



DESIGNER'S OATH

Collaboratively Defining a Code of Ethics for Design

Designers are now responsible for creating more than ever before—not only designing services, but also experiences, environments, products and systems for millions of people. With this increased influence, we must take a step back and recognize the increased responsibility we have to those we design for. We can learn from other professions, like healthcare, where those who practice medicine acknowledge their responsibility by swearing to uphold the Hippocratic Oath. This binds them to a clearly defined set of rules that guide the ethics of their interactions with patients. Designers also now have the ability to impact human health, and so we need a similar code of ethics to guide us.

We are calling on 15 exemplary interdisciplinary service designers from all over the world to define their own codes of ethics (that's you!). Each individual designer will receive one section of the existing Hippocratic Oath and will be asked to reshape it and create an image reflecting the ethics they follow in their own work. These pieces will be collected and woven together to create 3 new Designer's Hippocratic Oaths as well as 3 new collaborative images to represent them.

These Oaths will not only reflect what designers perceive to be their responsibilities in the modern world but will also open the channels of communication around ethics in design and provide a structure on which to build our future understanding of our responsibilities to those we design for.

The collaborative Oaths will be featured in *Touchpoint*, the Journal of Service Design and as an interactive exhibit at the Healthcare Refactored Conference in April.



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Instructions

We are encouraging you to have conversations about ethics in design on your project teams and within your organization. The Designer's Oath is a tool to help facilitate those conversations. There are two parts to every Oath: the written words describing the ethics you follow (or want to follow) in your own practice AND a visual reflecting those values.

If you're feeling good about writing your own Designer's Oath, then go ahead and go for it! There are no rules about what an Oath needs to look like except that it must include a visual as well as a written part. So do your thing!

If you're looking for some inspiration, you can find it in the following pages. We've provided five different (and completely optional) Designer's Oath templates to spark your creativity!

If you choose to work with a template, the left half of the page is a fill-in-the-blank form you can complete using words or phrases that relate to your own design practice. Or, if you're feeling courageous, feel free to rewrite or alter the whole statement.

On the right is a blank space for you to create a visual representation of the your Oath. This can be a sketch, a photo, a pattern, whatever! It just needs to fit in the vertical box (dimensions of 5 x 7.5 inches) and be at least 300 dpi.

The final page in this document contains a copy of the original clinical Hippocratic Oath to inspire you as you write your own Designer's Hippocratic Oath.

Thanks!



DESIGNER'S OATH

I swear to fulfill, to the best of my ability, this Oath: I will respect the hard-won _____ of the designers in whose steps I follow, and I will gladly share my _____ with those who are to follow me.

I will apply, for the benefit of the people, all measures that are _____, avoiding those twin traps of _____ and _____.



DESIGNER'S OATH

I will remember that there is _____ in design as well as _____, and that warmth, sympathy, and understanding outweigh _____.

