



Business Builder

Tips & Techniques to Help Your Business Grow

How We Really Use the Web Part #2

When designers are working on a webpage, they tend to assume that users will scan the page, consider all the available options, and choose the best one. In reality, though, most of the time we *don't* choose the best option—we choose the *first reasonable option*, a strategy known as **satisficing**.

As soon as we find a link that seems like it might lead to what we're looking for, there's a very good chance that we'll click it. You would think that people would stop and compare the two best options, but in reality, they don't compare *any* options. They take the first reasonable choice they see. Why?

- **We're usually in a hurry.** Optimizing choices is hard and takes too long. Satisficing is more efficient.
- **There's not much of a penalty for guessing wrong.** Unlike say, being a firefighter, the penalty for choosing the wrong course of action is usually just a click on the Back button. Of course, this assumes that pages load quickly; when they don't, we have to make choices more carefully—just one of the many reasons why most Web users are not patient with slow-loading pages, graphics or photos.
- **Weighing options may not improve our chances.** On poorly designed sites, putting effort into making the best choice doesn't really help. You're usually better off going with your first guess and using the Back button if it doesn't work out.
- **Guessing is more fun.** It's less work than weighing options, and if you guess right, it's faster. And it introduces an element of chance—the pleasant possibility of getting what you want on the first click!

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