This is to certify that the

thesis entitled

Digital First Impressions:
an analysis of e-retailing homepages

presented by

Jiatyan Chen

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

Masters degree in _Telecomm._

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Major professor

Date 8-21-2000

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PLACE IN RETURN BOX to remove this checkout from your record.
TO AVOID FINES return on or before date due.
MAY BE RECALLED with earlier due date if requested.

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DIGITAL FIRST IMPRESSIONS:
AN ANALYSIS OF E-RETAILING HOMEPAGES

BY

JIATYAN CHEN

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Telecommunication

2000

Abstract

Digital First Impressions:
An Analysis of E-Retailing Homepages

by

Jiatyan Chen

This thesis discusses issues associated with retailers' online presences – specifically examining the relation between presentation form and communication functionality. This is accomplished through an examination of five business genres – books, electronic greeting cards, toys, clothing and accessories, and computing merchandise – utilizing persona to illustrate how form may add to or detract from the function of a particular website. Suggestions are then offered for how online presences might be constructed. The thesis concludes with general observations of form in this young medium and possible future research.

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1. Introduction

Architect Louis Sullivan once said, "The architect who combines in his being the powers of vision, of imagination, of intellect, of sympathy with human need and the power to interpret them in a language vernacular and true – is he who shall create poems in stone," extrapolates the need for interface designs to combine the form and function, emotion and reason, decoration and purpose; for in the users' eyes, these elements are intertwined. [Flem, 70]

There are many areas to the design of a website – functionality, usability, effectiveness, speed, etc. Different people measure a website with their own yardsticks. The purpose of a website is usually determined by the requirements of the people who commissioned the site, an analysis of target user needs, the web technology support team expertise and the software at their disposal. Technology's influence on any website is so great that it sometimes might take over the reasoning of the designer, who opts for a high-tech gadget and sacrifices a broader audience. Conversely, usability folks sometimes emphasize the accessibility option so much that they miss out on the 'cool' stuff that could have been used to impress or attract visitors of the site.

Designing should be seen as a whole, not as separate elements to be optimized in their own way. It is a complicated balancing act, but not without any designing guidelines. In this project, I chose to look at the visual and structural designs of several websites, especially ones that make money off the sites. They have a well-defined purpose narrow enough for my analysis.

eCommerce web pages are commissioned and designed by the seller and not the buyers. The designers must serve the seller, who pays them, but also accommodate the buyers. I would like to approach my analysis and redesign from the buyer's perspective, using scenarios as a way to examine how a customer would navigate the site, look for information, make decisions and possibly finally make a purchase.

Jakob's Law of the Internet user experience: users spend most of their time on sites other than yours. Thus, users rarely learn enough about any given site to become true expert users. [Niel, 0200] If the page is not designed well enough to help a user figure out how s/he should manipulate the site's functions within the first few seconds, s/he will get frustrated and thus leave. This make-or-break property of an interface is probably the least emphasized among the other needs to display the money making portion of the site. Familiarity, intuitiveness and simplicity of an interface design helps. At the same time, we do not want the interface to be so elementary and long-winded that returning users find it cumbersome to trudge through. They need fast loading, easily accessible, in-depth information that allows them to easily accomplish their tasks.

In order for the designer to better serve the eCommerce client, it is important for him/her to understand ordinary users. It would be a fallacy to assume homogeneity among the users, thus the designer needs to define the prospective audience – what are the major concerns of the users? What are their limitations and constraints? What are their needs? Since most clients, given the choice, would like their site to lure in as many customers as possible, a site has to cater to multiple audiences, each with different

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concerns and interests. [Flem, 33]

The basic considerations of a user/shopper are

(a)   where am I?

(b)   where can I go?

(c)   what can I find here, or does it sell what I want?

(d)   how can I find items I want?

(e)   how can I get back from there?

and then

(f)   what are the security and privacy measures?

(g)   what if I am not sure of what I want?

(h)   how can I make sure that it is the correct product for me?

(i)   is it in stock and how do I buy it?

(j)   what if I have problems or returns?

