The war among paragraphs…

- We talked about user timers and how we must be careful about the length
- What happens when different pieces of text enter into competition for users' attention?

Who is going to win?

- Answer: ***shorter*** paragraphs attract much more than ***longer*** ones
- How much?
- Typically, at least ***double*** (!)

From paragraphs to titles

- The same thing happens for titles: ***shorter*** titles attract much more than longer ones (so, in the scan phase not all titles are equal…)

Moreover…

- Having a text broken with more paragraphs provokes a relaxation of timers, encouraging reading (remember email…!)

Technology

New Computers Not Worm-proof

By Stephanie Ranes, Forbes

Most machines currently on the market are vulnerable to the Blaster worm and other predations, thanks to unfixed defects in the versions of Windows they start with.

On one machine tested, the first dial-up connection delivered Blaster and a crash in less than two minutes.

Most Windows computers ship with an outdated "service pack" of fixes and enhancements – the most recent of which was delivered in September 2002.

To keep their machines current with critical security updates, users are supposed to download and install subsequent fixes – at present more than 29 megabytes – from the Internet.

The waste of users' time in performing that task is now compounded by the paradox that in trying to download the fix that nullifies Blaster, they run a risk of contracting it.

Some direct vendors have responded by installing the most important patches on new machines. But though Microsoft made its first anti-Blaster patch available July 16, it didn't ship with new Gateway machines until Aug. 12, and new Dell machines until Aug. 16.

Computers currently on retail shelves were typically produced before the fix was

Entertainment

Lucille Ball: Playing Fast and Lucy

By James Poniewozik, Time

You know about vitameatavegemin. You know about the consuming romance and contentious breakup with Desi Arnaz. You know about the glory years of I Love Lucy and the slow slide into irrelevance with a string of Lucy knock-offs. But I'll bet you didn't know this about Lucille Ball: "She once took an open-cockpit plane up in weather 20 below freezing to effect the rescue of a schoolboy." O.K., so that last bit is a fib, concocted for Ball's press biography by publicists for RKO, the studio she was under contract to in the late 1930s. They made it up because they — and the rest of Hollywood, for some two decades — had no idea how to best promote or cast the woman who in mid-life would become perhaps the most popular actress of the 20th century.

Ball didn't easily fit any of the standard movie-star niches. The saucy girl from Jamestown, N.Y., was pretty (a former model) but not va-va-voom sexy; she was down-home charming but divalshly difficult (she once chucked a coffeepot at a makeup man and missed, dousing Katharine Hepburn); she was funny but in a slapstick way audiences were not used to from women. Nearing 40, she was deep into a well-paid but unspectacular B-movie career when the opportunity came along to star in a TV show. Then, as Stefan Kanfer's entertaining but unreflective biography Ball of Fire (Knopf, 361 pages) details, she did what many unusual talents must. She created her own niche.

As Kanfer, a former TIME editor, presents her, Ball does fit one showbiz line well

How much timer relaxation?

- **+100% (!)**

Technology

New Computers Not Worm-proof

By Stephanie Ranes, Forbes

Most machines currently on the market are vulnerable to the Blaster worm and other predations, thanks to unfixed defects in the versions of Windows they start with.

On one machine tested, the first dial-up connection delivered Blaster and a crash in less than two minutes.

Most Windows computers ship with an outdated "service pack" of fixes and enhancements – the most recent of which was delivered in September 2002.

To keep their machines current with critical security updates, users are supposed to download and install subsequent fixes – at present more than 29 megabytes – from the Internet.

The waste of users' time in performing that task is now compounded by the paradox that in trying to download the fix that nullifies Blaster, they run a risk of contracting it.

Some direct vendors have responded by installing the most important patches on new machines. But though Microsoft made its first anti-Blaster patch available July 16, it didn't ship with new Gateway machines until Aug. 12, and new Dell machines until Aug. 16.

Paragraphs *and* Titles…

- A title is an important attractor, but it can be further improved. How?
- Adding below it a short explanation/summary (in technical terms, the **blurb**)

Marriott HOTELS & RESORTS Click for Rates

The Times

Online Edition · Mon Dec 1 11:39:17 PST 2003

TIFFANY & CO.

Search: In Today's Chronicle

Sections

News
Sports
Business
Technology
Entertainment
Lifestyle
Health

AP Wire

- U.S.: Iraq insurgency highly coordinated
- Court to clarify on juries imposing death
- Mideast activists launch symbolic accord
- Activists lead rallies on World AIDS Day

Sex Offenders On the Loose

'Bunker Buster' Missiles Aim at Moon

Troops From Iraq War Can't Donate Blood

Local News

Antioch's Scrabble Boy

Shared Goals, Shared Building

Have Shuttle, Will Travel

Documentary Chronicles Craigslist's Virtual Community

And Carly's Vain Lover Is ...

Sports

Amorous Athletes

World's fastest couple: Tim Montgomery & Marion Jones

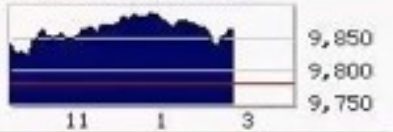
Roughing the Official

When Presidents Tee Off

citibank
Get $100 for banking online.
Details >

Markets

Dow Jones Industrials



DJIA	9,866.20	↑	82.74	+0.85%
Nasdaq	1,976.53	↑	16.27	+0.83%
S&P500	1,066.18	↑	7.98	+0.75%
10yr Tres. Yield		↑	4.40%	+0.08

© BigCharts.com 2:40 PM ET

COLUMBIA
School of Continuing Education

7-day Forecast

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

Features

Today's Highlights

Business

Advertisement

Marriott
HOTELS & RESORTS
Click for Rates
The Times
Online Edition · Mon Dec 1 11:39:17 PST 2003
TIFFANY & CO.
Search:
In Today's Chronicle
Sections
Loose
'Bunker Buster' Missiles Aim at Moon
Troops From Iraq War Can't Donate Blood
Local News
Sports
Amorous Athletes
World's fastest couple: Tim Montgomery & Marion Jones
Rounding the Official
When Presidents Tee Off
citibank
Get $100 for banking online.
Markets
Dow Jones Industrials
COLUMBIA
7-day Forecast
Monday
Tuesday
Wednesday
Thursday
Friday
Saturday
Sunday
Features
Today's Highlights
Business
Tone Deaf to a Moral Dilemma?
Some Bosses Never Meet a Success That Isn't Theirs
Entertainment
Technology
Recycling Not Easy for PC Makers
Video Games Add Soundtracks
BE THANKFUL FOR EVERYTHING FOR SOON THERE WILL BE NOTHING
verizon

What happened?

