

Check. And my No. 1 pet peeve: requirements for formatting phone numbers, social security numbers, or dates in a particular way, rather than accepting any reasonable way? Check.

There were a few specific topics I was hoping to see, such as dealing with credit card numbers (verify the internal checksum instantly on the client side), birthdays (avoid forcing users to divulge their age when possible), time zones (infer a default by looking up the geography of the visitor's IP address). It would have been nice to see a discussion about the incredible insight that can be gleaned by scouring historical data for patterns of input and error.

I would also have been grateful for specific treatment of international concerns, particularly the details of how common fields like names, addresses, and phone numbers should change for users in different locales. This is difficult knowledge to come by, and often, these locale-specific factors are the only thing preventing people from around the world from benefiting from our work.

Wroblewski rightfully avoids giving blanket advice to any given design problem. Again and again, he emphasizes that the correct answer depends on the situation. He follows through by laying out what those factors are.

Wroblewski is upfront about the sources of his

opinions. Some of his claims are backed up by published or unpublished usability studies. Some eye-tracking studies were conducted just for the book. And when no definitive evidence is available and Wroblewski must resort to his professional opinion, he says so.

The world of form design will continue to evolve, and best practices will continue to emerge. Hopefully, Wroblewski will return with updated editions of the book as the field of interactivity continues to mature.

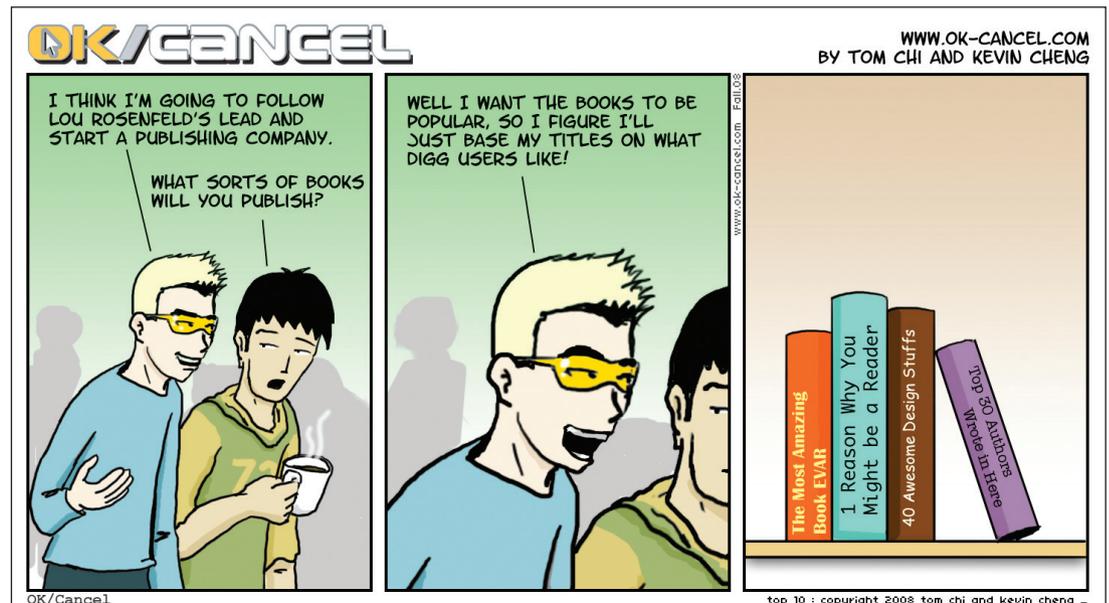
*Web Form Design: Filling in the Blanks* is an excellent guide for new or de facto designers and a handy reference for veterans. Wroblewski has done the dirty work for us in researching what works best. By following his advice, we—and our users—can quickly and competently get through the forms and onto the fun stuff.



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR** D. Philip Haine founded Obvious Design, LLC, a San Francisco consultancy specializing in product vision and design, in 1997. His articles can be found online at [StealThisIdea.com](http://StealThisIdea.com). For more information on Haine, please visit <http://obviousdesign.com>.

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