

A Research-Based Approach to Web Design and Usability

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Where the Guidelines Originated

- Department of Health and Human Services
- National Institutes of Health
- National Cancer Institute
- Office of Communications
- Communication Technologies Branch
(CTB)

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Mission of the Communications Technology Branch

- To analyze, design, evaluate, and test communications technology systems, products, and services
- To make them more usable, useful, and accessible

Presentation Objectives

- To show why evidence-based design guidelines are important
- To provide an overview of how the NCI guidelines were produced
- To provide examples of the guidelines, and show how they affect web design
- To suggest ways to introduce and implement the guidelines in an organization
- To discuss ways to keep the guidelines up-to-date

Question 1

Users read fastest from a computer monitor that displays characters as

- A. Serif font - Times New Roman or Georgia
- B. Sans serif font - Arial or Verdana
- C. Microsoft's new ClearType
- D. They all elicit the same reading speed

Question 2

When looking for information on a news website, users tend to first look at

- A. A text heading
- B. Some of the page content
- C. An image
- D. There is no way to predict

Question 3

Users tend to read text information fastest from a computer monitor if the line lengths are

- A. All about the same size (no matter how long)
- B. Fairly long (up to 8 inches wide)
- C. Moderately long (about 5 inches wide)
- D. Relatively short columns (about 2.5 inches wide)

Question 4

When searching an online page for a specific name and telephone number in a list, the fastest performance comes from using letters in the name that are

- A. ALL UPPERCASE
- B. all lowercase
- C. Appropriate upper and lowercase
- D. Any of the above (case makes no difference in this task)

The Problem

- Designers guess when making too many design decisions
- Reasons that the available research is not used more
 - Not part of initial training
 - Not readily available
 - Not easily accessible
 - Not easily understood
 - Not valued by management

Overall Goal of the Project

- To have a practical, easy-to-use resource
- One that will assist those involved in the creation of information oriented websites
- One that facilitates making design decisions based on the best available evidence

Research



Practice

Purpose of the Guidelines

- To create better and more usable cancer information websites
- To provide valid, peer-reviewed website design guidelines
- To stimulate research into areas that will have the greatest impact on the creation of usable websites