

Guidelines to Avoid
Hostile Patterns
in Error Messages

NN/g

TIP 1

Avoid premature
error messages

Wait until a user moves from a
field to display an error message.

Email Address*

m|

ⓘ Invalid email address

Phone Number*

Email Address*

millych@.com

ⓘ Invalid email address

Phone Number*

|

TIP 2

Provide any
constraints upfront

Do not wait until the user
begins typing or attempts
to submit the entry.

Password*

15Mn4z

ⓘ Your password must be between
8-100 characters

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8-100 characters

|

TIP 3

Do not overload your user
with multiple indicators

e.g., asterisk *and* red
outlined field *and* inline
validation message

Amount*

Amount cannot be left blank.

|

Amount*

|

TIP 4

Reserve error-like visual
treatments for critical
system-status messages

Routine system-status messages
that communicate noncritical
information should be discoverable,
but not intrusive.

Routing Number

9 digits (ABA/ACH routing number)

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Account Number

1 to 17 characters

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⚠ Make sure the bank account
information is correct and this
is a person you know and trust.

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