

Forum:[Hack Forums](#)

Thread: [Good books on GUI design?](#)

Phantom_NiNja - July 16, 2026, 11:30 am

Anyone know of any good books that teaches the concepts of good GUI design.

I want to learn good design methods for websites and software and apps etc.

Mainly designing interfaces.

I have mastered c,c++ and x86 64bit and working on making a eletronic device that uses pci express slots. I can write drivers for windows.

However, right now want to work on the design. I got things in working order. but right now I am making a pci express device that will be used to develop electronics by simulating them.

The pci express has jumper wires where you can attach them to a wire board. It will help you design computer chips and electronics makin schematics and blue prints on size needed and the cost of materials. I am building this for my needs.

I will eventually sell a commercial version. Right now want to learn design because right now it works.

It's just that it's not commercial ready and isn't simple. I am going to work on it to reduce possible errors

and make it dummy proof and want to make a design that anyone can pick up and easily understand and use.

the art of interfaces so to speak.

Do you think this book is any good ? : [Interface Design: The Art of Developing Easy-to-Use Software](#)

would like any suggestions on the subject matter. Also books on graphic design for computer systems would be helpful also.

M?tt - July 16, 2026, 12:20 pm

I think it really depends on how you want your applications to work (maybe I'm wrong). I've only done GUIs in .NET and that is a completely different realm of coding than HTML/CSS and everything else for web design.

I think beyond the books, it'd help to find other projects floating around and play with them since that's what I did. I didn't use books so it's hard for me to recommend one in particular.

Phantom_NiNja - July 16, 2026, 12:39 pm

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The thing is that I write programs first that works on the functionality of what I want it to do.

Once, this is done I then start working on the interface aspect. This is for everything including websites.

The issue is that I make my graphics and there's limitations on that aspect.

Like I want to learn the graphics aspects and how to make animations that look realistic. but at the same time I want the interfaces look in a way that it's not oversaturated. I need to make them more simplified. Less complex that can do more.

The stuff I made like it looks good but the artwork looks like it's copy and pasted. Meaning the border frames look like they don't belong with the container. Like if you look at the graphics individually it looks great on their own. If you look at my app as a whole it looks like good graphics but it looks

like someone went online downloaded good graphics and tried to make them look put together. I don't want that to be the finished look.

I want to learn how I can create the graphics that looks like they belong together as one piece.

look at the iphone or apple watch and you can see the app icons just looks like it belongs with the design of the iphone or app.

android devices look like my type of apps.. where it looks like someone took somethin and forced it to be put together when it doesn't

visually look as one... it looks modulated... like as if someone took a phone and put app icons and taped it together to just make it work.

I am not a graphic type of guy but want to learn it. I cannot describe what I mean about android and it's not a shade towards either company.

I just feel when looking at an iphone you can tell it's an iphone by the user interface and graphics. For android you cannot because the interfaces changes on various devices and versions etc and different os types.

my point is that some of the user interfaces look like each part doesn't belong in the design. It looks like if you went online and grab any icon graphic

made by different people for different systems and then just used them. You look at it and you cannot tell 100% but you feel like it's off. it doesn't

look like the icons and interfaces just belong together if that make sense.

I have made interfaces in the past but wasn't picky about how it looked but now want to learn how to make it look like a finished well put together product.

like the interface and graphics have to look like it was one whole part that fits together visually and functionality. I know I am not the only one but even businesses that make software have this issue. Most just focus on how the software functions rather than how it looks and is it easy to use but by design and visually. I am trying to learn this to make apps look better and easier to use.

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So, it's best to just mess around with projects and the more you do it the better you will get?

NLSwiper - July 16, 2026, 7:52 pm

I've been working on an app in zig, and I am currently using svelte to design the gui using webview and a zig port.. As I know frontend dev as well as backend in js where I started 6-7 years ago ahhhh..

So I just find it easier and more flexible to do designs using css and javascript for animations and interactivity.

I never really read any books on design as far as I can remember and just from experience and seeing what people like, maybe doing fun animations just really anything that the consumer would like. More so with UI design you have to put yourself in the position of the user, what do you like? What do your friends like? What does the community like? Do they like bright colors? Subtle animations? Hotkeys to swap around tabs? Animated transitions throughout the app?

You can also find a lot of design inspiration on dribbble.com just look up say gui design or things of that nature.

TLDR: I am not sure how hard UI design is within raw like C/C++ libraries, or if it may just be easier to use HTML/CSS and JS through a lightweight port of something like webview as I did.

M?tt - July 17, 2026, 4:17 pm

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So, it's best to just mess around with projects and the more you do it the better you will get? Digging more into the topic, it seems like there are some good resources on UI/UX design to include books and even courses. There's so many to provide, but I don't have experience with any of these and likely won't since UI/UX isn't my preferred topic of study. I do develop some tools, but they're more practical and specialized to a specific audience that doesn't need UI. Here's just what I came across:

<https://designlab.com/>

<https://uxpilot.ai/>

<https://uxplanet.org/my-favorite-ui-design-books-why-i-love-them-afabaec218f5?gi=4ace3805ce5a>

https://www.reddit.com/r/UXDesign/comments/1cubzbg/i_collected_top_10_uiux_books_based_on_designers/

<https://www.codecademy.com/learn/intro-to-ui-ux>

Some of these are pretty old as well, so keep that in mind. I've Codecademy for a while and I loved learning there. If it's anything close to my experience, I think you'll love it too.