- Blurbs ***relax timers***, and make users digest more information

What did not happen…

- Blurbs do ***not*** change significantly users will to go on with the navigation (!)
- But… they cause a bigger ***return rate*** to the page (about **+20%**)

Other non-obvious fact…

- Do you think it is the same information or not?

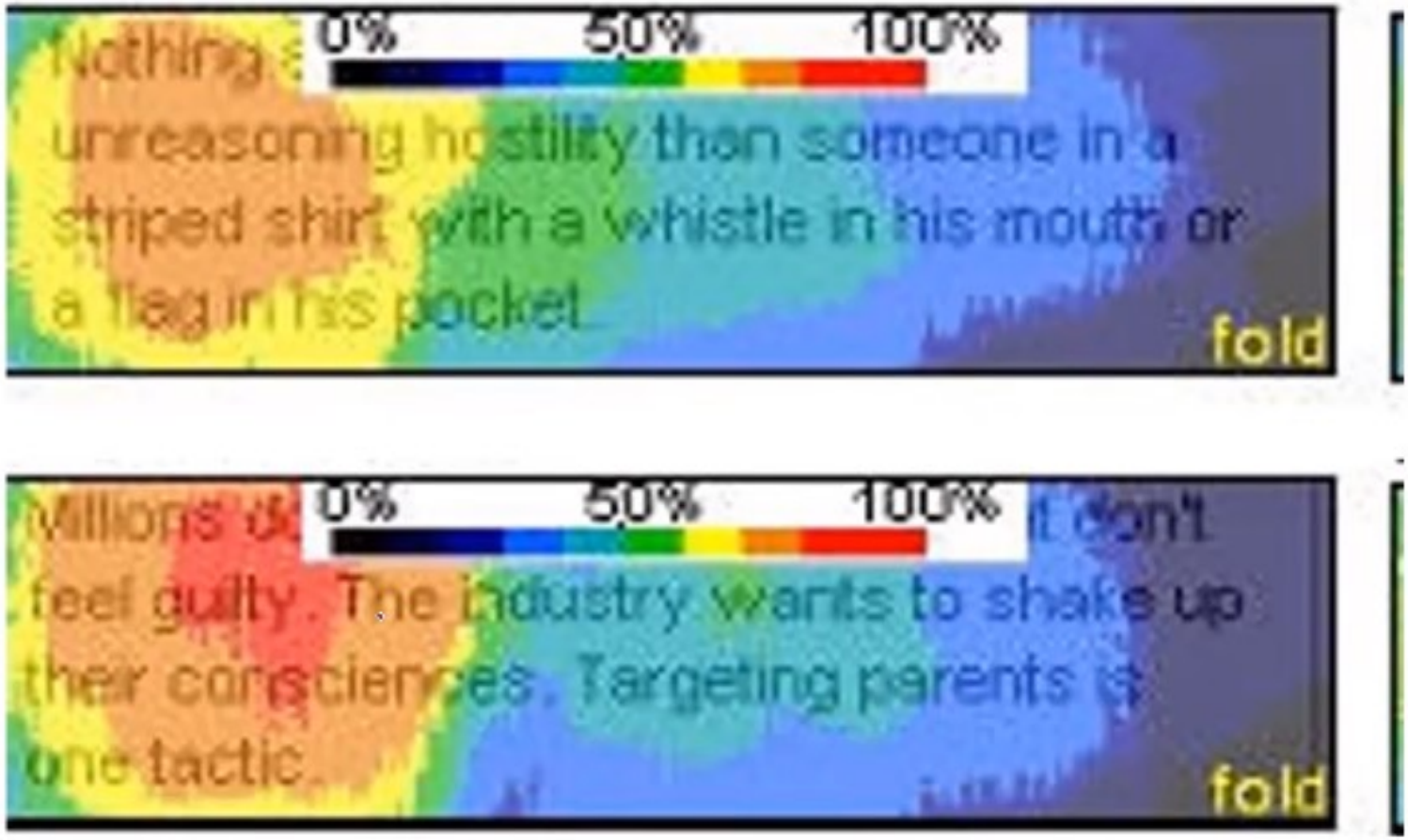
  Do you think it is the same information or not?

The blurb content…

- … can be perceived in different ways, as it is not just seen as a single text block by users:
- Like a web page, it can be itself divided into various zones

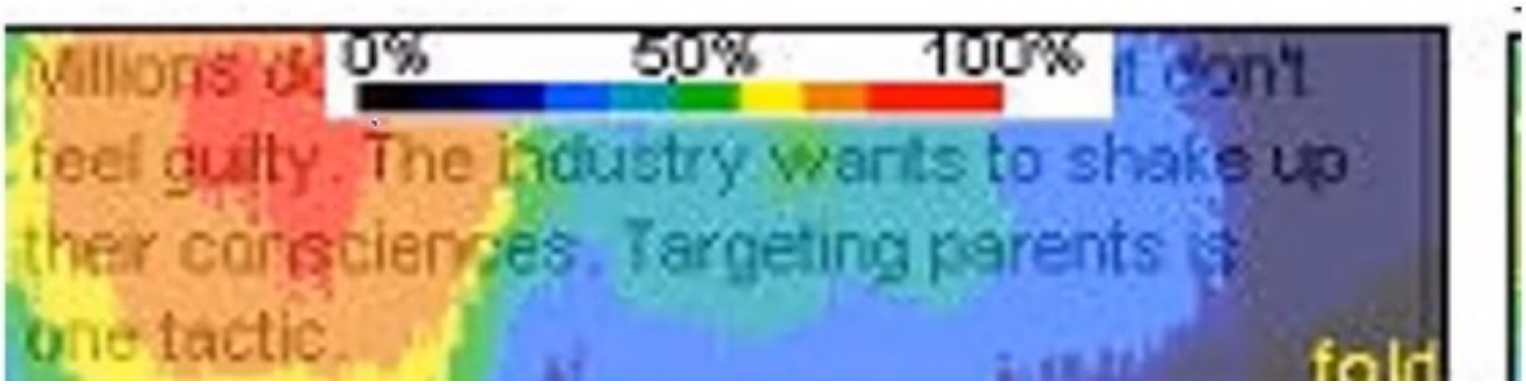
Blurb structure

- It is perceived asymmetrically: the ***left*** part is much more important (!)



