

Make money series 1: Web usability



First, a little introduction. Although we all want to live out the dream of earning all of our income from online advertising, it's quite obvious that this isn't done in a day. In this series I will try to share my knowledge in some areas, and maybe learn from the audience through comments. My knowledge concerns development (university degree & business) & communication (business). A lot of the work involves for me to get inside the users mind, and think like the user so that the interface is intuitive to the users. Watching the users try the interface and learn from the observations is also being used. Okay? So why do I need this info, example me!

You signed up for a text-link-ads program because they paid 0.1\$ more in pay-per-click, instead of your earlier images ads. Great! You think, I will now earn more revenue. Though, the result of your converting now resulted in some loss, and you don't know why.

Color blindness & poor sight

Did you know that one in 12 men, and one in 200 women has some kind of color blindness? You may also think about all the users with poor sight. Let's say your site has 5000 unique visitors a day, a simple calculation will result ($1/12 * 5000$) in 416. That means that in a situation 416 potential users may have not seen or have problems with viewing your ads. That's almost 10% not clicking your ads! In those situation keyword-relation doesn't mean a thing. What simple tasks can fix these to problems? Read upon color blindness, often some specific colors are subject of color blindness. Use contrast websites. As for users with poor sight, offer a way to increase the text on the site.

Short about ads

There are many ways to place ads, but concerning usability a few things comes to my mind. You may think. Hey! "If I have a blinking banner with strong colors, users will see it and therefore most likely click it." This might be right, but it must be placed with great care. If you place it alone and badly integrated to the site the users is most likely to ignore the ad subconsciously and proceed on the site, this is done because the users don't percept the ad as a part of the page. The [gestalt principles](#) explains some reasons for this. It also happens if you use (eg.) borders on images you can click, and no borders on images you can't click. Many ads don't come with borders, so in that situation your site should not use borders on images that is clickable. This because users won't perceive the ads as clickable.



Figure 1 - Placement example

The reason this is better is because the user now perceives the information the way we want. Now we need to integrate those ads well and we have a good basic for traffic. Now that you have placed ads, you may have several groups of ads (like shown on the images above) in your page. Maybe in the left and right sidebar. It is very important to distinct the different groupings of ads as they may have quite different results. There are many ways to do that. Find a script that distinct outgoing links, or use the channels setting in [Google AdSense](#). In AdSense you can make different channels for your ads. You can make a channel called "Left sidebar" and another one "Right sidebar", after

some time you might find the reason for that the “Left sidebar” is more effective than the other. This is it for now, I will close with some recommended reading.

Recommended reading

- [Jacob Nielsen's site. Great information about usability etc.](#)
- [Simulate colorblindness. Cool!](#)
- [Google about placement of ads.](#)

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