(k)   what if I have a question?

[adapted from Flem, 111]

The homepage of any shopping site should address all of the first five and most of the next six issues. If the user is unable to figure out, with a cursory glance (the 10 second rule of attention [Niel]), s/he is very likely to go elsewhere. Think about the homepage of any site you first went to. As you quickly look across the screen, what goes through your mind? As a user, you are looking for clues to tell you what the site does, and how to work with the interface. After orienting yourself, understanding a little of the site and determining that you are indeed interested, you start to question where on the page you should click in order to explore further.

After these navigational questions, the second tier of questions ((f) to (k))

varies as personal concerns of users diverge, but remain indicative of user insecurity, being a number of "what if" questions related to the products or merchandise.

If the customer is looking for a product, the site designers have a choice of providing a search function or a hierarchical navigation. The latter lists the possible choices in categories, but not necessarily in the same train of thought as the customer's. The former requires the customers to guess at the correct product name or description. Based on a premise by Jacob Nielsen where "... usability studies show that more than **half of all users are search-dominant**, about a fifth of the users are link-dominant, and the rest exhibit mixed behavior,"[Niel, 0797], providing a search function is almost as important as any interface for clear navigation.

Jennifer Flemming suggested that the designer put himself/herself in the users' shoes, by creating profiles of fictional users who represent the target audience. [Flem, 8] It is much simpler to imagine and define a character than to grapple with a 'cloud' of target audience. With the exception of the very few, we all grow up immersing ourselves in fictional characters walking through fictional scenarios, evident with the plenitude of fiction and movies. Role-playing is not alien to us. I will adopt this method of conjuring imaginary users and defining their mind sets, then placing them in possible scenarios to reveal the pros and cons of the sites under examination.

Brick-and-mortar store designs can make use of special effects, lighting and space, creating dramatic looks to involve and influence customers. For example, a BlockBuster store uses signed areas with "Lights, Camera,

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Action", "You ain't seen nothing yet" and "What's Hot", along with Hollywood style flooring fixtures and ceiling treatments to bask its customer in the limelight. [VMSD, 27] The online store loses out on these spatial and contact environment aspects, and thus have to make them up with interactiveness of the site and ease of information retrieval.

There are other tricks that brick-and-mortar store designers apply which can be adapted for online stores. Carefully co-ordinated banners, panels, pennants and photomurals set strong themes to create powerful statements about the brands and core businesses. For example, Borders adopts a theme and projects a consistent image through fonts, graphics and logos on its products and packaging. Customers can thus easily identify a Borders product based on this theme. Notice that this kind of branding is also widely use in advertisements to create names and identities. Online stores can easily match this kind of packaging with their own version of images, fonts, logos and deliverables. A pitfall is that since it is much easier and cheaper changing graphics electronically than printing them, online stores are prone to alter their icons, themes and layout (in the spirit of improving the site), and in turn alienate returning customers by forcing them to re-learn the interface.

As a general reminder in the designing directions of an eCommerce site, Dr. Therese Torris of Forrester Research suggested that, "Dot Coms must remind themselves what customers miss about in-person shopping and compensate with true value: meaningful **personalization** but also **discounted prices** ."[Torr]

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2. Methodology

I elected to look at a series of eCommerce sites that carry products or services with prices ranging from free to under $50 – books, electronic greeting cards, toys, clothes, and computer merchandise. The choices were selected from sites I had visited in the past year.

I first took screenshots of sites I visited within a few months, and selected 5 genres to explore further. Using Yahoo, Netscape Center and several other web portals to locate a list of potential sites, I visited and took screenshots of these sites, writing down my observations as: (a) a designer regarding their layout, and (b) a user interacting with the site. I picked out at least 5 sites for each genre, ranging from representative designs for that genre to sites with different and interesting elements. Other than looking at the homepage of each site, I explored the site for its structure and navigation patterns, attempting to get a feel of the shopping experience it provides. I revisited these sites during November through January, taking note of their Christmas presentations. Within the lapse of a few months, some of the sites have overhauled their pages, and a number of them listed extra special deals on their site to take advantage of the seasonal spending spree. It was somewhat surprising to observe sections of the site shifting around and features appearing and disappearing. For example, Dockers used to have a "changing room" feature that helps customers mix-and-match a selection of tops with bottoms, but was no longer available the next time I dropped by. It was, nevertheless, a unique and useful service to have.