So…

- It is important to know that blurbs (and paragraphs too!) are asymmetrical: the leftmost part is well assimilated, the rightmost not so well



the main difference between Europe and USA

Another Eternal Battle...

- Better skinny or fat?
  (compact pages or not?)

Marriott HOTELS & RESORTS Click for Rates

BAY CITY TIMES-DEMOCRAT

Internet Edition

Online Edition · Tue Feb 3 15:13:59 MST 2004 Search: In The Times-Democrat

American Express® Cardmembers enjoy special offers, including an extra 15% off.

Come Out and Play℠ summer weekend rates from $79/night.

Top Story

A Warrior for Peace

Is it counterintuitive to hope Wesley Clark might provide the same wisdom Eisenhower did?

Other News

The Great Educator Escape

Teachers are fleeing faster than ever as schools work to keep them.

AIDS Becoming a 'Young Person's Disease'

Half of all new infections are occurring in the 15-24 age group, an alarming UN survey finds.

Regional

We're No. 2 in Gridlock

Study finds traffic congestion bad and getting worse, especially in L.A.

Experts Warn Boaters to Look Out for Sea Otters

California's sea otters are being victimized by reckless boaters, who have rammed and killed an unusually large number of the marine creatures this month.

California Rushes Into Power Production

The push to build plants raises environmental concerns and questions about permit practices.

Sports

The Next Yao Ming?

NBA scouts are scouring China for another giant with the skills of last season's sensational rookie. This 6-ft. 11-in. teenager just might be the one.

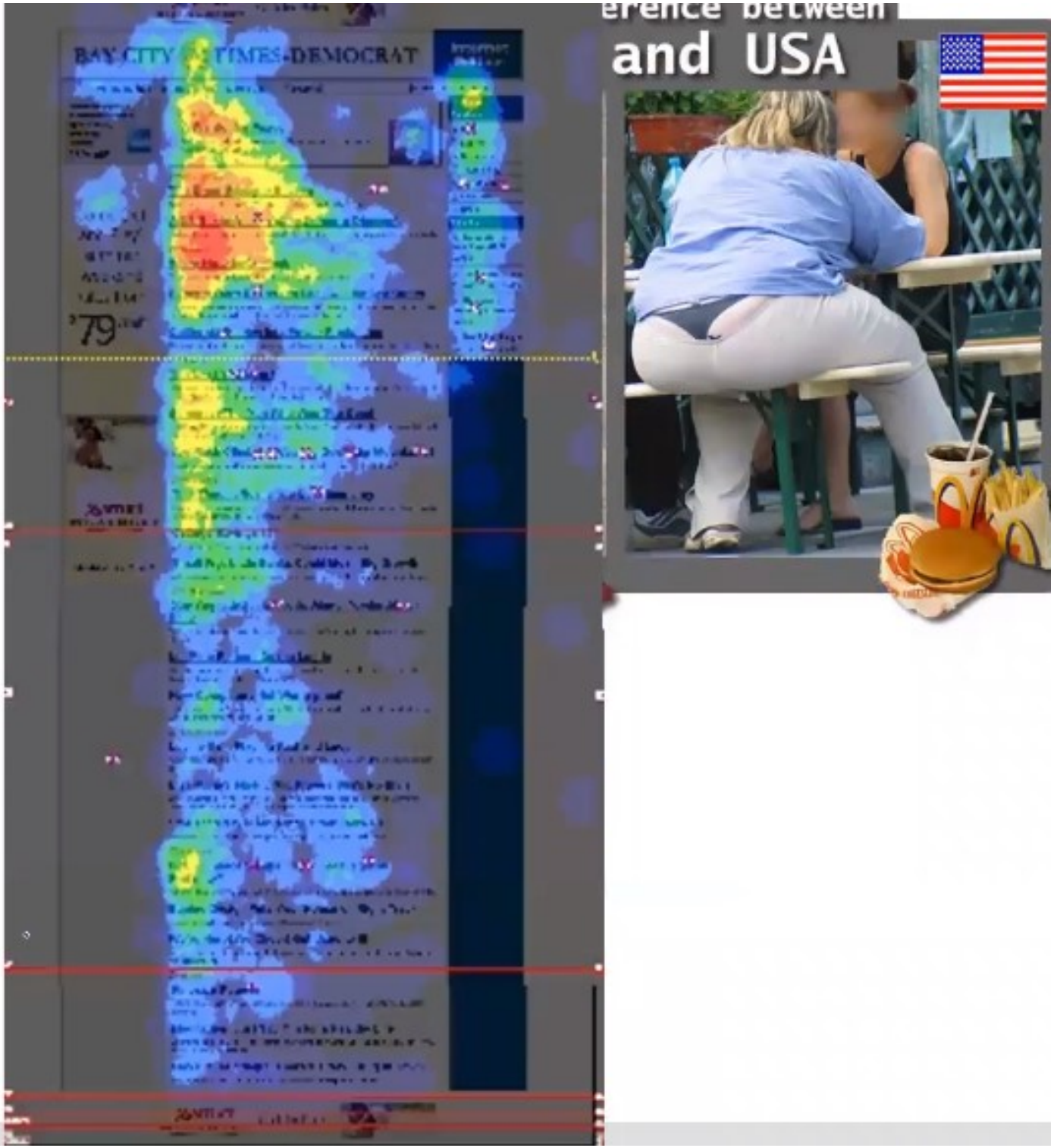
Home

Sections

- News
- Sports
- Business
- Technology
- Entertainment
- Lifestyle
- Health

AP Wire

- Poison Ricin Found in Sen. Frist's Office
- Edwards, Clark hope to stop Kerry sweep
- Stewart team questions Faneuil reputation
- U.N. team to assist in Iraq transition


BAY CITY TIMES-DEMOCRAT
erence between
and USA

So we need to pay attention…

- … to find the right compromise between ***separation*** but also ***compactness*** of information
- Excessive separation doesn't imply better usability, but actually causes the so-called **diluted design**

So there is tension…

- Separation brings to faster scanning, useful for ***navigation*** pages with ***links*** and little scroll
- For pages with ***content*** and ***scroll***, separation instead works badly, and creates diluted design

Let's switch now…

- … to the «secondary» part, ***images***
- We already saw they are «B series» when compared to text, but they are anyway important!
- For instance, remember the discussion on (e-)commerce

The user wants to see...

