

## Define Web user's behaviour?

If web surfers behaved all alike, if there were strict patterns in users' behaviour, wouldn't all publishers be on a sunny beach right now, with a fancy-colored cocktail, worrying not about AdSense optimization matters?

Web user's behaviour depends on two main groups of variables: the user-related one and the website-related one.

### A) User-related Behavior Variables

Though people react very differently at various stimuli, we can identify some peculiarities specific to web surfers. The behaviour is much like yours. Have you considered watching your own actions while surfing on the web? This might help if you want to improve your site's appeal to readers, especially if you sell something or if you want your visitors to click on your ads.

Several groups of variables that influence users' behaviour can be identified:

- \* Components of the mental processes involved while searching and browsing on the Internet: attention, awareness, language, mental imagery etc.
- \* The behavior of websurfers is influenced also by their subjective approach to matters, determined by temperamental characteristics, such as mood, patience and their purpose and degree of interest.
- \* Also, users act differently varying with how used they are to web surfing.

Let's see how we can tweak our websites to turn these to our advantage (and turn visitors into "clickers"):

#### 1. Mental processes

**Attention** - The web designer keeps the tools to direct readers' attention. A simple design, without unnecessary loading will prevent the reader from being distracted by unimportant elements. The ads placement must be done strategically, in a place impossible to overlook (recommended in the first paragraph, usually in the upper-left area). Pictures and graphics are considered attention-grabbers and will also be considered when choosing your ads' placement.

**Awareness** - This is a much debated topic. Opinions differ on readers' ads awareness. Some sustain that the more blended into content, the better, others say that this formatting will induce the readers the feeling of being "tricked" into clicking on ads, which they resent. I incline to say that blend-in ads work only for very well targeted ads, coming naturally as if belonging to the content. Positioning ads outside the content area would be effective mostly with advertising that builds brand awareness, based on image impressions.

**Mental Imagery** - Again, a pleasant, uncluttered design, a balanced look of the page contribute to a positive perception of the page from the part of the reader and to a more open state of mind. A professional layout is important. It inspires confidence, people don't want to purchase from a just any backyard business.

#### 2. Subjectiveness

**Patience** - A golden rule: don't abuse your readers' patience (for they usually don't have one)! Web pages must load quickly; ads must not be placed in readers' way and should be kept to a reasonable number.

**Purpose and Mood** - Are more related to the topic of your site and the type of content you publish. The idea is that users' purpose and mood can be influenced by copy.

**Degree of Interest** - Besides relevant, good content, that answers questions, the reader's interest is influenced by involvement and interaction. Keep your reader involved; integrate your ads into an interaction environment: these will work wonders on your CTR.

#### 3. User's Degree of Acquaintance with Web Surfing

Net savvy users has developed certain immunities, such as ad-blindness. These are less likely to click on any ads. Customizing ads for this type of readers means harder work; the result must be ads of high relevance (and remarkable ad texts!), with an aspect as close to the rest of the page as possible, as if they were a natural continuation of your ideas. Important! Avoid default formats.

## B) Site-related Variables

The type of the site and the topic attract visitors with different interests with different behavioral patterns.

### 1. Site Type — Readers vs Browsers

Whether the visitor is a “reader” or a “scanner/browser” depends also on the site type — content and topic. Generally, readers are regular visitors while “scanners” are the ones who look for information and will not spend too much time on the same site. Site topic and content are most times factors in bringing more “uniques” or more regular visitors. Though not as a rule, these apply to many sites:

**Sites Attracting Unique Visitors** - These are mostly commercial sites, content sites. Statistics say that unique visitors are more likely to be your clickers, for regular readers are more used to your pages' look and your ads. Contextual advertising works well with these sites. If you're headed for unique visitors, make your site “SE-friendly”. They come mostly from search engines and are said to be “pre-qualified” clickers. So, your efforts should be directed towards keywords and keyword phrases optimization. The ideal would be to go beyond the technicalities that are finding out what are the most searched for keywords in your area of preoccupations and try to find out why these are popular, try to find a behavioral pattern. This can be achieved by statistics and analysis. Find out some niches in your area and the users' behaviour within them — that is, lists of searches and then see what is it customers want. This will solve your puzzle and give you exact hints towards what works best for your site. Keep in mind: unique visitors are mostly “browsers”. Use ad placement and ad customization techniques that apply best for this type of users.

**Sites with Regular Visitors** - These are mostly forums, blogs and news sections (though news are somewhere in between). If you own sites with many bookmarks, that attract especially repeat visitors, then either you will be very imaginative in customizing your ads and finding new ways to interest your readers into clicking or if not the case, better use CPM based advertising. Brand bulding/reinforcement advertising works better in this case.

### 2. Site Theme Relates to Visitor's Mood and Purpose

**Commercial Sites** - Sites selling and promoting products are more suitable for CPC advertising. By their specific, this type of site will attract visitors looking for a specific product/service/business opportunity. Thus, users are more in a buying mood, are looking for a way to spend their money profitably. These are clickers.

**Content Sites, Blogs, and Forums** - Unless you market specific products, your readers will land on your page without the express purpose of buying something. However, you can influence your reader's mood and needs thru witty, sales-directed copywriting. You just need to know some basic things that sell. One is that people are more likely to buy from persons they know, like and trust.

So, what will help you build these? Good content and structure. Especially with content sites, these are fundamental issues to focus on (unlike commercial sites that focus more on products). Good content, professionally written and formatted for the web, containing information that is of high interest and relevance for the reader, within an easily manageable structure and good targeting on a specific theme are imperatives. On one hand these mean bulding confidence, the first step in selling. On the other hand they will attract well-targeted ads, more likely to interest your reader.

Great content will give you credit to your reader. Once you've gained trust, it's easy to direct your readers: you just give recommendations and the results will appear. (Avoid being too explicit in recommendations, though — for example, directing readers towards clicking on ads is against AdSense Program Policies.)

With blogs and forums, it is a different story. Not all forums and blogs are accepted for AdSense (or even if accepted, they must be also profitable). Only genuine, specifically-themed blogs and forums, with highly interesting content are suitable. These conditions being fulfilled, forums and blogs are perfect as a source of advertising money — they have what is very difficult for others to achieve: reader's trust, liking and involvement.

## About the Author

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