

Value sensitive design

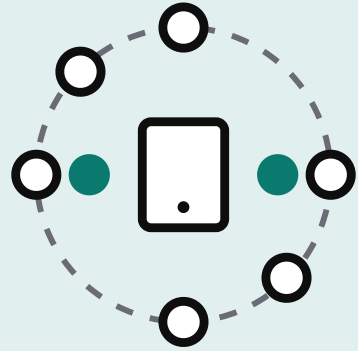
An approach that builds human values, such as privacy, autonomy or trust, into the design of a technology from start to finish, also thinking about those who don't use it.

In Spanish

Diseño sensible a valores

Origin

Friedman (1996); Friedman and Hendry (2019)



What it's for

It spots early the values a technology can harm, for those who use it or those who only live with its effects, even if it works well.

Principles

Three kinds of investigation

Conceptual (which values are at stake and for whom), empirical (how people experience them) and technical (how the design supports or threatens them), repeated in cycles.

Direct and indirect stakeholders

Those who use the technology count, and so do those who feel its effects without using it.

Values can clash

Privacy and security, for example, sometimes pull in opposite directions; the conflict is made visible and decided.

How it's done

1



Name the values at stake and who they affect.

2



Investigate how direct and indirect stakeholders experience them.

3



Design to support them, and review the result.

Applications in design

✓ When to use it

In technology that touches personal data, automated decisions, health or public spaces, where the effects go beyond those who use it.

✗ Avoid

Making a list of values at the start and never looking at it again.

👁 Don't fall for it

Don't decide on your own which values matter: ask the people affected.

Connections

Builds on

■ Deceptive patterns (dark patterns)

Related to

■ Human-centered design

■ AI design

■ Design justice

■ Stakeholder map

■ Privacy by design

Authors and works

1996	Batya Friedman	Named it in an article that argued for taking human values into account when designing computer systems.
2017	Batya Friedman, David G. Hendry, and Alan Borning	Gathered and described the approach's methods, such as the analysis of direct and indirect stakeholders.
2019	Batya Friedman and David G. Hendry	Explained the approach's theory, methods and application cases in a book.

Sources

Original sources

- Friedman, B. (1996). Value-sensitive design. *Interactions*, 3(6), 16–23. [View source \(https://doi.org/10.1145/242485.242493\)](https://doi.org/10.1145/242485.242493)
- Friedman, B., & Hendry, D. G. (2019). *Value sensitive design: Shaping technology with moral imagination*. The MIT Press.

Academic reviews

- Friedman, B., Hendry, D. G., & Borning, A. (2017). A survey of value sensitive design methods. *Foundations and Trends in Human-Computer Interaction*, 11(2), 63–125. [View source \(https://doi.org/10.1561/1100000015\)](https://doi.org/10.1561/1100000015)

Last reviewed: October 25, 2026

