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People don't read manuals

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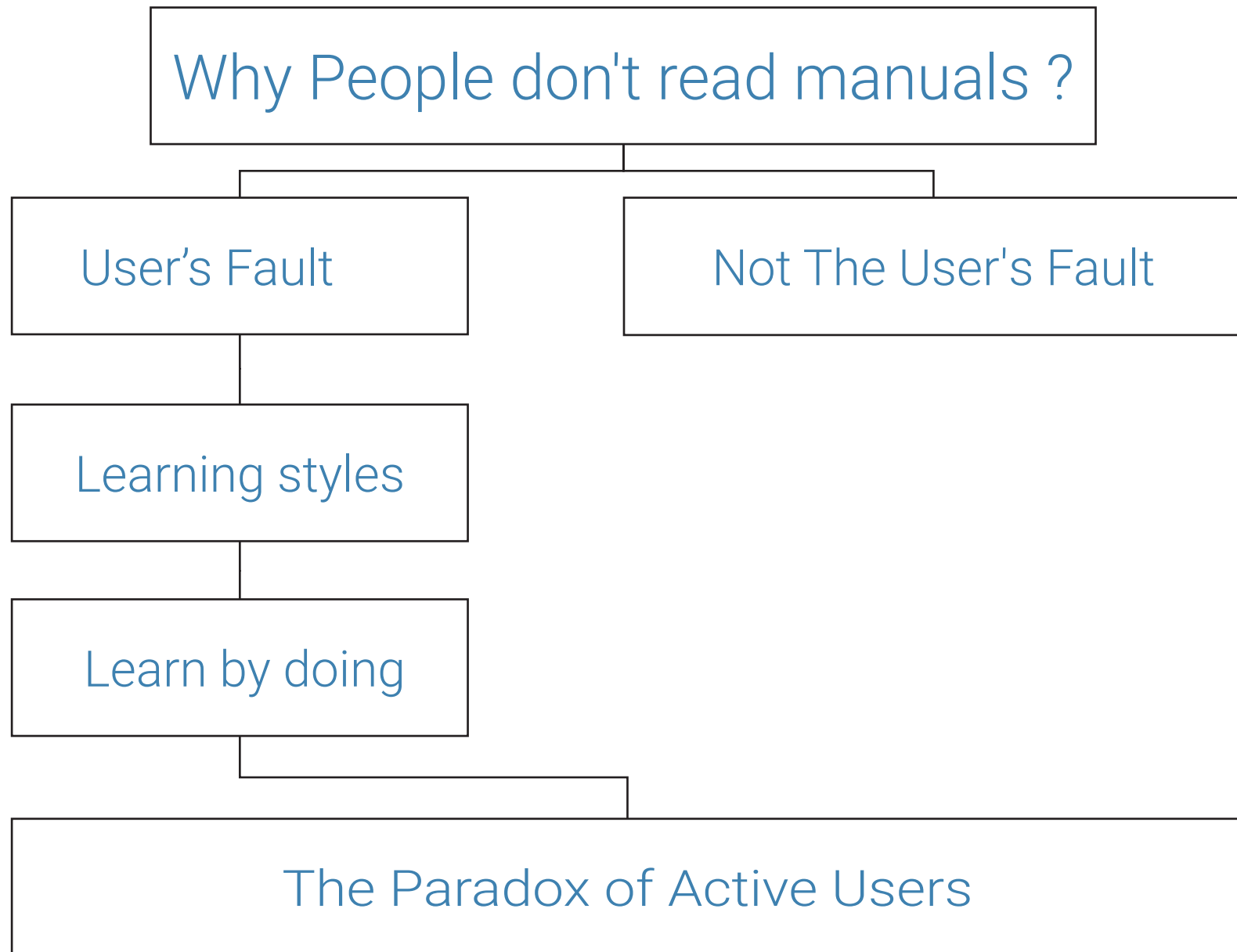
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People don't
read manuals





Why don't users read instructions?

User's Fault





- Most people are lazy.
- They assume most of it can be figured out by using common sense.
- They assume they know how to use things and don't have time to read complicated instructions.
- Some people learn best when given spoken directions rather than reading.
- Some people learn best by watching and imitating.

Not The User's Fault

- Instructions are often tedious to read and poorly written.
- The manual is written in another language.
- Often written by the engineers who designed the product and by lawyers for the manufacturer, the manuals are usually not written with the consumer in mind, even when the manuals are easy to understand, they may not be entertaining enough for today's consumer, especially younger ones who have grown up with the fast-paced world.

