

perpendicular angel design

organizing and simplifying, one illumination at a time

AN EVENT APART SEATTLE 2017: DESIGN FOR REAL LIFE BY ERIC MEYER

Eric Meyer has been speaking on the subject of making our designs more human and more robust for a number of years now, through discussions about designing for crisis. This year his talk was about Design for Real Life. **He co-authored a book with the same name with Sara Wachter-Bettcher**, and it stands as one of the most important books in the field of User Experience Design.

An Event Apart Seattle 2017 Design for Real Life by Eric Meyer (pdf)



Anne Gibson

@perpendicularme

.@meyerweb kicks off after lunch with Design for Real Life and 20,000 pages of the Code of Federal Regulations in the US
[#AEASEA](#)

5:18 PM - Apr 4, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)

**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

200,000 pages (80 linear feet of shelf space), a printout is 80 feet tall. [#AEASEA](#) That's a lot!

5:19 PM - Apr 4, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

The Windows 10 source code is 40,000,000 lines of code, that's 267 feet of printout, or roughly 2-3x bigger than the legal code [#AEASEA](#)

5:20 PM - Apr 4, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Google has estimated that their entire app suite is 2 billion lines of code. 2.5 miles (4km tall) of paper stacked [#AEASEA](#)

5:21 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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@perpendicularme

The entire web is unestimated - but the legal code is tiny in comparison (and we think of it as big!) [#AEASEA](#)

5:21 PM - Apr 4, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



Anne Gibson

@perpendicularme

The systems we work on are unimaginably complex and we unleash them on our users often w/o forethought #AEASEA

5:22 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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Anne Gibson

@perpendicularme

What do unit tests for new laws look like? #AEASEA

5:22 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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Anne Gibson

@perpendicularme

Even without unit tests, there's a lot of back and forth between gov't entities, citizens, etc. #AEASEA

5:22 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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Anne Gibson

@perpendicularme

We often design what is easiest or what seems like a good idea at the time #AEASEA

5:23 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

The AWS S3 outage in February was a code change 1 person pushed. [#AEASEA](#)

5:23 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

What's the level of responsibility there, when something is fragile or we cause harm? [#AEASEA](#)

5:23 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

What's the level of responsibility there, when something is fragile or we cause harm? [#AEASEA](#)

5:23 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

This isn't just infrastructure, it's also design. "On this day" shows memories from previous years on the same day on Facebook [#AEASEA](#)

5:24 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

In 2014 their interaction was very bad because it wasn't thought through - hurt a lot of people [#AEASEA](#)

5:25 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Now they offer ability to filter out people or time frames, but it's very difficult to find [#AEASEA](#)

5:26 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

A potentially disastrous decision they've made: Any "memory" is any post where anyone is tagged even if it wasn't their post [#AEASEA](#)

5:27 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Facebook doesn't seem to have thought about how labeling someone else's post as a memory of yours [#AEASEA](#)

5:28 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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Anne Gibson

@perpendicularme

We tend to think of our users as an undifferentiated mass.

#AEASEA

5:28 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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Anne Gibson

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We tend to think of our users as an undifferentiated mass.

#AEASEA

5:28 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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jared bishop

@bishopart

Our users are individuals. Not a homogeneous group. @meyerweb

#aeasea

5:29 PM - Apr 4, 2017

[See jared bishop's other Tweets](#)



Anne Gibson

@perpendicularme

We tend to think of our users as being a whole crowd just like us, which they aren't. But we don't internalize that fact #AEASEA

5:29 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Human brains take shortcuts whenever they can, so we have to be cognizant of cognitive limitations [#AEASEA](#)

5:29 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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Human brains take shortcuts whenever they can, so we have to be cognizant of cognitive limitations [#AEASEA](#)

5:29 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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@perpendicularme

Human brains take shortcuts whenever they can, so we have to be cognizant of cognitive limitations [#AEASEA](#)

5:29 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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@perpendicularme

It is not an easy task to push past it. We want a reward like donuts. Unless we have celiac, then donuts are frustration and pain [#AEASEA](#)

5:30 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Don't try to understand hating the taste of chocolate. Try to understand that some people feel different from you and that's OK [#AEASEA](#)

5:32 PM - Apr 4, 2017

1

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@perpendicularme

Don't feel pity because someone doesn't like chocolate. It's not a problem to be fixed. It's an example of diversity [#AEASEA](#)