- So, how big should the images be? Is there a minimum size?
- Answer: yes, at least ***210x230 pixels***
- Below this size, images are too small (ok for icons but not for images)

Moreover…

- … pay attention because 210x230 is the minimum suggested size in normal conditions
- But when in competition (images versus text) thing can change…

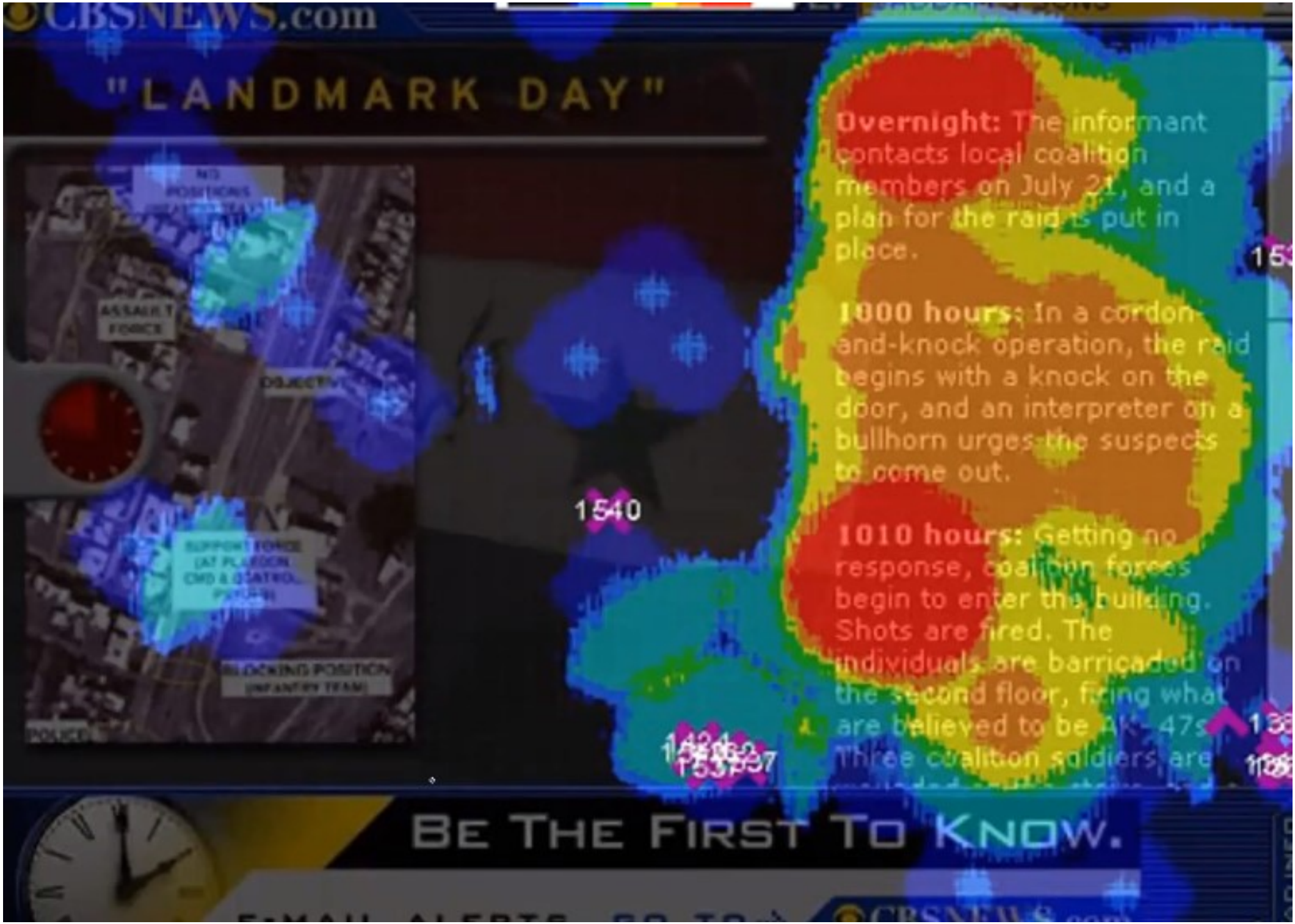
CBSNEWS.com INTERACTIVE: SADDAM'S SONS

SADDAM'S SONS

- GO **THE RAID:** Minute-By-Minute Details
- GO **PHOTOS:** Evidence Of Their Deaths
- GO **BIOGRAPHY:** Odai Hussein
- GO **BIOGRAPHY:** Qusai Hussein
- GO **FAMILY TREE:** Saddam's Wives & Children
- GO **PHOTOS:** Feared And Powerful Men
- GO **GALLERY:** Iraq's Most Wanted Cards
- GO **VIDEO ARCHIVE:** Home Movies, The U.S. Raid

CBS NEWS VIDEO
ONLINE. ON DEMAND.
ALWAYS FREE. GO

AD INFO


CBSNEWS.com
"LANDMARK DAY"
Overnight: The informant contacts local coalition members on July 21, and a plan for the raid is put in place.
1000 hours: In a cordon-and-knock operation, the raid begins with a knock on the door, and an interpreter on a bullhorn urges the suspects to come out.
1010 hours: Getting no response, coalition forces begin to enter the building. Shots are fired. The individuals are barricaded on the second floor, firing what are believed to be AK-47s. Three coalition soldiers are
1540
BE THE FIRST TO KNOW.

