



# Seekers & browsers

How building diverse purchase paths can increase conversions



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## The goal: Serve each individual, individually

When there is endless data about each individual, the challenge is to harness our knowledge to treat each individual as an individual.

“...People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”  
- Maya Angelou

Years ago, when retailers actually knew their individual customers in the physical world, the butcher knew to offer Mrs. Jones the nicer cuts, whereas Mr. Smith preferred whatever was on sale. The florist could subtly direct Mrs. Jones to the flowers nearing the end of their shelf-life, while making sure they matched the color scheme of her living room. Retailers knew that how each customer felt vis-à-vis their establishment could make or break their business.

Today, the e-commerce ecosystem has reached a level of sophistication we could only have dreamed of a decade ago. With competition only a click away, online retailers truly appreciate what small-town retailers understood so well: successful product marketing is all about looking at your products and services from the customer’s point of view.

In the digital arena, there are more customers and prospects than the local butcher or florist ever imagined. And there are endless sources of detailed data about these individuals. The challenge facing online retail today is no longer what we know about each of our millions of customers and prospects. Rather, retailers today need to focus on effectively harnessing this knowledge to treat each individual as an individual.

**In this third paper of the Clicktale Psychology and Customer Experience Series, we examine how retailers can identify intentionality of shopper behavior and differentiate between goal-oriented buyers and casual browsers.**

*Make sure to read the other three papers in the Psychology and Customer Experience Series:*



**Different people, different clicks.**

Harnessing buyer personality insights to grow your online business



**Women connect. Men choose.**

How to leverage gender difference to grow your online business



**Rational actors, emotional reactors.**

How leveraging emotion-based learning can yield business results

## Goal-oriented visitors vs. casual browsers

People process information via two distinct routes: central and peripheral.

### In theory

The dual process theory of the human mind defines, among other things, two distinct routes by which people process information: central and peripheral. These routes are reflected in or influence an individual's state of mind, and are themselves influenced by motivation (a desire to process the message) and ability (available cognitive resources).

**A central route** is taken when a person is motivated to generate thoughts in response to substantive content – for example, a shopper who compares prices of similar products. The central route is controlled by higher-level brain areas, and reflects rational thinking.

**A peripheral route** is taken when someone is unable or unwilling to execute a cognitive assignment. This route is controlled by emotional brain areas, and uses heuristics and cognitive biases when cognitive resources or the motivation required to process information are lacking.



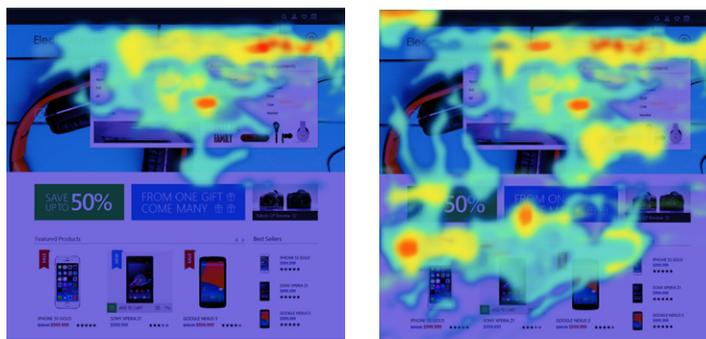
### In practice

The dual process theory is key to understanding shopper intent. It is supported by the observable differences between goal-oriented visitors - who visit a website for a specific reason - and casual browsers who are just passing time, checking out what a website has to offer, or seeking entertainment.

A recent analysis conducted by Clicktale illustrates the distinctive patterns of behavior of these two groups.

The first group comprised visitors who arrived intentionally at a sub-section of a site using the site's primary navigation. The second group was made up of visitors who arrived at that same sub-section after being automatically redirected there from a video on the homepage.

Goal-oriented visitors ignored featured page elements and went directly to navigational elements. Browsers leisurely examined featured articles and showed interest in colorful, captivating images.

