

# Recognition and Recall in UX Design

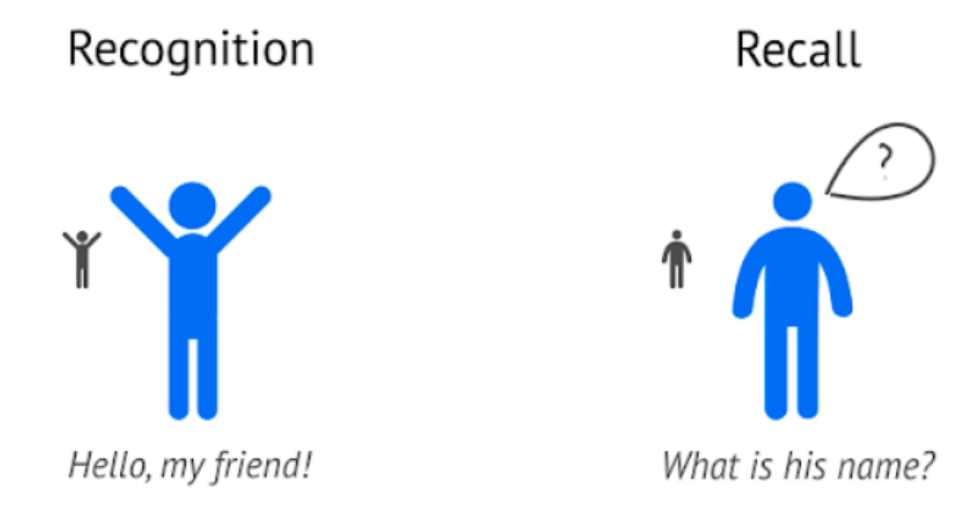
By Anahita Sanandaji



**Oregon State**  
University

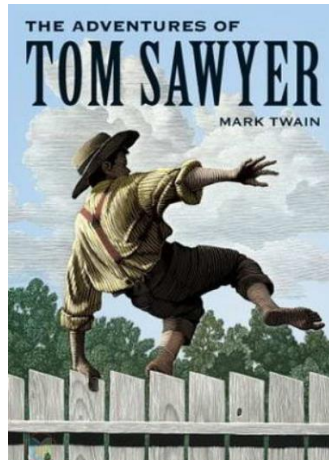
# Introduction

- **Recognition:** Our ability to “recognize” an event or piece of information as being familiar
  - Example: recognizing a familiar person in street.
- **Recall:** The retrieval of related details from memory.
  - Example: Coming up with the name of the familiar person in street (More difficult!)



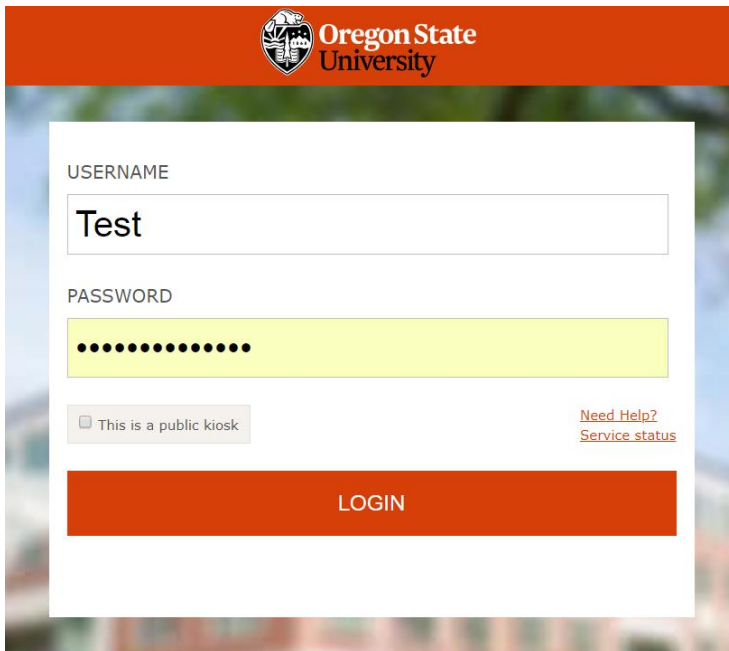
# Recognition vs. Recall

- The big difference is in the amount of **cues** that can help the memory retrieval:
  - Recall involves fewer cues than recognition therefore harder than recognition
  - Example:
    - “Did Mark Twain wrote The Adventures of Tom Sawyer?” → involves recognition, Why?
    - “Who wrote The Adventures of Tom Sawyer?” → involves recall

