

# Entry Point

A point of physical or attentional entry into a design.

People do judge books by their covers, Internet sites by their first pages, and buildings by their lobbies. This initial impression of a system or environment greatly influences subsequent perceptions and attitudes, which then affects the quality of subsequent interactions. This impression is largely formed at the entry point to a system or environment. For example, entering many Internet sites entails going through a slow-loading splash screen, followed by a slow-loading main page, followed by several pop-up windows with advertisements—all this to enter a site that may or may not have the information the person was looking for. Such errors in entry point design annoy visitors who make it through, or deter visitors altogether. Either way, it does not promote additional interaction. The key elements of good entry point design are minimal barriers, points of prospect, and progressive lures.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, *Why We Buy: The Science of Shopping* by Paco Underhill, Touchstone Books, 2000; *Hotel Design, Planning, and Development* by Walter A. Rutes, Richard H. Penner, Lawrence Adams, W. W. Norton & Company, 2001; and “The Stanford-Poynter Eyetracking Study” by Marion Lewenstein, Greg Edwards, Deborah Tatar, and Andrew DeVigal, <http://www.poynterextra.org>.

## Minimal Barriers

Barriers should not encumber entry points. Examples of barriers to entry are highly trafficked parking lots, noisy displays with many unnecessary elements, salespeople standing at the doors of retail stores, or anything that impedes people from getting to and moving through an entry point. Barriers can be aesthetic as well as functional in nature. For example, a poorly maintained building front or landscape is an aesthetic barrier to entry.

## Points of Prospect

Entry points should allow people to become oriented and clearly survey available options. Points of prospect include store entrances that provide a clear view of store layout and aisle signs, or Internet pages that provide good orientation cues and navigation options. Points of prospect should provide sufficient time and space for a person to review options with minimal distraction or disruption—i.e., people should not feel hurried or crowded by their surroundings or other people.

## Progressive Lures

Lures should be used to attract and pull people through the entry point. Progressive lures can be compelling headlines from the front page of a newspaper, greeters at restaurants, or the display of popular products or destinations (e.g., restrooms) just beyond the entry point of a store. Progressive lures get people to incrementally approach, enter, and move through the entry point.

Maximize the effectiveness of the entry point in a design by reducing barriers, establishing clear points of prospect, and using progressive lures. Provide sufficient time and space for people to review opportunities for interaction at the entry point. Consider progressive lures like highlighting, entry point greeters, and popular offerings visibly located beyond the entry point to get people to enter and progress through.

See also Immersion, Prospect-Refuge, and Wayfinding.

Apple Computer retail stores maintain the high standards of design excellence for which Apple is known. The stores appear more like museums than retail shops, creating tempting visual spectacles that are hard to pass by.

The redesign of the *Wall Street Journal* creates a clear entry point to each edition by highlighting the region of the page containing news summaries. The summaries also act as a point of prospect, allowing readers to quickly scan for stories of interest with no competing visual barriers. Page references on select summaries act as progressive lures, leading readers to the full articles in different sections of the paper.



Apple Retail Store  
Level 1