Can - July 17, 2026, 6:14 pm

Try CodeAcademy, good for starting off learning the basics

Phantom_NiNja - July 19, 2026, 5:59 pm

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Some of these are pretty old as well, so keep that in mind. I've Codecademy for a while and I loved learning there. If it's anything close to my experience, I think you'll love it too.

Thanks for the help. I bookmarked that reddit link.

I bought that book on amazon and will be here this Thursday. Just trying to improve my skills. because I can code good but need work on gui interfaces. Trying to do it from scratch.

itcorp - July 20, 2026, 5:15 pm

Look, I'm going to be straight with you. You've built something genuinely impressive. Mastering C, C++, x86 assembly, writing Windows drivers, and actually building a PCI Express device from scratch? That's incredible. Most people couldn't do any of that, let alone all of it.

But here's the thing. You're coming at this backwards. You're asking for books on GUI design, but what you really need is a shift in perspective. You're an engineer who built a machine. Now you need to become a host who welcomes people to use it.

The fact that you said "it's not commercial ready and isn't simple" tells me you already know the problem. You built something that works, but only for you. That's fine for a prototype, but if you want to sell this, you need to design for someone who isn't you.

Here's my honest advice. Don't go read a book about GUI design yet. Books teach principles, but they won't teach you empathy, and that's what you actually need right now.

Instead, do this. Find five people who know nothing about electronics or PCI Express. Sit them in front of your device and don't say a word. Just watch. Where do they struggle? What do they click first? What confuses them? What do they break?

Write down every single moment of frustration you see. That's your design document right there. Those are the things you need to fix.

Once you have that list, then pick up a book. I'd recommend "The Design of Everyday Things" by Don Norman. It's not about GUI design specifically, but it's about why things confuse people and how to make them intuitive. It will change how you think about design more than any coding book ever could.

After that, read "Don't Make Me Think" by Steve Krug. It's short, it's practical, and it's exactly what you need for web and software interfaces. It will teach you that good design isn't about making things pretty. It's about making things obvious.

But here's what I really want you to hear. Your current GUI is probably not great because you built it for yourself. You understand the underlying hardware, so everything makes sense to you. But your customers won't have that context. They need a layer of abstraction that hides all the complexity you've mastered.

Think about it this way. You didn't learn C in a day. You didn't learn x86 in a week. So don't expect to learn interface design overnight either. It's a different skill, and it requires a different kind of thinking. You need to learn to see things from the outside, not just from the inside.

The good news is that you clearly have the discipline to master difficult things. You just need to apply that same discipline to understanding people instead of machines. Once you do, your device will go from a clever engineering project to a product that people actually want to use.

And honestly, that's the difference between a cool hobby and a successful business.

saibertron - August 6, 2026, 12:21 am

The reason the iPhone versus Android comparison you noticed holds up so well is that Apple ships one written design system, the Human Interface Guidelines, and enforces it through app review, while Android runs across dozens of manufacturers with their own skins layered on top of Material Design, so consistency breaks down. That is the concept you are actually looking for: a design system, meaning one shared set of rules for spacing, color, icon stroke weight, and corner radius that every screen pulls from, rather than each icon or screen being designed in isolation.

For a book on exactly the problem you described, Refactoring UI by Adam Wathan and Steve Schoger is the one worth reading first. It is short, practical, and aimed at people who can code but are not trained designers, and it covers exactly this: limiting your palette, picking one icon set instead of mixing sources, using a consistent spacing scale, and keeping visual weight such as borders and shadows uniform across elements so nothing looks bolted on.

Two free resources worth reading alongside it, since they are the actual rulebooks the apps you admire are built from, are Apple's Human Interface Guidelines and Google's Material Design guidelines. Even if you never touch iOS or Android development, both explain the reasoning behind spacing, color, and icon decisions in a way that generalizes to any GUI toolkit, including whatever you end up using for your PCI Express tool.

Practically, the fastest fix for icons and graphics that look fine individually but mismatched together is to stop sourcing icons from different places and pick a single icon set with one consistent stroke width and corner style, then reuse it everywhere. That change alone usually fixes most of the does not belong together feeling before you touch color or layout at all.

Phantom_NiNja - August 7, 2026, 8:10 am

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Thanks homie, I just bought the book will get here in 2 weeks. I will for sure read that. I am not sourcing my icons. I Draw them myself and it looks decent.

However, it doesn't look professional. I just want to improve to make it look more professional and put together. It just when you put the icons side by side it looks off a bit. It uses the same color schemes . I am working on fixing it and improving on it.