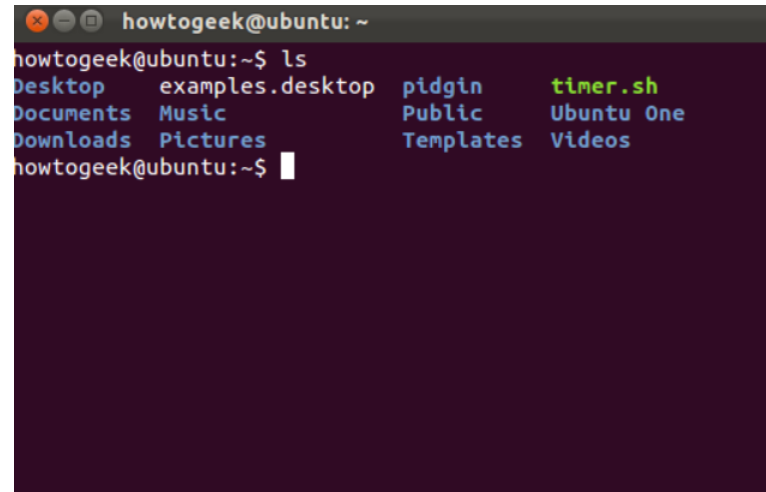


# Example of Recall in User Interfaces

- The classic example: Login to a site or app.
  - You have to remember both a username (or email) and a password.
  - You receive very few cues to help you with that memory retrieval
  - Some people make it easier for themselves by:
    - Using the same credentials everywhere! (BAD)
    - Creating a password that is related to a specific site, for example: “myOnidpassword” for your OSU access
- Another example: Command-line interfaces are based on recall



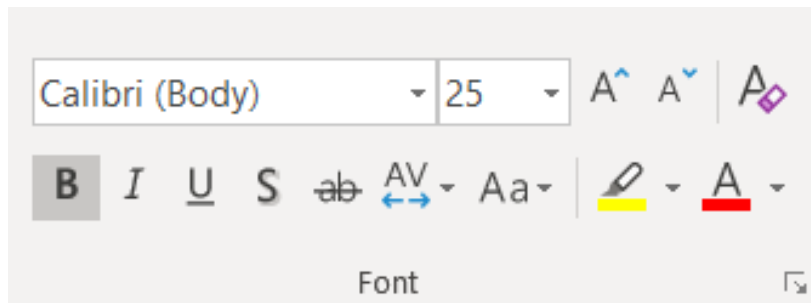
The screenshot shows the Oregon State University login interface. At the top, there is an orange header with the Oregon State University logo and name. Below the header, the login form is displayed on a background image of a campus scene. The form includes a 'USERNAME' field with the text 'Test' entered, a 'PASSWORD' field with masked characters (dots), a checkbox labeled 'This is a public kiosk', and a 'LOGIN' button. There are also links for 'Need Help?' and 'Service status'.



```
howtogeek@ubuntu: ~  
howtogeek@ubuntu:~$ ls  
Desktop    examples.desktop  pidgin    timer.sh  
Documents  Music              Public    Ubuntu One  
Downloads  Pictures           Templates Videos  
howtogeek@ubuntu:~$
```

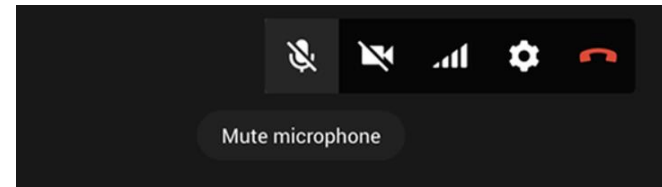
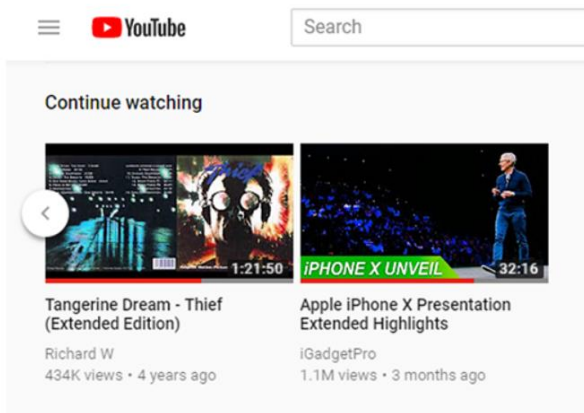
# Example of Recognition in User Interfaces

- The classic example: Menu system
  - System shows you the available commands, and you recognize the one you want
  - To use Bold in word application, just recognize the **B**



# Promote Recognition in Your Design!

- Make the content and the interface of your design easy to remember, visible and accessible!
- Visual aids, such as tooltips and context-sensitive details, also help support users in recognizing information.
- Examples:
  - YouTube uses recognition instead of recall by showing users lists of items they recently watched.



# Conclusion

- How easily information can be retrieved from memory depends on:
  - How often some one encountered that information
  - How recently used that information,
  - How much it is related to the current context.
- Richer contexts (like those present when we use recognition rather than recall) make memory retrieval easier.
- Interfaces that promote recognition give users extra help in remembering information
- Don't forget to Promote recognition in You Designs

# Resources

For more information take a look at these resource as well:

1. [Web Design and Usability Analysis](#)
2. [The 15 Rules Every UX Designer Should Know](#)
3. [The 4 Golden Rules of UI Design](#)
4. [Memory Recognition and Recall in User Interfaces](#)