Inline Linking

Best Practice: How to Implement Inline Linking

The imported connections design pattern is a function that allows users to import contacts from one application into another. Allowing users to import contacts from one mail client, social media site, or address book to another saves them time and effort. To implement the imported connections design pattern correctly, follow these steps:

1 | **Identify the words** for which you feel users might require or benefit from further explanation. For example, in the Wikipedia entry for 'user experience', the word 'affective' is hyperlinked to another Wikipedia page where the term is explained in more detail. Alternatively, you might have an interesting website, web page, or other electronic document that you want to provide the user with instant access to. On these occasions, identify the words within a passage of text that fit most logically with these linked contents. For example, many of the Interaction Design Foundation links are employed to direct users to interesting articles and web pages.

2 | **Conventionally, inline links are blue and underlined.** And when the user places the cursor over the hyperlinked word, the mouse arrow changes into a hand. This serves as informative feedback, letting the users know they can interact with the words.

3 | When the user hovers the cursor over the inline link, you could have a tooltip appear in close proximity to the words, without obscuring them. When the contents of the link are not explicitly revealed by the hyperlinked words themselves, you could **use the tooltip to indicate what the users will find if they click on the inline link**. For example, when linking to journal articles, the hyperlinked word can be short and concise—using minimal space in a body of text—while the tooltip can show the full journal article title, providing users with the necessary level of detail to decide whether to follow the link or not.

4 | When the user clicks on the inline link, you should either let it open on the user's current page or in a new tab or window.