5:32 PM - Apr 4, 2017

1

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

(A lot of what [@meyerweb](#) is saying is true of disability — it's not a problem to fix, it's a life different from yours!) [#AEASEA](#) [#a11y](#)

5:34 PM - Apr 4, 2017

16

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)**Stephanie seaotta Drescher**

@seaotta

It's important to realize how incredibly diverse humans are & it's ok to not like things that others like. [#aeasea](#)

5:34 PM - Apr 4, 2017

1

[See !\[\]\(90ef8a875012d671981c846fc200a6e1_img.jpg\) Stephanie seaotta Drescher's other Tweets](#)

**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Mother's Day is coming soon. Facebook advertises it. It's a very difficult holiday for many people [#AEASEA](#)

5:35 PM - Apr 4, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

All that spam about the holiday someone hates is incredibly painful. We know how to filter it out - most people don't [#AEASEA](#)

5:36 PM - Apr 4, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

"Brands, please stop." You don't have to shove something potentially painful in someone's face AS A BANK. [#AEASEA](#)

5:37 PM - Apr 4, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

The paradox: we can't pretend that the universe revolves around us. users absolutely feel like the universe revolves around them [#AEASEA](#)

5:38 PM - Apr 4, 2017

1 [See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)

**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

The paradox: we can't pretend that the universe revolves around us. users absolutely feel like the universe revolves around them
[#AEASEA](#)

5:38 PM - Apr 4, 2017

1

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)**Josh Vickerson**

@joshvickerson

“We design for millions, but every one of those actions are intensely personal.” - [@meyerweb](#) [#aeasea](#)

5:38 PM - Apr 4, 2017 · Belltown, Seattle

[See Josh Vickerson's other Tweets](#)**David Watson, CPWA**

@caughtexception

We can't let the world revolve around us, even when designing for folks who assume it revolves around them. [#aeasea](#)

5:38 PM - Apr 4, 2017

[See David Watson, CPWA's other Tweets](#)**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

We're partially responsible for this feeling of personal immediacy. People are a large amount of commonality & a mass of difference
[#aeasea](#)

5:39 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Fundamental collision is technology vs human psychology. The past decade has changed it [#AEASEA](#)

5:39 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Our users are bringing entire worlds into unguarded spaces [#AEASEA](#)

5:40 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

We are shaping lives in ways small and large [#AEASEA](#)

5:40 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

This is a lot harder than the job we thought we signed up to do. But it's the job now. [#AEASEA](#)

5:41 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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Anne Gibson

@perpendicularme

We have a responsibility to make good choices about design through technology and not cause harm [#AEASEA](#)

5:41 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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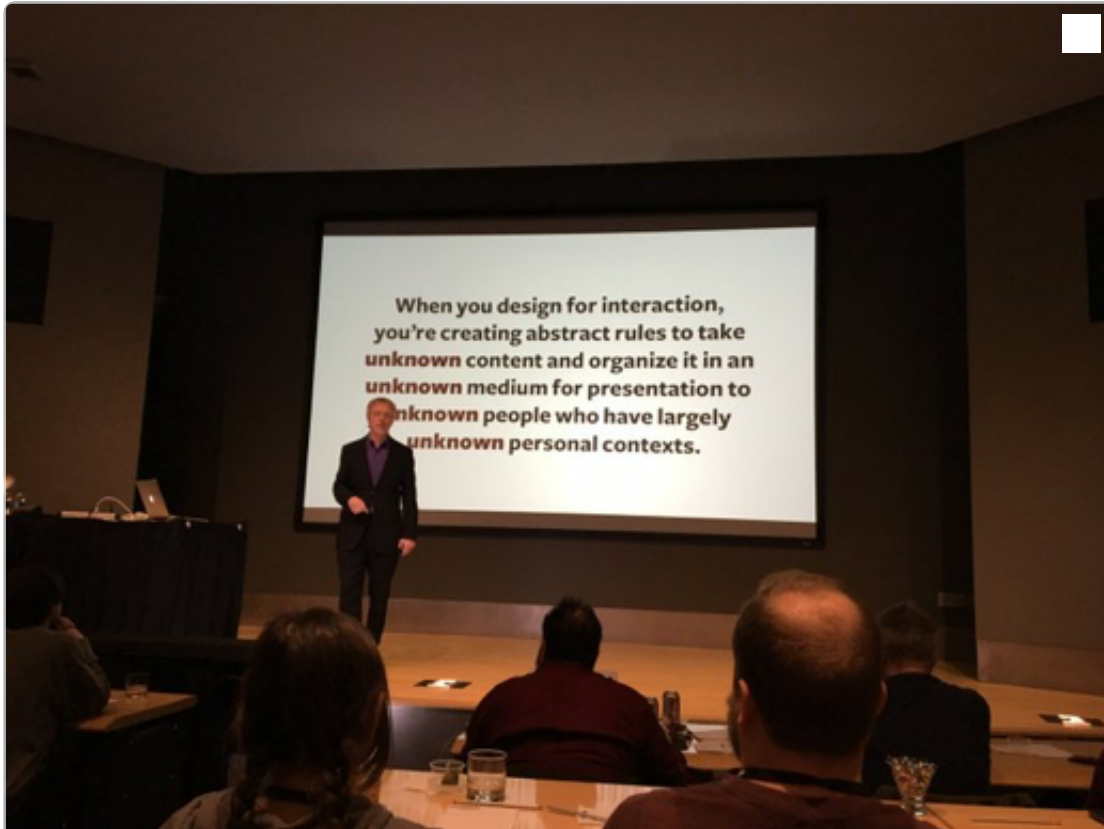
Stephanie seaotta Drescher

