13. It’s a Myth That Capital Letters are Inherently Hard to Read

The second part of the psychology of design is all about how people read. Item 13 is about the Myth of capital letters being harder to read than lowercase letters. That isn’t true. We don’t read capital letters as often as smaller case ones, so we need time to practice. Here is a visual example:

“I want to go to the store to buy Baulder’s Gate 3.”

“I WANT TO GO TO THE STORE TO BUY BAULDER’S GATE 3.”

While the second sentence may take you more time to read, it isn’t any harder. Our eyes jump quickly with short bursts of stillness in between. By this logic, the actions required to read don’t make a distinction between bigger letters or small letters.

17. Reading a Computer Screen is Harder than Reading Paper

I don’t find this principle surprising at all. When I read a book, it is easier for me to focus and pay greater attention to the material. When I read text from a screen, I often move my eyes elsewhere are get distracted by some other image. The book explains this by stillness of the image of book versus that of a computer screen. Paper reflects light while screens emit it. If you happen to go to a website and find it hard to read, the background image and text probably aren’t helping. I could not find a bad example, but in the early days of the internet, it was easy to find a website that had similar background and text colors making thing impossible to read.