Learning styles

Learning styles (People learn in a variety of ways)

	Visual Learners learn by seeing and visualizing
	Auditory Learners learn by listening and verbalizing
	Read/Write Learners learn by reading and writing
	Kinesthetic Learners learn through trial and error enjoy hands-on approaches

“ Tell me and I'll forget,
show me and I may remember, involve me
and I'll understand. ”

Learning Pyramid



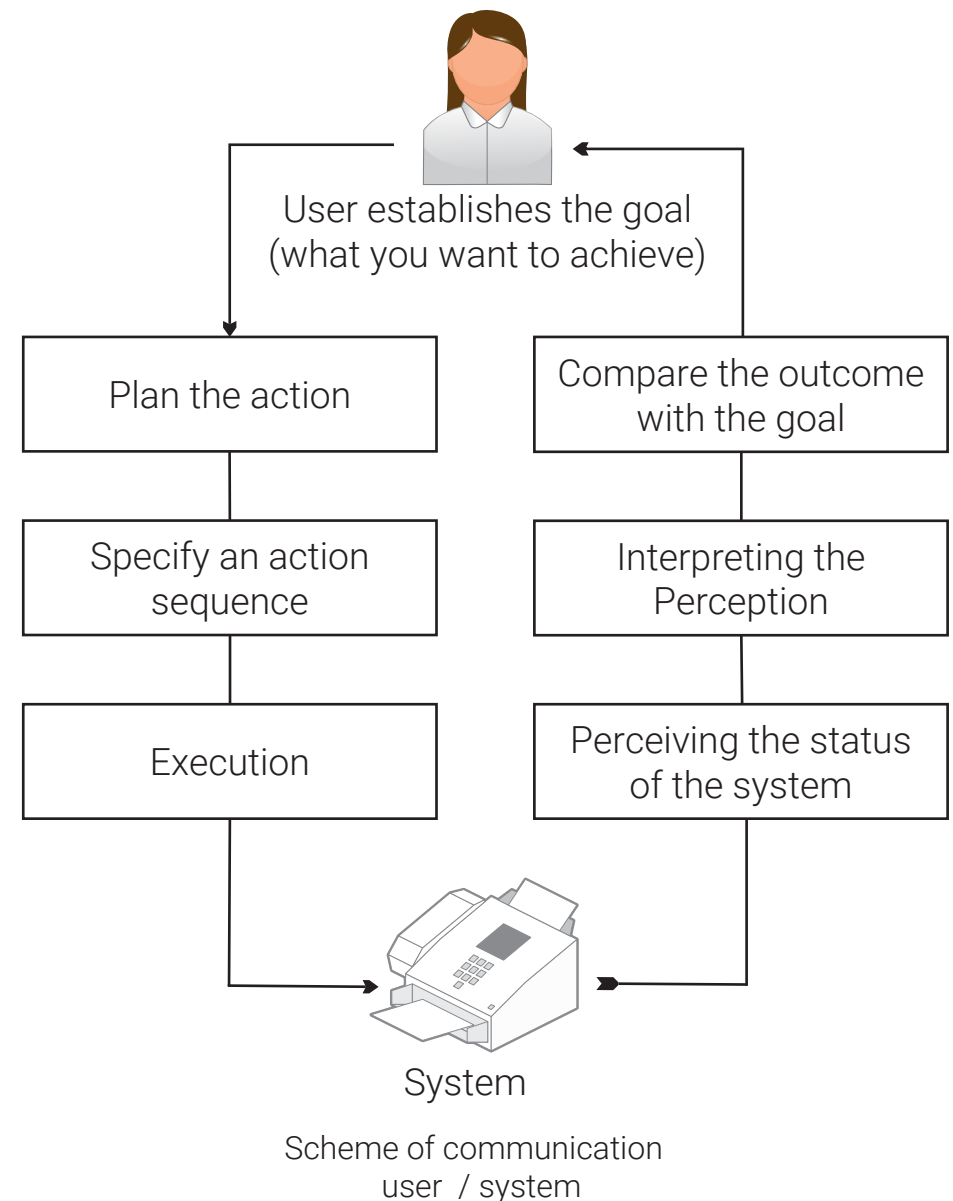
Average student retention rates

Learning by doing

People do not want to spend time learning how to use the interface, but rather to complete a task in as short an amount of time as possible, using the least amount of effort possible. Users skip instructions because, often, instructions increase users cognitive load.

Studies confirm that "doing" is clearly the most preferred mode of learning.

So, you need to make sure that people have a clear sense of what to do and how to do it.



The Paradox of Active Users

These behavioral patterns explain how users try to avoid spending more time than necessary with a product. By skipping proper learning they try to save time, but in the long run, this usually costs more time than it saves.



Usability

Principles of design for users

Affordance

Affordances define what actions are possible between an object/service and a person.

Consistency

Design interfaces to have similar operations and use similar elements for similar tasks. Enable people to transfer prior knowledge to new contexts and learn new things quickly.

Constraint

A method of limiting the actions with restrictions so that the system can never enter into an invalid state.

Feedback

Clearly and immediate confirmation that an action has been performed successfully.

Mapping

A relationship between controls and their movements or effects. Good mapping between controls and their effects results in greater ease of use.

Signifier

Signifiers are signs, perceptible signals of what can be done. These signs tell you about the possible actions; what to do, and where to do it.

Visibility

The usability of a system is improved when its status and methods of use are clearly visible.

“ Good products help users attain their goals, even without manuals. ”

How to write usable manuals

“You cannot please all the users all the time.”

Components of well-designed manuals:

- A separate quick-start booklet.
- Table of contents and index required.
- Glossaries for clarifying technical terms.
- Appendices for error messages.
- Divide the document into sections.
- Match the procedures to tasks. Group similar tasks into the same chapter.
- Organize chapters so that frequent tasks come before infrequent tasks.
- If you need both task-based instructions and reference material, divide the document into two sections. The first section is a user guide. The second section is a reference manual.

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