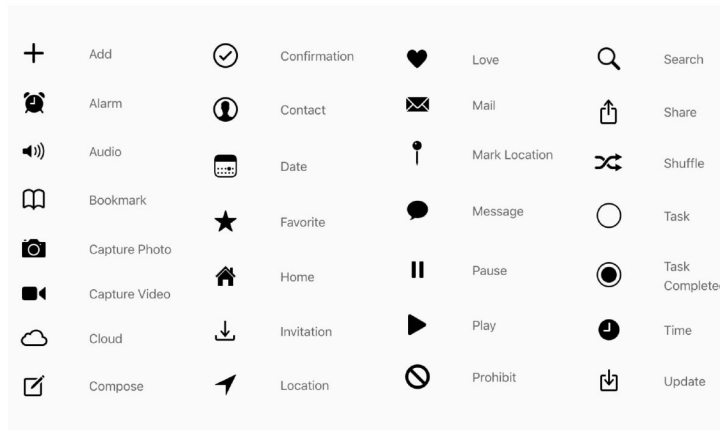
Burgers



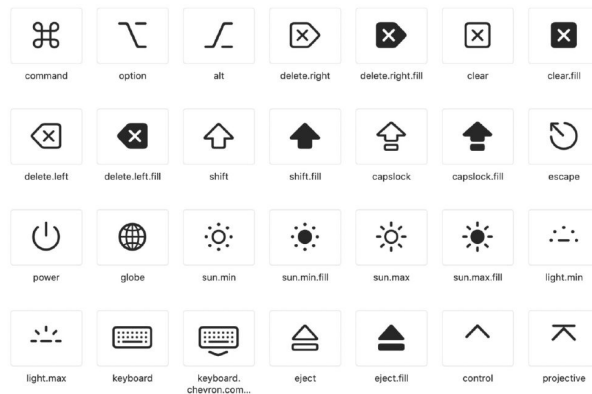
Thai

Consistency

To achieve harmony for an icon family, maintain the same stylistic rules throughout.



this older iOS icon set has too many different fills and strokes throughout



this updated iOS icon set provides a stroke version and fill version of each icon.

Personality

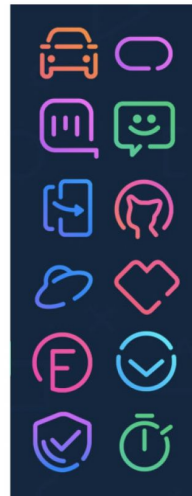
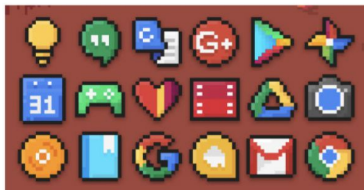
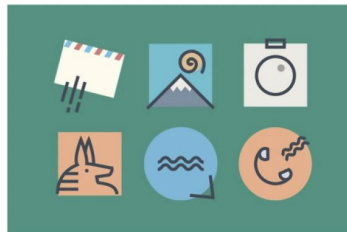
Every icon set has a flavor.
What makes it unique?
What does it say about
the brand? What mood
does it create?



Twitter icons are soft, light, crisp



Waze icons say we're quirky!



Android icon packs cater to a wide array of moods for home screen theming.



How to Design Icons

Color

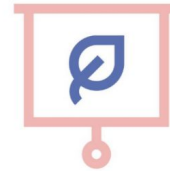
For product icons, use 1 color. You might want to use 2 colors if it is a crucial part of your brand, but anything with 3 or more colors is an illustration, not an icon.

1 COLOR



GOOD ICON

2 COLORS



**NOT BAD
IN SOME SITUATIONS**

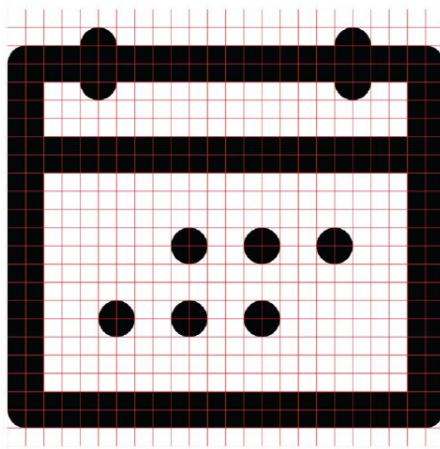
3 OR MORE COLORS



ILLUSTRATION

Grid

When building icons, spacing things evenly is much easier when you're using a grid. It helps you stay consistent with your placement, and overall will make your icons look better.