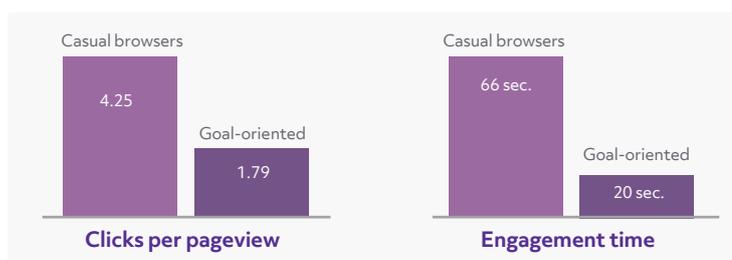


The differences in behavioral patterns were very clear. Goal-oriented visitors (those who navigated to the page on purpose) ignored the page's featured elements and went directly to navigational elements like search and the "Browse Alphabetically" menu that showcased the site's assets. For these visitors, the central route was clearly active.

Visitors who were automatically redirected to the page, however, leisurely examined the featured articles and images, showing interest in colorful and captivating images. These visitors ignored informative text and demonstrated no interest in the Search box. For them, the peripheral route had taken control.

Clicktale analyzed the behavioral patterns of each group above, and uncovered a number of significant differences:

- Casual browsers were engaged with the page three times longer than goal-oriented visitors
- Casual browsers scrolled all the way down the page; goal-oriented visitors did not



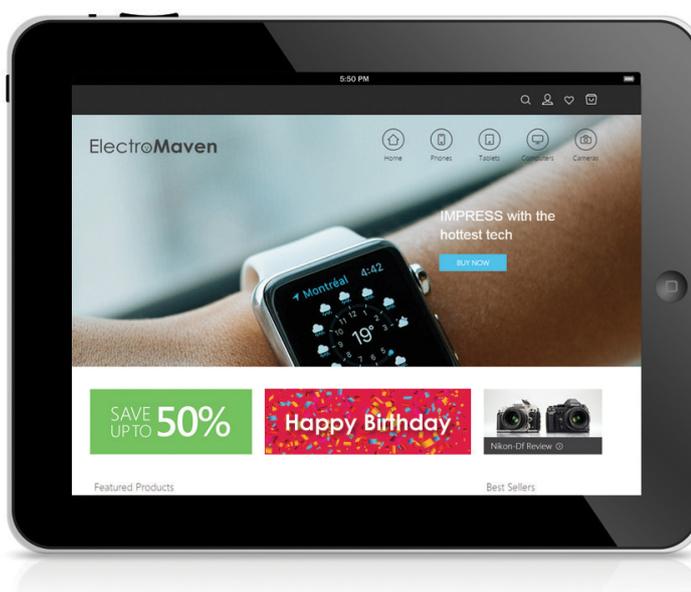
- Casual browsers were intrigued by evocative keywords like "temptation," "adultery" and "shocking," while goal-oriented visitors were less susceptible to sensational language
- Casual browsers viewed an average of eight pages on the site while goal-oriented visitors viewed far fewer pages and spent much less time on the site
- The next pages visited by goal-oriented visitors were determined by search results, while casual browsers mostly clicked through to featured content

To reach goal-oriented visitors, provide navigational tools and search abilities that allow them to complete their tasks as quickly and easily as possible.

### Optimizing for goal-oriented visitors

When visitors are highly motivated, willing to dive deeply into the information process, and equipped with the necessary cognitive resources, they will focus all their attention on the process. These visitors will ignore distractions such as ads and featured elements, take the minimum steps necessary to reach their goal, and rely on as much information as they can retrieve.

You can convert these visitors by providing navigational tools and search abilities that allow them to complete their tasks as quickly and easily as possible. It is also crucial that you equip goal-oriented visitors with all the information they need to make a calculated decision – including customer reviews, easy access to website assets, and even information from other websites.



To appeal to casual browsers, keep the website colorful and attractive, with a limited amount of detail and a lot of imagery and video.