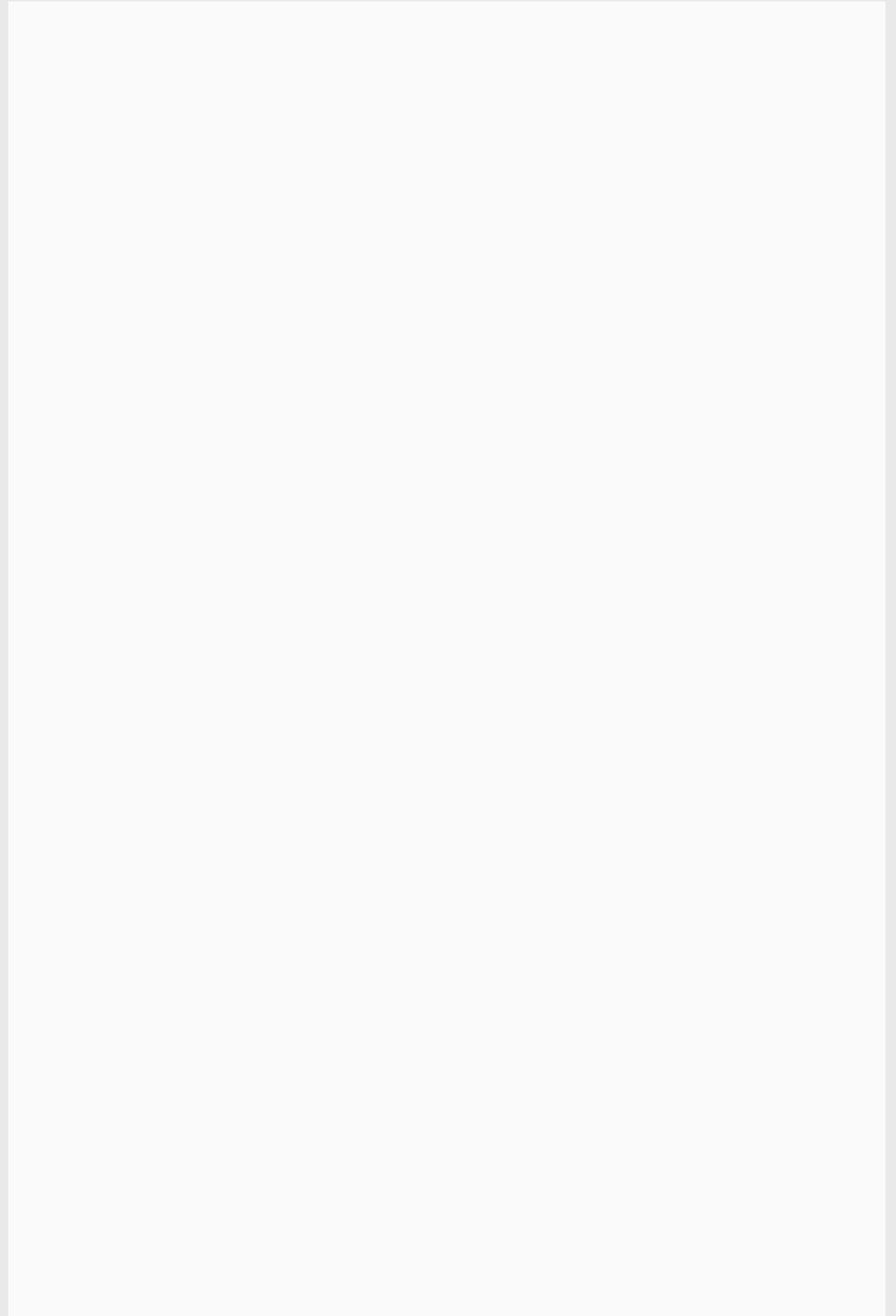
I will not be ashamed to admit what I don't know, or to call in my colleagues when their skills are needed for

_____.



DESIGNER'S OATH

I will be especially careful in matters of _____ and _____. It is my professional calling to _____, but it may also be within my power to _____; this awesome responsibility must be faced with great humbleness and awareness of my own shortcomings.





DESIGNER'S OATH

I will remember that I do not design for a _____ or a _____, but a human being, whose choices may affect the person's family and economic stability. My responsibility includes these related problems, if I am to design adequately for _____.

I will prevent _____ whenever I can, for prevention is preferable to reaction.



DESIGNER'S OATH

I will remember that I remain a member of _____, with special obligations to all my fellow human beings, those of sound of mind and body as well as the infirm.

If I do not violate this oath, may I enjoy _____, respected while I live and remembered with affection thereafter. May I always act so as to preserve the finest traditions of my calling, and may I long experience the joy of _____ for those who _____.



DESIGNER'S OATH

The Modern Hippocratic Oath

The Modern Hippocratic Oath was written in 1964 and is used to swear in many clinicians today. The optional Designer's Oath templates are based on this. If you need inspiration to write your own Designer's Oath, take a look at this!

I swear to fulfill, to the best of my ability and judgment, this covenant: I will respect the hard-won scientific gains of those physicians in whose steps I walk, and gladly share such knowledge as is mine with those who are to follow.

I will apply, for the benefit of the sick, all measures [that] are required, avoiding those twin traps of overtreatment and therapeutic nihilism.

I will remember that there is art to medicine as well as science, and that warmth, sympathy, and understanding may outweigh the surgeon's knife or the chemist's drug.

I will not be ashamed to say "I know not," nor will I fail to call in my colleagues when the skills of another are needed for a patient's recovery.

I will respect the privacy of my patients, for their problems are not disclosed to me that the world may know.

Most especially must I tread with care in matters of life and death. If it is given me to save a life, all thanks. But it may also be within my power to take a life; this awesome responsibility must be faced with great humbleness and awareness of my own frailty. Above all, I must not play at God.

I will remember that I do not treat a fever chart, a cancerous growth, but a sick human being, whose illness may affect the person's family and economic stability. My responsibility includes these related problems, if I am to care adequately for the sick.

I will prevent disease whenever I can, for prevention is preferable to cure.

I will remember that I remain a member of society, with special obligations to all my fellow human beings, those sound of mind and body as well as the infirm.

If I do not violate this oath, may I enjoy life and art, respected while I live and remembered with affection thereafter. May I always act so as to preserve the finest traditions of my calling and may I long experience the joy of healing those who seek my help.