Moreover…

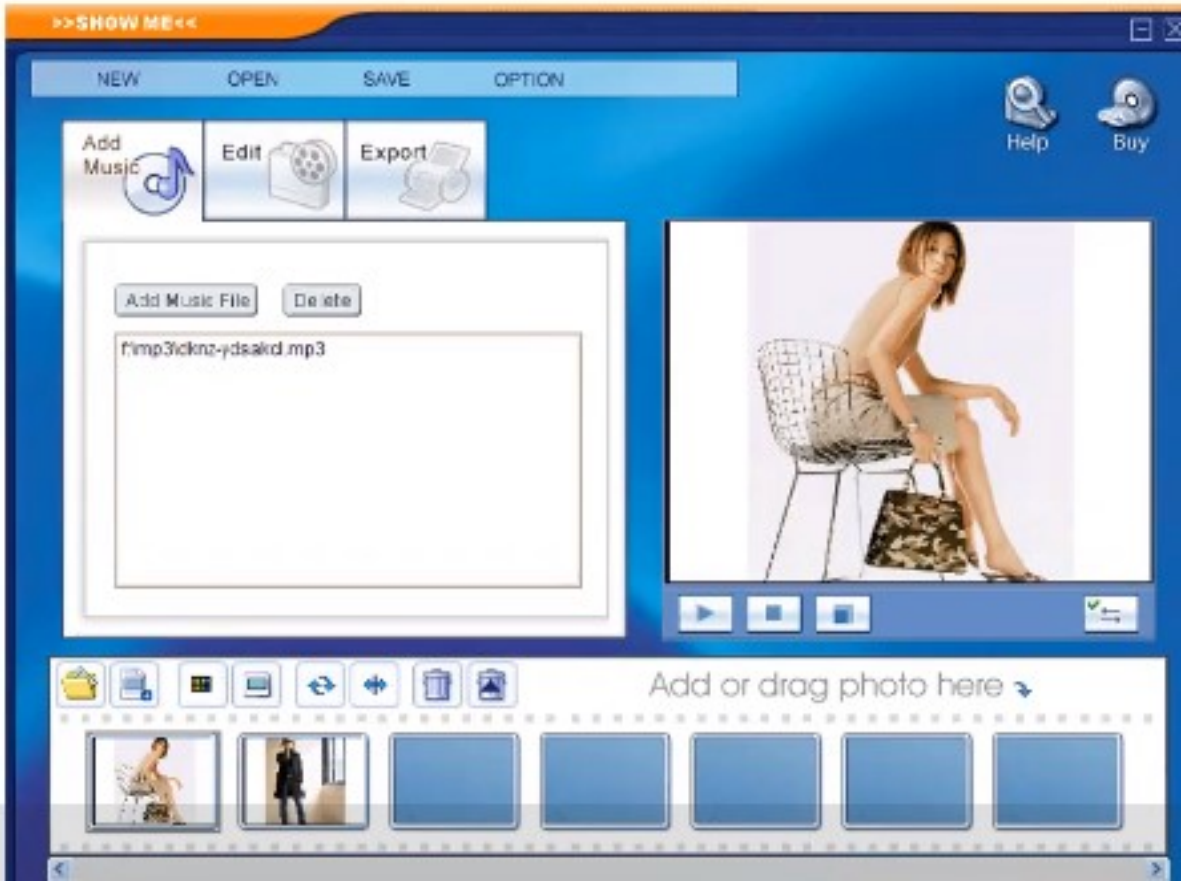
- Images have a peculiar property
- Even if they fall behind text for users' priority, they create a ***magnet effect***

The Magnet Effect

- Images attracts clicks (!)
- How much?
- Minimum 20% of users
- So, it is important to welcome this property and make users happy: images should all be clickable

Example of implications…

- … on «slideshow-like» presentations…



50 Years of Corvettes

PLAY | STOPPED

The 2003 Chevrolet Corvette 50th Anniversary Coupe. This collectors' edition is also available as a convertible.

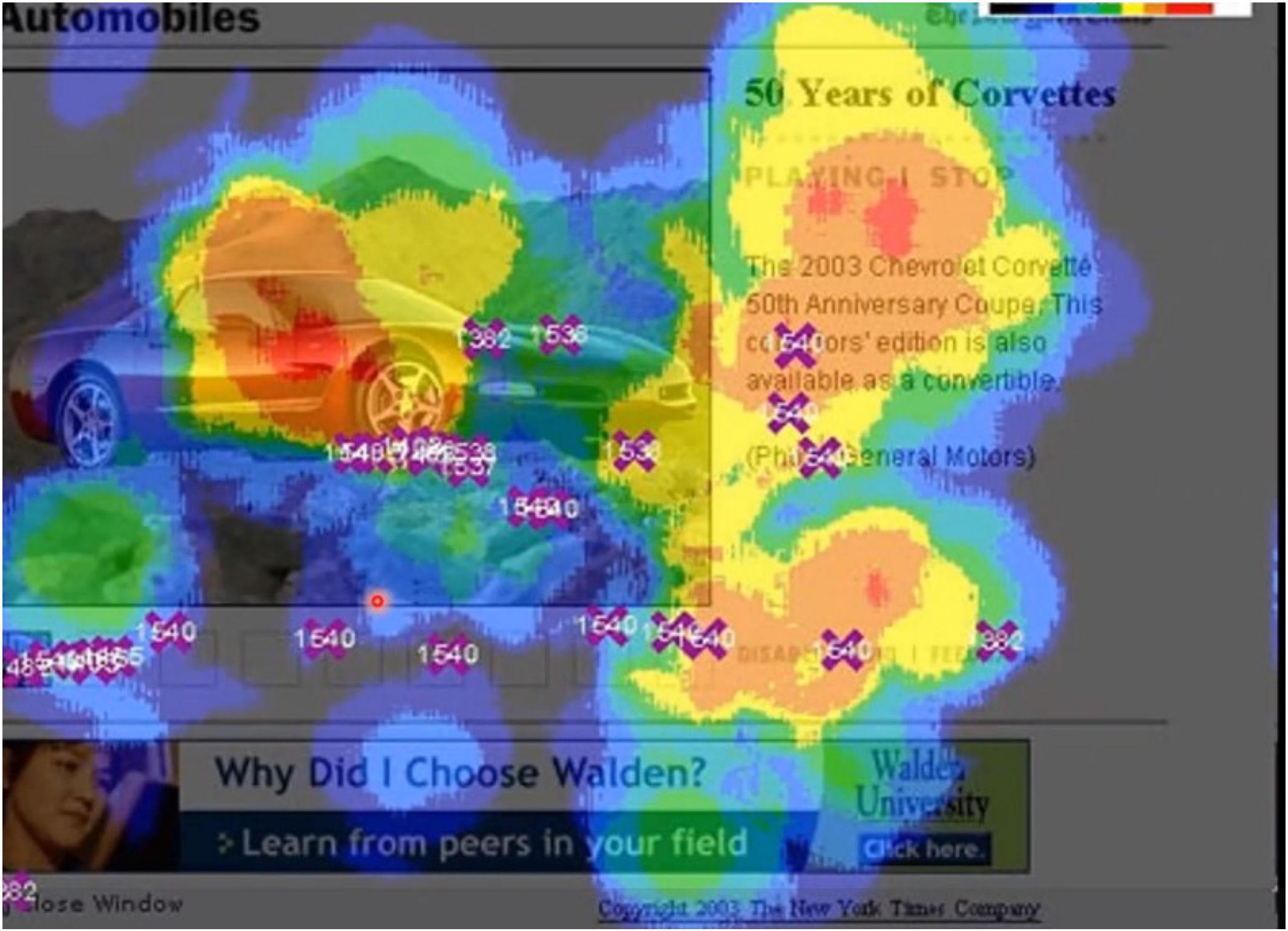
(Photo: General Motors)

