

SYSTEM DESIGN HEURISTICS



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Design Wagers Checklist

We know that design can be thought of as a wager, a bet, on the future. Here is a checklist of some of the guesses on which designers base the bets they make when designing a system:

Hardware - will get faster - will stay compatible, or not - platform [will, will not] change

Costs - of capital [will, will not] change [in the following way] - of labor [will, will not] change [in the following way] - of materials [will, will not] change [in the following way]

Performance - can be optimized - will not be important (or will)

Usage - will be predictable - will be predictable, and follow this-and-such pattern - will grow - will not grow - will grow at this-and-such rate - pattern will not change - will change in the following way...

Builders - will understand the design - will be capable of implementing the design

Maintainers - will understand the design - will be capable of implementing changes without corrupting the design - will be smarter than me - will not be as smart as me

Interface - will be improved by someone - will not change - training will or will not be developed

Users - will or won't be trained - will have a certain level of intelligence - will or will not be professionals - may try to beat the system in some way - will make errors

I, the Designer - [do, don't] understand [users, business]

Use this checklist as you start designing to attempt to make a better guess about the future.

Also use it to document your assumptions, so your customers and users know what the success of your design depends on.