For the other part of my analysis on these websites, I constructed persona from the generic "target audience," defining the needs and abilities of three fictional characters for each genre of sites. I then put these characters through an imaginary walkthrough of each site, noticing the challenges they faced as they maneuver around the site to complete their task.

The images presented with the analyses are but part of the full screenshots, collected as color plates in the appendix of this document. These are meant to be used as an easy reference to the pertinent section of each analysis. Most of them have been reduced in size and cropped to display only key elements.

Throughout this paper, the terms "homepage" and "front page" are used interchangeably to mean the main page of a website which presents a visitor with the site's basic navigational links, and usually provides the topmost level of information.

3. Analysis

3.1. *Books*

One of the first markets to go online is books, where Amazon practically set the bar for good sites and good service. Having a huge list of books available, but not needing display space is a big plus to the online book stores. In addition, the virtual stores have an advantage to the physical stores in terms of sorting titles – a title can appear under as many sections as needed. For example, a biography of an esteem physicist might be classified under "physics" or "biographies."

Books, as it turned out, is a perfect product to be sold over the Internet. A good catalog of books would contain thousands, if not millions of listings [Quit, 64], making it cost-efficient to maintain an up-to-date online database rather than sending out out-dated catalogs on paper or CD-ROMs. Bookstores thus need to advertise new releases for casual window shoppers, provide good search support for the goal-oriented shoppers, and fantastic service to keep the customers coming back.

Since a significant number of customers enter a bookstore with a purpose in mind, bookstores are designed in such a way to attract their attention with books that are not on their list. Physical bookstores can utilize shelf space to display the sales/new items in the front of the store. This technique will undoubtedly fail with an online store – with just a few click, the customers can go straight to

what they came for, bypassing these 'extras'. To gain the advertising advantage, it is crucial that the online bookstores make full use of the first 500 or so pixels – the first 'scrolling page' of the screen – customers will not scroll down if they are not interested.

Books are advertised differently from toys or clothes where the emphasis is on looks. Although book covers have in them a certain degree of attraction, if only to catch the eyes of a window shopper, books *sell* mainly by content and not covers. It is for this reason that physical bookstores lay their merchandise out for the customers to peruse, and this is more difficult for an online store to achieve. It is a tough balancing act determining how much content is sufficient without taking too much space, and how seductive this content is. These online customers are unable to pick a book up, look at the table of contents, flip through the pages, or even read a page or two that interests them. Also, a customer in a physical store has a time constraint where s/he can or will only stay for so long before having to make a decision, but an online customer can revisit the site repeatedly without incurring much travel cost. This makes it more difficult for an online book seller to accomplish a sale, but is evened off by the absence of queues and merchandise unavailability. Therefore, the operation of an online book seller has to be different from a bricks-and-mortar bookstore.

3.1.1. Profiles

Jerome is a retired clerk who enjoys reading science fiction, thrillers and biographies, and he polls the shelves of his local

bookstores and library every week for new releases or old classics. When he learnt from a friend that he might get a much better selection online, he went to the library to use their computers to connect to the Internet. Jerome has little experience when it comes to computers and browsing – knowing very little of windowing objects, URLs and links. With some help from the librarian, Jerome sat down and began going through the sites recommended by the librarian.

Keith is a programmer who is in need of a reference book for the new language he is programming in. He wants something that explains not only fundamental elements of the language but serves as a reference manual later on. Although there are various books regarding this subject, Keith needs to find a book with good explanation that works the first time, since he does not have too much time to test things out. Keith is proficient with the web as he has to frequently look up product information and specifications.