DISABLE AUDIO | FEEDBACK

Jump-start your business day.

nytimes.com

Copyright 2003 The New York Times Company


Automobiles
50 Years of Corvettes
The 2003 Chevrolet Corvette 50th Anniversary Coupe. This
available as a convertible.
(Photo: General Motors)
Why Did I Choose Walden?
Learn from peers in your field
Walden University
click here.
Close Window
Copyright 2003 The New York Times Company

Additional moral

- The user always wants to be in control: be careful to instances that take some control away, and in any case leave always an ***easy way out***!

Summing up for the moment…

- We better understood the attractive capacities of many elements in web (and not only web…) pages
- Is there something missing?

The missing piece…

- One thing is still missing: **time**
- We talked about absolute times, but we didn't face the problem of its dynamic nature: accessing parts of the page

Thankfully…

- There is a beautiful result that comes to the rescue

The general problem

Fitts Law

$$T = a + b \log_2 \left(1 + \frac{D}{W} \right)$$

- a = start /stop
- b = co-speed («slowness»)
- D = distance
- W = width

Example

- ***Point-and-click*** or ***drag-and-drop***?
- Drag-and-drop has a bigger co-speed b (→ slower speed!), because of muscle fatigue
- So, drag-and-drop should actually be ***avoided*** in web (and more…) interfaces, if it can be substituted with point-and-click!

$$T = a + b \log_2 \left(1 + \frac{D}{W} \right)$$

Implications of Fitts

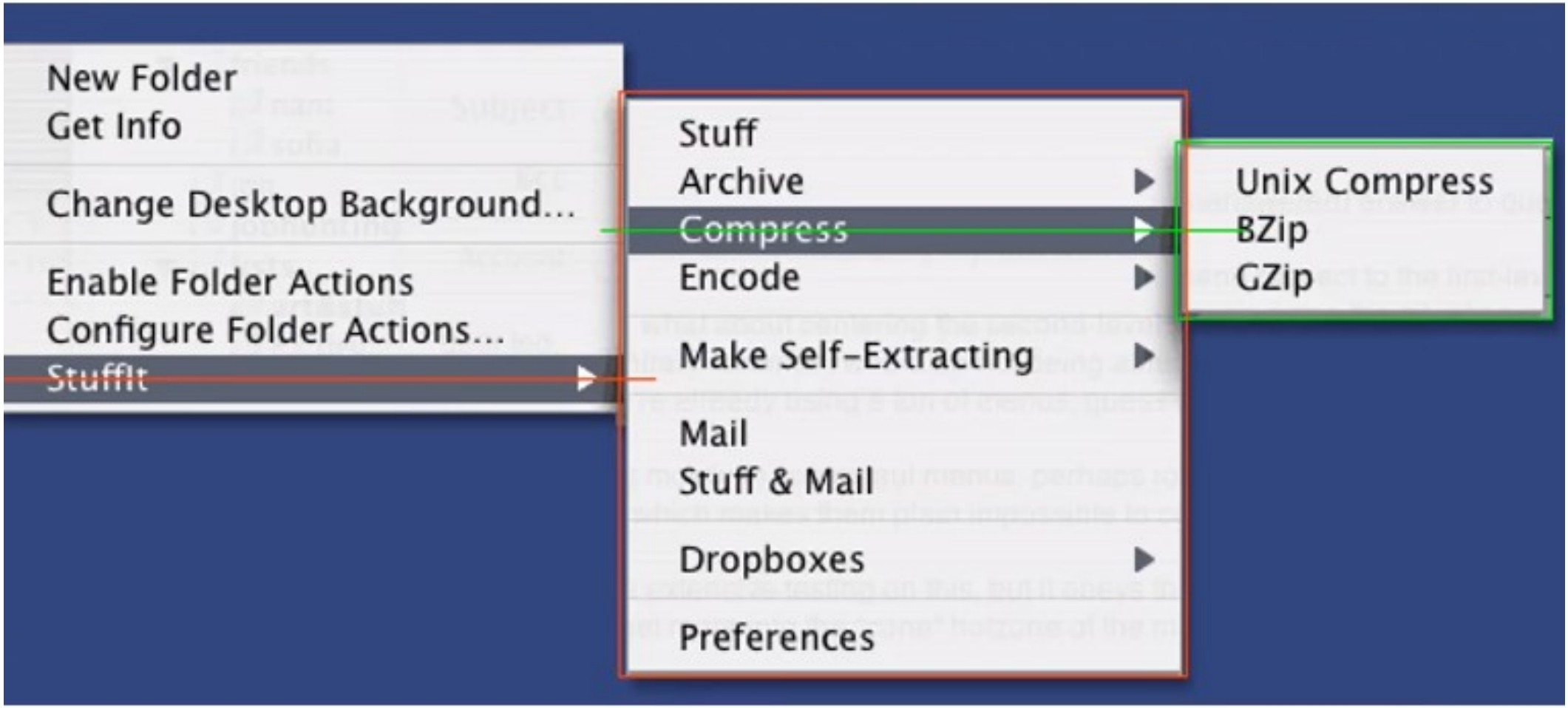
- Bigger objects are much easier to click!
- → Minimize object distances, and/or…
- Break the implicit rules that objects should have the same size: closer objects can be smaller, and objects far away can be made bigger!