@seaotta

All of your design decisions will not be perfect. That's not human. [#aeasea](#)

5:42 PM - Apr 4, 2017

[See !\[\]\(626ce8ac21792b9405bfddfea8e0c96a_img.jpg\) Stephanie seaotta Drescher's other Tweets](#)



Anne Gibson

@perpendicularme

Unknowns we work in. [#aeasea](#)

5:42 PM - Apr 4, 2017

1 [See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



Anne Gibson

@perpendicularme

We can't make the promise to provide tools that are totally harmless. But we have to try [#AEASEA](#)

5:42 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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Anne Gibson

@perpendicularme

Maybe you fly JetBlue a few times and then have a really bad flight - you probably don't abandon forever [#AEASEA](#)

5:43 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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Anne Gibson

@perpendicularme

Build up goodwill so when you stumble, your users are more likely to be forgiving [#AEASEA](#)

5:43 PM - Apr 4, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



Anne Gibson

@perpendicularme

Stress-testing your work will make it stronger [#AEASEA](#)

5:44 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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Anne Gibson

@perpendicularme

Look at the designs through the eyes of someone in crisis. (Look up [@meyerweb](#)'s talks from last year if you didn't see.) [#AEASEA](#)

5:44 PM - Apr 4, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)

Here's one of them:

Eric Meyer: Designing for a crisis



Anne Gibson

@perpendicularme

“I don’t have users in crisis, how does this apply to me?” #AEASEA

5:45 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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Anne Gibson

@perpendicularme

“Most users trying to adopt a pet aren’t doing it in crisis”.
But what if you’re giving up a pet? That’s crisis-like #AEASEA

5:46 PM - Apr 4, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



Krystal Higgins

@kryshiggins

Adding friction to weed out low value leads? Be careful, your desired audience may also get weeded out - @meyerweb #aeasea

6:04 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

The 75-step form someone needs to fill out to give up a pet might actually be in a family crisis. The form becomes a filter [#AEASEA](#)

5:46 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Is it easier to abandon an animal than fill out your form? [#AEASEA](#)

5:47 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

“Crisis” doesn’t necessarily mean life-or-death, it can be a layoff, or something else going on. Might not involve a site they’re on [#aeasea](#)

5:48 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Crises: lawyers in ethical crisis, student a credit short from graduating, many other examples [#AEASEA](#)

5:57 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

“Your stuff expands to fill your available space” - human psychology feels the same way. Your biggest stress is the biggest stress

#AEASEA

5:57 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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@perpendicularme

Wordpress has an error message, “Cheatin’ uh?”. That’s it. How... helpful. #AEASEA

5:58 PM - Apr 4, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

It’s uncommon for ppl to get it, has to do with permissions, and has spawned 7 years of discussion #AEASEA

5:59 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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@perpendicularme

This bug is still open. It did lead to a change, with a tiny bit of more data. #AEASEA

5:59 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

“It never ceases to annoy me to be unjustly accused of something I’m not doing.” Don’t burn users’ goodwill. #AEASEA

6:00 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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@perpendicularme

At the bottom of every wordpress.org page is their motto: code is poetry. This doesn’t feel poetic. #AEASEA

6:02 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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@perpendicularme

A designated dissenter to question assumptions - what are we assuming and what if it’s wrong - can help #AEASEA

6:02 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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More about the Designated Dissenter and a bunch of other concepts from their book are explained in Sara and Eric’s article on A List Apart, [**Design for Real Life**](#).