As a graduate student who has been just been hired by the Business department of a college as a teaching assistant, Lawrence is responsible for delivering his own lectures and assignments, subjected to some departmental guidelines. He will have to look for a source of reading material for the classes he will be teaching. In addition, he also is on the lookout for a cheaper source of textbooks for the classes he is taking, since the college bookstore has a monopoly over required readings assigned by instructors. Lawrence is

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familiar with computers and the web, having used them for his undergraduate studies. He is aware of the more popular Internet bookstores like Amazon, and has seen flyers on campus advertising cheaper prices on textbooks sites like VarsityBooks.

3.1.2.

One of the first on the scene, **Amazon** sets the standard for interfaces for online stores. Their design is so implicitly simple and worked so wonderfully that many others designed their store front based on Amazon. Usability expert Jacob Nielsen feels that tabs should be used for, "rapid switching between alternative views of the same information

object" than as navigations to unrelated information; and that the left navigation column has usability problems. [Niel, 1199] Defying his observations, this tabbed interface, with the search function just below it, the customer service icons to the right of the logo, and the columnar layout have been replicated many times. In fact, it has become so universal that any deviation becomes a hindrance to the shopping experience by giving the shopper a different interface. Unlike various other sites, Amazon's tabbed format makes good use of colors to create a sub-category listing just under the tabs. Amazon also makes itself more personal by addressing returning users by their name; and a fast checkout process.

Perhaps the best service that Amazon carries is that of user reviews. Creating a sense of community by asking readers and customers for input on their merchandise, Amazon instituted a trustworthy recommendation network that is more informative and participatory than mere editors' or critics' choices. By providing a text-only site, Amazon addresses an audience larger than usual – accommodating not only slower connections, but the PDA/cellular phone groups as well.

Jerome does not have much experience with any online stores, but a casual glance at Amazon's site indicates to him that he can click on the tabs on top to get to the bookstore, and the color-coordinated sub-headings (green) on the page highlights the various 'important' sections of the page –

"search" and "browse". Unfortunately, by reading data from the cookies stores on the public computer, Amazon would have pulled up the records for whoever had used the computer before Jerome, or that Jerome's records would be retained for the next novice user, a great security and privacy concern that Jerome is unaware of. The "10 under $10" link has an icon which stands out among the myriad of text, catching Jerome's eyes. Since Jerome is scouting for new releases, he might only have Amazon's reviews to go by, but he definitely finds the 'related items' link ("Customers who bough this book also bought") very useful. Jerome chanced upon the "wish list" service, where he can keep a list of the books that he wants, and have someone buy them for him – perfect for his birthday next month! Keith, on the other hand, uses the search engine to look for prospective books, then reads the reviews and recommendations from his peers about the various books which he is considering.

Barnes & Noble has went through a couple of designs before settling on one with a very similar interface to Amazon's. The "Advanced search" option might be helpful for a library search on keywords, but I see limited use for a bookstore. B&N has a "Special Features" column on the left, containing items like "Award winners", "Bestsellers" and "New releases". This mirrors their brick-and-mortar in-store displays, where they situate such sections near entrances to draw customer attention. Unfortunately, it gives the impression that it had been put in as an afterthought, trying to coordinate the corporate directorates into the website, as it displaces the high priority "Browse Subject" further down the

screen, contradicting priorities users would normally associate with these screen positions. However, B&N provides a prominent "Order Status" link, taking good care of returning customers.

The header graphics spots three distinct red dots, highlighting to Jerome the three most important functions of the site – "cart", "help" and "account". After glancing through the page and going through the more apparent texts, Jerome decides to click on the "help" button to see if it will help him locate the new books. The help topics are not that clear to Jerome, as they address online shopping issues like search criteria, privacy concerns and customer accounts. He tries a few links but eventually returns to the homepage and starts reading the finer print lower down the page, where he then discovered the links to "Bestsellers" and "New releases" under the "Special Features" list. Jerome also tries searching by his favorite authors' names, and found their other books which are not in the categories he usually looks under.

