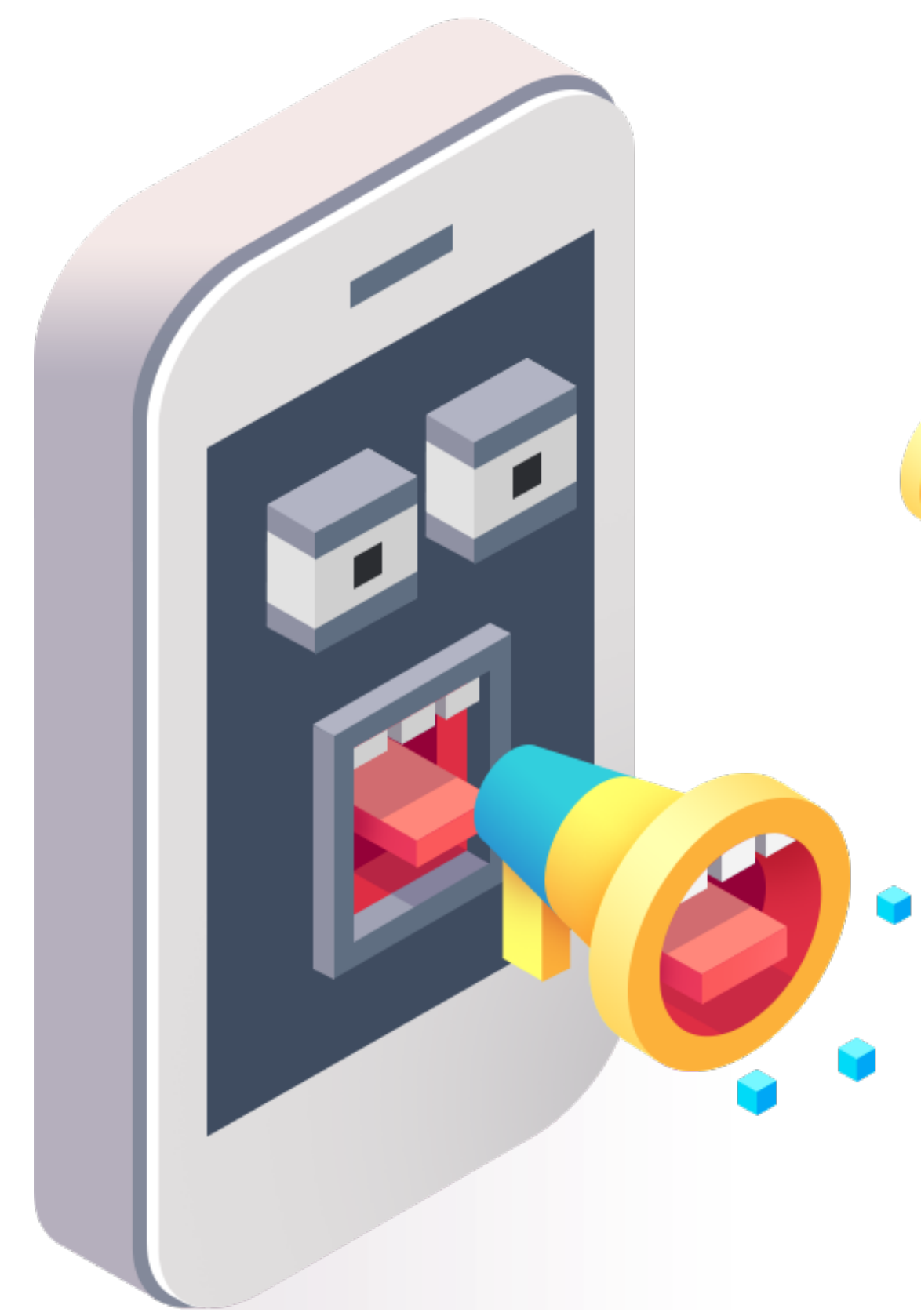


Handling Errors in a Non-Geek Interface



Did the error happen because of the conscious actions of the user? (They hit a button, opened a page, submitted a form)

Yep

Really? When the user opens, e.g., a contact list, they expect to get the contacts, nothing more. They don't know anything about background loading something from third party source which might fail.

Sure?

Is the user able to fix the error by themselves?

Yeah

Briefly, explain the error and give the user a hint on how to fix it:

- ⊗ This username is already taken.
Pick a new one
- ⊗ Can't load the gallery.
Check the internet connection
- ⊗ No space available, can't upload the file.
Upgrade your plan or clean the folder

Nah

Notify the user the desired result is not reachable, and promise to fix it quickly (you do receive bug reports automatically, right?). Keep the technical details. The users don't care about the code of error and its full description.

- ⊗ Can't synchronize the document.
We've received the bug report and will fix everything soon

Nope

Well, no

Don't block the interface with alerts and pop-ups. If necessary, show a gentle non-blocking notification somewhere in the corner.

- ⚠ Can't display messages.
Refresh in 60 secs
- ⚠ Weather server is down.
Can't download weather data.

Read more about error reporting:
goo.gl/veCF9X

