

Apps need to be memorable, too

There's one more attribute that's important: memorability. Once you've figured out how to use an app, will you remember how to use it the next time you try or will you have to start over again from scratch?

I don't usually talk much about memorability because I think the best way to make things easy to *relearn* is to make them incredibly clear and easy to *learn* in the first place. If it's easy to learn the first time, it's easy to learn the second time.

But it's certainly a serious problem with some apps.

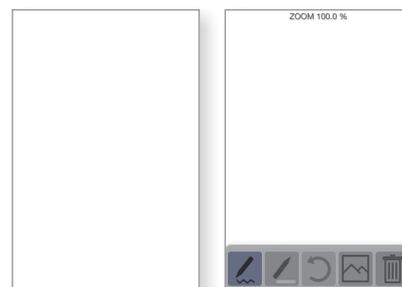
One of my favorite drawing apps is ASketch. I *love* this app because no matter what you try to draw and how crudely you draw it, it ends up looking interesting.



But for months, each time I opened it I couldn't remember how to start a new drawing.

In fact, I couldn't remember how to get to *any* of the controls. To maximize the drawing space there weren't any icons on the screen.

I'd try all the usual suspects: double tap, triple tap, tap near the middle at the top or bottom of the screen, various swipes and multi-finger taps, and finally I'd hit on it. But by the next time I went to use it I'd forgotten what the trick was again.



Memorability can be a big factor in whether people adopt an app for regular use. Usually when you purchase one, you'll be willing to spend some time right away figuring out how to use it. But if you have to invest the same effort the next time, it's unlikely to feel like a satisfying experience. Unless you're very impressed by what it does, there's a good chance you'll abandon it—which is the fate of most apps.

Life is cheap (99 cents) on mobile devices.