Lawrence, our graduate student in search of textbooks, moves his mouse pointer quickly to the search box. Thanks to his experience from his library researches, he elected to do a "keyword" search for the business textbooks he is researching on. Searching for the price of the textbooks assigned by his instructor is a breeze, since Lawrence has all the information he needs to locate the book. Lawrence also found the additional links on the left, related to the books,

rather interesting, especially for the topic he is researching on.

Although the B&N and Amazon sites look very similar, they focus differently on the way customers shop. Amazon places more emphasis on popular books, with the right column devoted to bestsellers and sale items. B&N moves towards customer enrichment by offering ways to "Renew Yourself" and more diverse links providing information about authors and software.

3.1.4.

Without an extra column on the right, **Borders'** site looks cleaner than that of Amazon or B&N, defining just the menu

on the left and contents on the right. Unfortunately the menu on the left does not really show up due to its tiny font and low text-to-background contrast. Borders took the approach of listing detailed information of each book in the highlights/special section on the front page, speeding up the ordering process. By providing more information per highlighted item, Borders makes up for it smaller item-to-space ratio. By giving more of the editor's review, compared to "hear what he has to say..." or "check this book out at...", the book stands a better chance at being looked at as more information is provided about it. Despite this slightly superior approach in capturing its audience, Borders needs to exert more effort in community building by providing 'related' book lists and 'customer reviews' to retain customers.

A quick scan of the page reviews the white-on-blue words of "Best Sellers" to Jerome, and he follows the links to check out the list. The layout of the page, compared to other sites, is less confusing to Jerome, who quickly surmises the left column is a list of indices and the right (main) column are highlights of the books. Jerome found the excerpts from the books very helpful in making his decision on purchasing new books, especially ones by authors he does not yet know.

The 'window dressing' of the homepage does not have too much effect on Keith as he makes a bee-line for the search button. Without a good source of reviews by his peers, Keith

found it difficult to decide on which book would most likely be of use to him. Keith browses around the site for a little while, looking at the links, but eventually heads off to another site to do his research on the books he needs.

3.1.5.

Even though it uses a variant of the Amazonian layout, the technical bookstore **fatbrain** manages to give its menus a more personal, less rigid look. The hand-written subtitle, "Because great minds think a lot," conveys a casual, non-businesslike atmosphere. Fatbrain looks like the 'little bookstore around the corner' compared to the corporate chain Borders. However, Fatbrain is one of the Net's biggest

e-books sellers, selling these downloadable electronic books online for about $5 each. [Sach, 76] Opting to dispense less information, the tabbed menu bar has more visual space around it to separate and highlight it from the rest of the information on the page, providing a clear visual information hierarchy. Fatbrain has an advantage over the generic bookstore since it only carries technical books (compared to Amazon carrying music, videos and other merchandise). It is able to allot more space and effort when presenting the books with better targeted descriptions.

Keith finds himself right at home at Fatbrain's site. All the labels and lingo look familiar, and Keith can immediately find his way around, reading through the editors' choices, navigating through the hierarchical menu, checking out books from other topics he is mildly interested in.

Fatbrain's business department is equally well organized by topics which are familiar to Lawrence. Using the topical menu and associated links, Lawrence manages to filter down to a handful of elementary economics books that he might be interested in teaching with, reads through the summaries and reviews from other customers, and decides to order two of them. He also buys a book that his instructor recommended at a much reduced price. Not bad for an afternoon's work.

3.1.6.

Michigan State University Bookstore
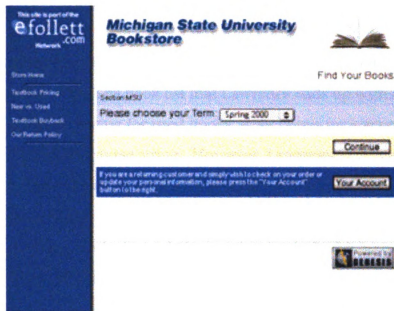
Since **eFollett** uses the same formula to present its various pages for the colleges it is affiliated to, I elected to look at its page for Michigan State University (MSU). As it has a **very** targeted audience – students who are buying textbooks – **it** uses a very utilitarian page for the MSU Bookstore. The **page** provides the most essential items that a college student needs in the left column, and a pointblank "search by term" engine. Zero frill. Due to its affiliation to the college, it sees no necessity to lure or retain customers, since there is virtually no competition. However, things may start to change with the increase of online college bookstores like VarsityBooks.

