

Designing for Interruptions

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Few questions to think about



How many times are you interrupted in a day while working?



How easy or difficult is it to get back to what you were doing?



What role does communication play in your work?



When are you ok being interrupted and when does it annoy you?

What does your work look like



Communication

Creating documents

Other?

The Emotional Cost of Interruption

The problem of focus – building up your thoughts to where you were on a task

Task overload – every interruption could turn into a task - respond, send, create, update

Interruption about a stressful discussion or argument

Overall feeling of not getting anything done – when should I do my ‘actual’ work

The Problem of Multiple

Desktop + Mobile + Browser + OS

Multiple windows

Email interruption + notification on multiple

Self bias

I need time to respond to my messages
I am busy.

Why doesn't he/she respond to me
sooner?

I need interruption

Someone is waiting e.g. meeting chat

Time sensitive chat message, reminders

Something I am waiting for (important)

Channel discussion of interest

Things that concern me more

Too much time, don't mind chatting

Can wait

Ongoing discussion

Low priority messages (beyond IM)

Future items, not immediate priority

Reading suggestions, articles, promotions etc.

Things that concern others more

So busy, I can kill someone if they poke me

Existing solutions

Mute chat or channel

Priority inbox

Notification control – App and OS level

Tend to leave them on – FOMO

Focus time / DND

Can AI help make interruption contextual?

People – Don't want to miss a message from my manager

Time – Establishes urgency of the interruption, was it a recent interaction

Criticality – How important is it – cost of missing the communication

Availability – Am I in a meeting or driving or working on a focus task

Other approaches

Digest – Interrupt less frequently for less important content as a summary or group

Patterns – Establish patterns of usage for personalized interruptions through day in life

Levels – Possibility of tiered interruptions, just knowing something to check vs seeing exact info

Ambient – Creating interruptions in a way that don't distract but inform, knowing where to check

De-stress – Too much interruption or back and forth could mean stress, suggest a meeting or break

Byte meetings – Help solve communication faster by enabling smaller, quicker, focused meetings

Task orientation – Did the interruption need me to finish something? Help finish or remind

Where was I? – Help people get back to what they were doing naturally and quickly

Hope to see smarter interruptions

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