$$T = a + b \log_2 \left(1 + \frac{D}{W} \right)$$

Example

- Now we can better understand, beyond what we said earlier, why people in general dislike menus
- It is true a menu keeps commands close by, but as seen with Fitts, ***proximity is not the only factor*** (!)

Example of Fitts-menu: balanced menus...

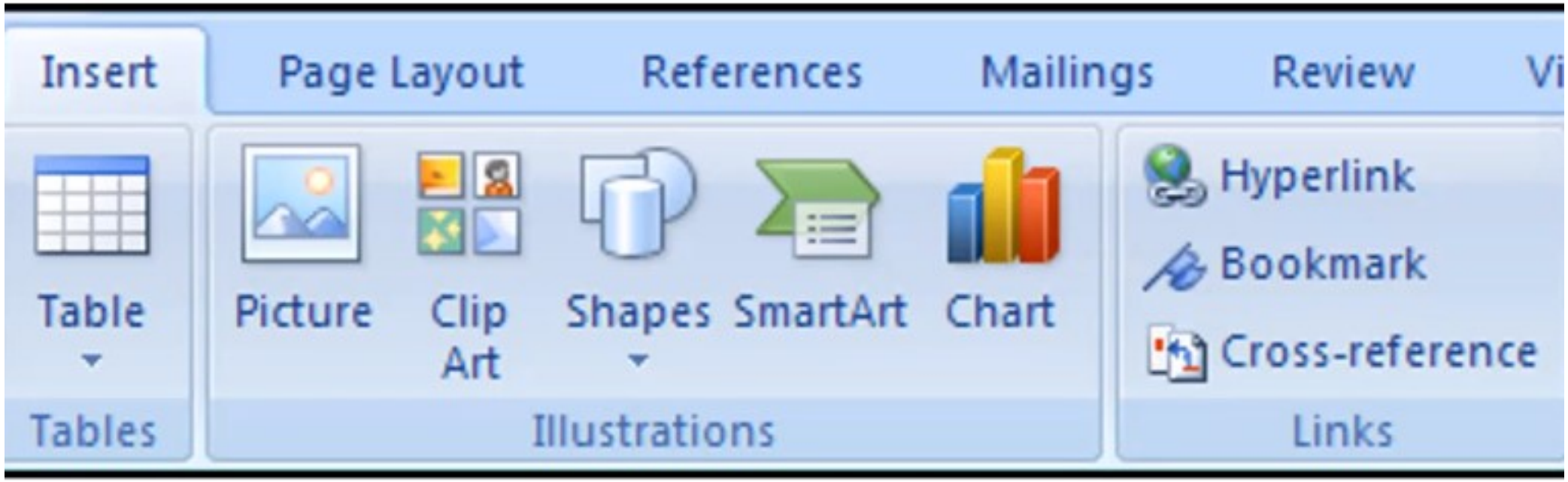


Other implication…

- The so-called ***Target Size Rule***
- Size of a button should be proportional to its usage frequency (!)

Example

- Redesign in Microsoft Office



A note of warning...

- Regarding the constants and the applicability of Fitts, which also depends on the media
- For instance, does Fitts also apply to touchscreens?

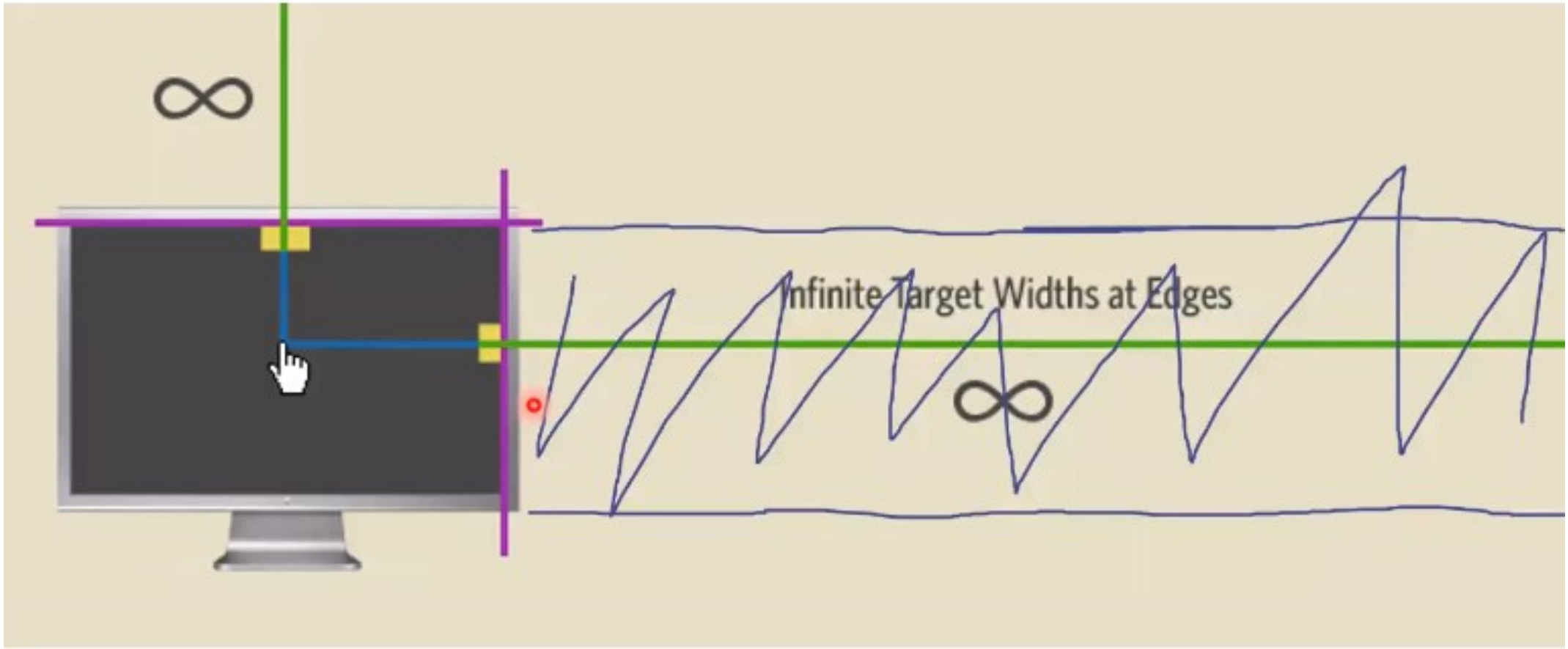
Not quite!

