Writing web pages for the brain

What you see is not exactly what you get at first.

Scientists have known for some time that the brain has a neural pathway that first registers the same image that will be forthcoming from the sensory feedback of what your eyes focus on.

Because eye movement is so quick, your eyes are actually taking split-second before and after camera-like images. In order to make these images appear stable, the brain matches and integrates them into an image which is passed on to conscious awareness. But, **the image of what your see only makes sense if it matches your original brain image**.

This unique brain imaging may also explain why reading a web page is different than reading a physical page.

When it comes to a web page, both the brain and the eyes have to readjust. There may be a few seconds to sort out the structure and locate information. If it seems too confusing or takes too long, frustration sets in and focus and attention are lost. However, when the brain picks up on a pattern it recognizes and confirms it visually, focus and attention continue.

Brain recognition of the "F" pattern

Chris Mole a former journalist and current web designer and Internet marketer, recommends structuring an "F" pattern web based on a study by Jacob Nielsen who monitored the eye movements of 232 individuals looking at thousands of web pages.

While this idea of brain image recognition before eye

recognition is not widely know, it may explain why **an "F" pattern keeps a reader more connected to the page**. By having the brain first recognize a familiar pattern ("F") first and matching it with the visual conformation, the web page makes it easier to find the information and then have focus and attention.

According to Mole, web page readers will scan the longest line first, followed by shorter scans for text below and scan the left side column vertically. In order to effectively communicate information on a web page, he recommends –

- Relate a benefit in a compelling headline
- Place key information in the first two paragraphs
- Reinforce left side viewing with subheadings and bullet points.

While there are other design elements that capture the attention of both the brain and the eyes, **by following the "F" pattern the most important information on your web page will register first.**

Sources:

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