**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Can we think about how this design decision might backfire in certain contexts and can we make it better? #AEASEA

6:03 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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Stephanie seaotta Drescher
@seaotta

The role of designers is to ask: Have we thought about this, what are we assuming? Have we thought about the design backfiring? [#aeasea](#)

6:04 PM - Apr 4, 2017

1

See  Stephanie seaotta Drescher's other Tweets



Anne Gibson
@perpendicularme

Pokémon Go: uses cultural touchstones as pokestops. History: good. National borders: ugh. Minefields: bad! [#AEASEA](#)

6:04 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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Anne Gibson
@perpendicularme

Pokémon Go has a ton of pop ups of warnings. How much responsibility to the designers have for their players behavior? [#AEASEA](#)

6:05 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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Anne Gibson
@perpendicularme

Not legal responsibility. Personal ethical responsibility. It's not enough to be checking legal responsibility [#AEASEA](#)

6:06 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Twitter puts hashflags (icons next to hashtags) on terms. How can they go wrong? [#aeasea](#)

6:07 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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@perpendicularme

Copy design to try to prevent yourself from embarrassing yourself or your users when your assumptions are wrong can save you [#AEASEA](#)

6:14 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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@perpendicularme

Microsoft has a great series of pdfs activities and things for inclusive design. How do we make x-box gaming available to everyone? [#AEASEA](#)

6:14 PM - Apr 4, 2017

2 [See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)**Rebecca Watson**

@RVivusArtDesign

Designing for the real world - check your assumptions at the door. Embrace inclusive design. [@meyerweb](#) [#aeasea](#) microsoft.com/en-us/design/i...

6:16 PM - Apr 4, 2017

2 [See Rebecca Watson's other Tweets](#)

**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

If your only connection to the rest of the world is through gaming and you're a quadriplegic, Microsoft wants to make that possible [#AEASEA](#)

6:15 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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@perpendicularme

We have a responsibility to be aware and act on the effects our designs have on people [#AEASEA](#)

6:16 PM - Apr 4, 2017

1 [See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Our system design decisions, copy, visual design, experience design all together. We change lives [#AEASEA](#)

6:16 PM - Apr 4, 2017

1 [See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)**Josh Vickerson**

@joshvickerson

“You never know what seemingly trivial interaction will be anything but trivial.” - [@meyerweb](#) [#aeasea](#)

6:17 PM - Apr 4, 2017 · Belltown, Seattle

2 [See Josh Vickerson's other Tweets](#)

**Anne Gibson**[@perpendicularme](#)

It may be trivial to most, but the change can be anything but trivial for one person. We want those to be profound positive changes [#AEASEA](#)

6:17 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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**Anne Gibson**[@perpendicularme](#)

The internet is a road. We're not building roads. We're designing communities around the roads [#AEASEA](#)

6:17 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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**Anne Gibson**[@perpendicularme](#)

"I have yet to enter a city where there were no traffic laws." Different rules in different zones. We're defining the structures [#AEASEA](#)

6:18 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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**Laura Steele**[@laurabsteele](#)

A crisis moment I think about working in the auto & dealer industry is those who just want a vehicle after a car accident [@meyerweb](#) [#aeasea](#)

6:19 PM - Apr 4, 2017

[See Laura Steele's other Tweets](#)



Anne Gibson

@perpendicularme

Build wisely because we can help each other or hurt each other because helping is the much better approach [#AEASEA](#)

6:19 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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Krystal Higgins

@kryshiggins

Sketchnotes from [@meyerweb](#)'s talk "Design for Real Life"
[#aeasea](#) - kryshiggins.com/sketchnotes-fr...

6:30 PM - Apr 4, 2017

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