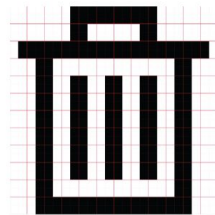




Strokes & Fills

Making sure your icons are all styled the same way is very important. Typically, filled icons have higher recognizability. Stroked icons give you great ability to create tiny details. When choosing which style is more appropriate, you should also consider your overall brand.

If you're going to create stroked icons, strokes all need to be the same weight. It is recommended that the space between strokes not be thinner than your stroke weight.



Style Choices

Your icons are a reflection of your brand. Some adjectives about your brand to think about may be hard/soft, casual/formal, luxurious/economical, and literal/abstract. You may have an illustration style you can reference.



More Tips to Create Icons

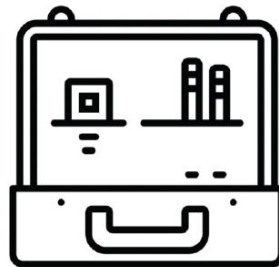
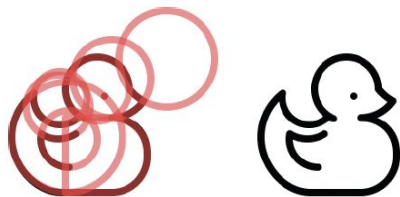
Geometric Shapes: Start with combining geometric shapes.

Corners/Joins: Use the same style of corners/joins, such as mitered (square), beveled, or rounded.

Corner Radius: Use the same corner radius.

End Caps: Use the same style end caps, rounded or squared.

Filled Objects: Keep stroked shapes in stroked icons and filled shapes in filled icons – don't mix and match.



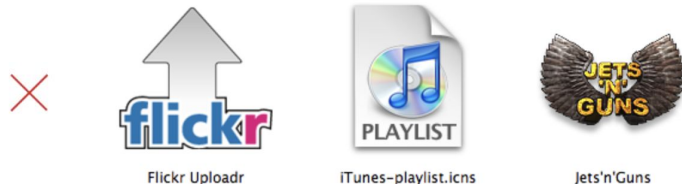
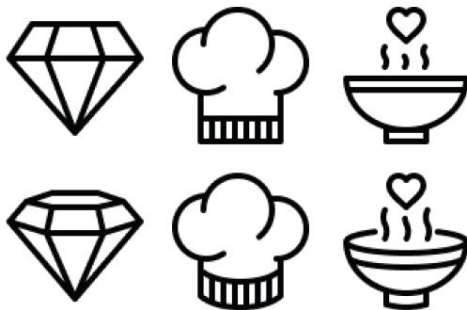
More Tips to Create Icons

Perspective

Using perspective in icons is tricky - their size makes it difficult since drawing with perspective takes up extra space. If you do want to use perspective, either use it widely and make it a key part of your system, or use it sparingly when it helps increase legibility and clarity.

Type (avoid):

When possible, avoid type in your icons. Icons are meant to be global. If you do need type (for instance, currency symbols), draw it yourself, rather than using a typeface.



How to Conceptualize Icons

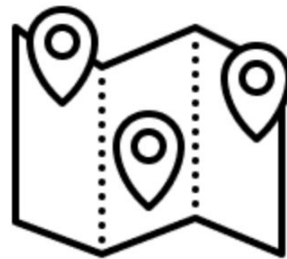
Metaphor

Metaphors are important in icons - we use them all the time without even thinking.

Resemblance icons

Symbols directly depicting a physical object the icon represents.

For example, the magnifier for search, the shopping cart, the envelope for mail etc.

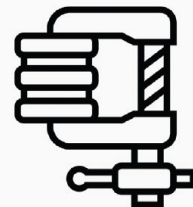


How to Conceptualize Icons

Reference icons

Symbols depicting an object on the basis of analogy.

For instance, a picture of a clamp representing a file-compression utility (because it squeezes) goes to this group.



Arbitrary icons

Symbols which currently do not set direct connections with the objects and their recognizability is based on convention and power of habit.

*For example, we know that a floppy disk represents "Save." Although initially, it was a **reference icon**, for many users now — they just know the meaning from seeing this image for many years.*



How to Conceptualize Icons

Cultural Meaning

Icon designers must also consider how different cultures will interpret colors, hand gestures, and symbols. If you are designing a product for a specific marketplace, some local language and culture research can prevent users from misinterpreting or misunderstanding an icon's meaning.

