

## Chapter Two: How we *really* use the web

Chapter two discusses the differences between how users are expected to use the internet and how they actually use the internet. Designers create page layouts with excessive detail, careful delineation of the text, and exact pixel measurements to capture the reader's attention. However, upon close people watching, it became evident that these users will jump to keywords, clickable links or anything that seems like it will take them to an answer. From this research, Krug's advice is to design for the user's intent to scan.

The first lesson of chapter two is that people use the internet to search for fast answers. We do this by means of scanning. Fast answers does not equal reading every single word so readers are quick to move on to whatever jumps out at them first. The three main categories that users act on are the task at hand, his/her personal interests or trigger words, such as "free", "sex", "sale" or his/her own name. People scan documents because they know they don't have to read everything to get from point A to point B or to grasp the gist of the document. Additionally, most people feel that majority of the text is irrelevant to whatever it is he/she is looking for. People have been successfully scanning documents for a long time and Krug sees no end in sight.

The second lesson of the chapter is that readers do not optimize, they satisfice (a combination of the words satisfy and suffice, both similarly means to meet adequate needs). Satisficing is the process of choosing the first reasonable option. People see more success in clicking on something without investigation and taking the chance of using the back button than they do in reading the text before deciding whether or not to click forward. As previously stated, people are typically on the hunt for fast answers and the clicking-forward-can-always-go-back method seems to be the most efficient path to the users, as there's little damage done if they click incorrectly.

The third lesson is that users prefer to forge ahead semi-blind and adapt from their mistakes rather than thoroughly read any type of instructions. The 'how' and the 'why' often get left behind for the 'what' as people like to tinker and muddle through in order to find out their own version of how something works. Krug's favorite example of muddling through is his findings that many users believe search engines like Yahoo to be "the internet". They type full URLs into the search bar as if it will take them directly to the site instead of to a list of pages relating to the URL. This is the theory of "if we find something that works, we stick to it." His

point here is to still design in hopes that users “get it” because if so, there will be more success in design and more retention of users throughout the entire site.

In summation, chapter two brings to attention that users approach these documents, websites, page layouts, etcetera, on their own agendas and how they interact with them depends on their own individual experiences. We, as designers, can only hope to guide the users on how we think these documents can be navigated. In all honesty, users scan, satisfice, and muddle. They want quick, reasonable answers and they will do it the way they know best even if it means fumbling through the website. Krug mentions in the beginning of the chapter that we assume readers will read every little word when in fact they are viewing the content as though they are passing a billboard. So his suggestion is: “If your audience is going to act like you’re designing billboards, then design great billboards.”