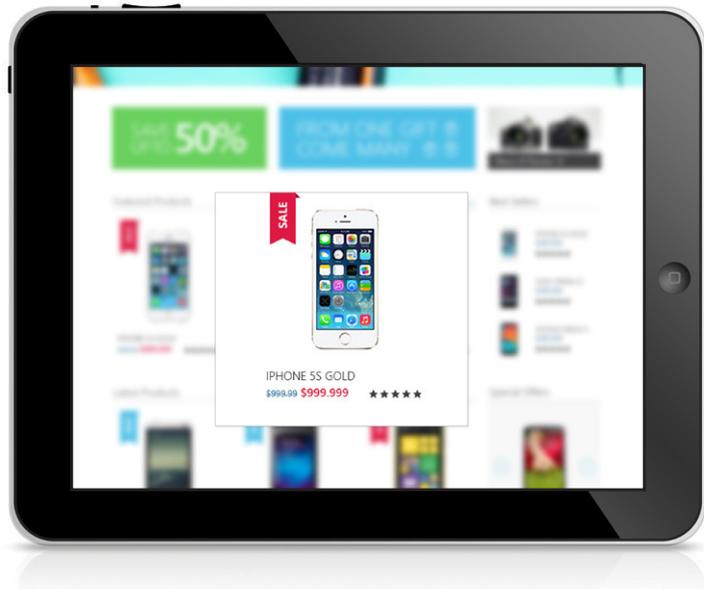
### Optimizing for casual browsers

When visitors are unwilling or unable to process featured content, they subconsciously use simple rules called heuristics to infer the validity of the content they are exposed to.

Examples of such heuristic rules would be: "Messages with many arguments are more likely to be valid than messages with fewer arguments"; or "A message coming from a man dressed like a doctor may seem more valid than the exact same message coming from a guy in shorts."

In addition, under the sway of emotion-based processing, these visitors will pay attention to colorful images, embedded video, attractive headlines and catchy slogans. In order to appeal to casual browsers, the website should be colorful and attractive, have a limited amount of detail and use a lot of imagery and video

Associative linkage is another winning tactic for keeping casual browsers engaged. In the absence of a defined goal, visitor behavior can be directed by associations that link one idea to another – which can greatly increase engagement time.



For example, visitors to sites like BuzzFeed and Facebook generally don't have a specific goal in mind, but are looking for amusement during a work break or at the end of the day. Smart websites know how to grab these visitors for long periods of time by posting links to very similar content at the bottom of each article, leading the visitors from one article of interest to the next.

Major e-commerce sites like Amazon are also frequented by visitors just looking to kill time, and the most successful ones use mechanisms such as "Similar items" sections and "Recommended for you" pages that take into account not only the customer's purchase history but also recent browsing activity.

## The takeaways

A single user can apply each of the cognitive routes alternately and even shift routes during the same visit. Make sure your site is optimized for both types.

By understanding and adapting to the nuances of human intent, online retailers can optimize the shopping experience, maximize its ultimate outcome, and capitalize on consumer brand awareness.

If there's anything offline salespeople learned over hundreds of years of human retail activity, it's that visitor state of mind is transient. Intent can change between visits, or even during the course of a single visit. And, most importantly, it can be heavily influenced, in real time.

In the absence of sufficient levels of stimulation, casual browsers will get bored and move on. Similarly, a sense of disorientation can lead your goal-oriented users to abandon your site permanently. Thus, it is mission-critical that your site be optimized for both types, making pages attractive to both experiential and goal-oriented visitors.

On any given page, ensure that you provide sufficient levels of stimulation to engage casual browsers, as well as elements - such as navigation tools and search options - to help goal-oriented users take the minimum steps necessary to reach their goal.

**Interested in how Clicktale can help you improve the customer experience on your website, mobile site and apps, for all buyer personalities?**

[Request a meeting](#)

# About the Psychology & CX Series

Clicktale's **Psychology & CX** Series is based on original online behavioral research initiated and led by Clicktale Web Psychologist Dr. Liraz Margalit.

There are many different psychological theories as to what influences online visitor behavior, and this field of research is still young. The Clicktale research team developed and tested a theory based on the Interactionism approach to behavior, which states that in order to predict behavior, we have to take into consideration personality and environmental factors. Our research integrates the different factors found to influence online behavior, merging these into a comprehensive theory that incorporates gender, personality, state of mind, intent and environmental factors.

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