Target Width
Start
Initial Movement Phase
HIGH VELOCITY
Final Movement Phase
DECELERATION

Now let's see some complications…

- Whoever read Fitts original research…?? (!)
- Fitts was born flat… (!)
- Let's do a quiz…

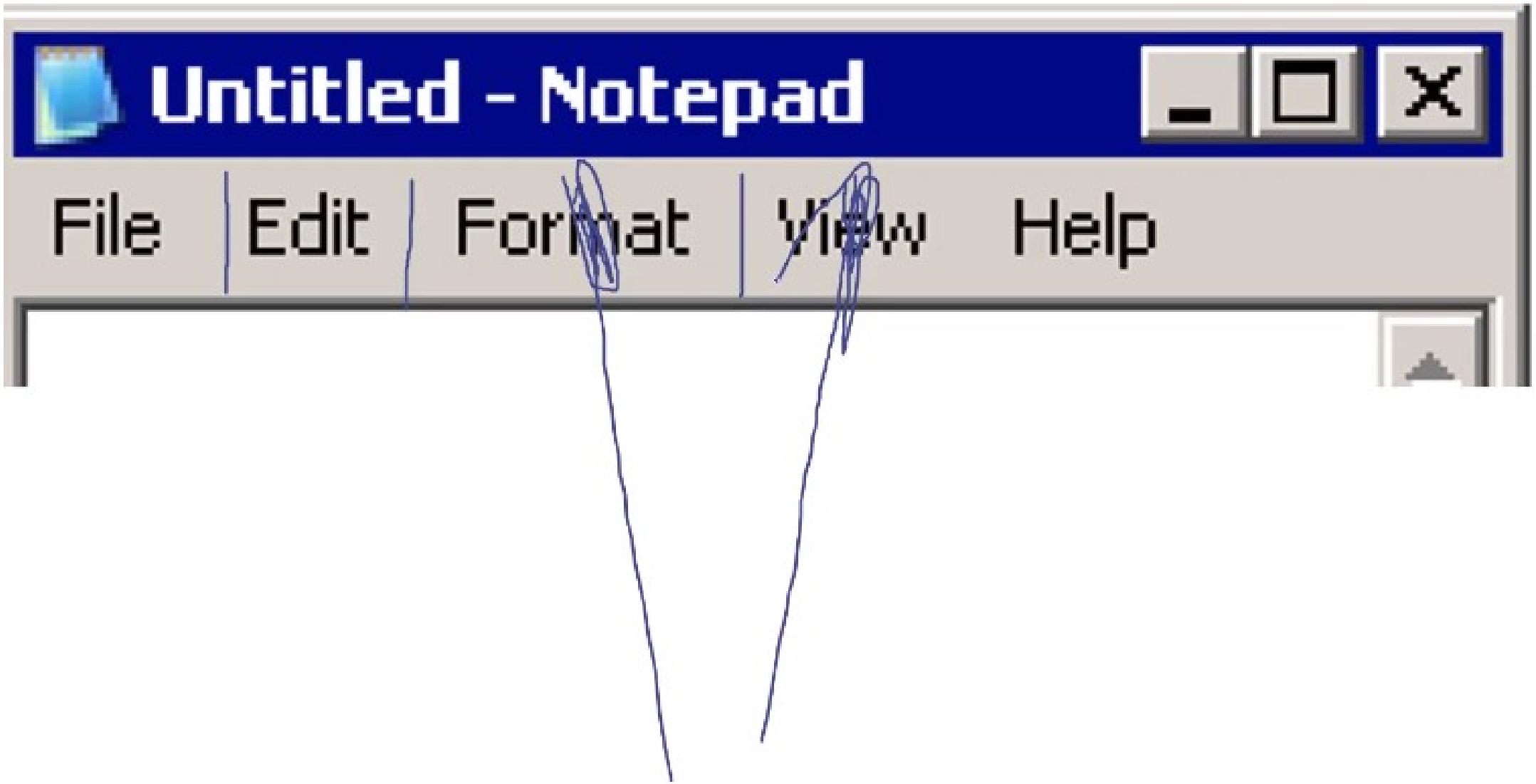
The borders!



So...

- It is much easier to go to the opposite side of the screen, rather than clicking an object that just a few pixels away (!)

Windows-style



Mac-style

TextEdit
File
Edit
Format
Window
Help
Fri 11:52 PM
Jim Midnite
New ⌘N
Open... ⌘O
Open Recent
Close ⌘W
Save ⌘S
Save As... ⇧⌘S
Save All
Revert to Saved
Show Properties ⌥⌘P
Page Setup... ⇧⌘P
Print... ⌘P
brochure data.txt
Read Me — DivX 5.2.1
Read Me — Readiris 7.0
Photoshop Read Me.rtf
Clear Menu
17

Result

- Mac-style menus are about ***5 times faster*** than those windows-style
- → Consequence, for instance, the…
- **TASK BAR**, which has been developed ***afterwards***, following Fitts law (!)