









Summary of Design Norms for Technology

Design Norm	Description	Sample Questions
Cultural Appropriateness 	Technology products should consider the culture into which they are embedded, cultivating improvement without disrespectful or unnecessary disruption.	Does the technology relieve burdens while preserving what is good in a cultural context? Is the design appropriate to its context, including questions of centralization vs. decentralization, large scale vs. small scale, and continuity vs. discontinuity.
Transparency 	Documentation and user interface ought to be clearly understandable by the user without being overwhelming. Users should be informed about potential dangers and guided to diagnose failures. For example, software and dashboards that clearly communicate status and errors.	Is the documentation clear and unambiguous? Is the layout, color scheme, and icons of the interface helpful? Does the product perform as advertised or does it bear false witness or exaggerate its claims? Are potential dangers clearly indicated to users?
Social 	The technology should foster good relationships and conviviality among all people involved.	Does the technology encourage community, hospitality, conviviality, and cooperation? Does the design process foster good teamwork? Does the product contribute to enmity, isolation, or polarization?
Stewardship 	Use of creational resources should be respectful, frugal, and caring. Design should reflect concern for sustainability and the environment. This norm also includes economic considerations.	Does the design consider the entire life cycle of the product? Is it repairable and recyclable? Is it efficient, using energy and other resources wisely? Are there waste products result from its use? Is respect paid to all of God's creatures?
Aesthetics 	This norm deals with <i>delightful harmony</i> : the form of the technological device should suggest its function and be pleasing and satisfying to use. For example, a hammer's form implies its function (of pounding).	Can new users easily intuit the function of this design? Is the user interface clear and pleasing to use? Is it delightful and beautiful?
Justice 	Technology should correct (not cause) injustice and should encourage justice, i.e., equity and fairness. The design should help give each person their due and facilitate the opportunity for all creatures to be the creature that God intends them to be.	Does this device promote fairness? Are copyrights and intellectual property respected? Could this design be easily used for unjust purposes? Does it respect intellectual property and privacy?
Caring 	Our tools should help us serve one another, promote wellness, contribute to healing, show love to our neighbor, and enable fellow creatures to flourish. Design should show loving concern for the welfare of all involved.	In what ways does this design show care for others? How does it show love for neighbor? Who might be harmed if this device is used?
Trust 	Technological devices ought to be reliable, especially in situations where safety is a crucial factor. Design should be a response to God and promote faith in him rather than faith in technology of any created thing.	Can the user depend on the design for its intended purpose. Is the design safe and secure? What habits and practices are associated with the device and how might that shape the user?

For more details on how these apply to **engineering**, see: Ethan J. Brue, Derek C. Schuurman, and Steven H. VanderLeest, [A Christian Field Guide to Technology for Engineers and Designers](#), IVP Academic, 2022.

For more details on how these apply to **computer science**, see: Derek C. Schuurman, [Shaping a Digital World: Faith, Culture and Computer Technology](#), IVP Academic, 2013.