Lawrence obtained the URL to his college's bookstore from one of eFollett's flyers. Once he got to the customized eFollett's store for his college, he immediately begins retrieving the relevant information based on the class he is

enrolled in, without any distraction from advertisements. With the menu ordered by semesters, followed by department then course number, finding his assigned readings is child's play. It does not even require him to type in any text. The book list that Lawrence ends up with also includes pricing for used books, a big bonus for someone tight on the purse string. However, Lawrence is also hoping to compare notes with a list of readings other colleges use for introductory economics classes similar to what he will be teaching. Unfortunately he is not going to find it here, not in either MSU Bookstore nor the main site of eFollett.

3.1.7.
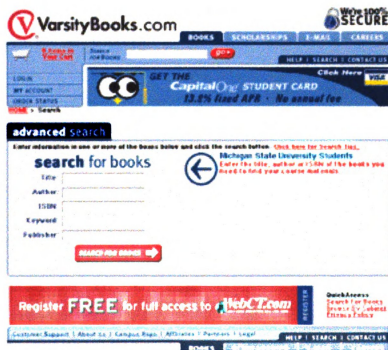
VarsityBooks tries to enter the college textbook market by advertising savings of up to 40% off the publisher's price. They do indeed have cheaper prices on certain books, but the

book lists are less accurate. Having a wider audience than other college bookstores, VarsityBooks also earns extra revenue selling ads placements to sponsors.

Lawrence types in VarsityBooks' URL from the flyer that he took off the notice board. It is a pretty simple URL to remember. He went through several pages to locate his school and finally lands in a page that asks him for the title of the book, searching only in the database pertaining to his school. Lawrence found the books without much trouble, but he has to double check the list with the one his instructor gave out, and though discounted, the prices are not as attractive as used books. In comparison, eFollett makes use of its affiliation to the schools to construct a more streamlined process for students.

3.2. Cards

Let us go to something free. Electronic greeting cards have a high fixed cost but almost no variable cost. The provider needs to set up a database and a mail server, and intermittently add or replace card selections. Since it costs next to nothing to send an e-card, all the these sites have a free selection of cards. Most of them are funded solely by sponsor advertisements, while some also provide additional services for a price. It is thus the prerogative of a site to attract as much traffic as possible – by providing a large selection of cards so as to make it a one-stop-shop for repeated visitors. Most of the sites look about the same – banner ads, multiple lists of card categorization/indices, and a card pick-up point.

Almost all of the sites have a holiday or special occasion cards link, displayed rather conspicuously. Interestingly, some sites provided a search function, which I do not really see a purpose for since all the categories are already listed in plain view. So, unless I have seen a phrase in some cards that I really wanted to send, and that the keywords in the images are indeed in the search database, I find a search function rather useless. Also, providing a search function means that it will take a lot more effort on the part of the site maintainers to categorize and cross-index the cards, not only according to occasions but also according to text and image content. Sites which provide such search capabilities are welcomed but in the interest of time and resources, such free service sites do not really do a commendable job in categorizing their card choices.

3.2.1. Profiles

We first look at some prospective customers. Alex is a fairly web-savvy grandfather, who has just found out from Yahoo that he can send free personalized greeting cards to his grandchildren. So he goes to Yahoo, types in "cards" and clicks on one of the links to a virtual card site. Alex does not know a lot about the new technology. His browser is probably not configured to peruse Flash animations or even listen to the accompanying music selection. Alex does know how to pick a card off the shelves of a supermarket. He is probably going to go by the categories he is familiar with.

What about Bob? As a middle-aged son and father, Bob has Internet access at home and probably a good computer and connection at work, maintained by the company. He receives a card from a co-worker. He follows the link to pick up the card, and decides to send one to his wife, who is currently on a business trip. Bob does not have too much time to browse the lists of categories and their respective cards. He just wants something suitable to say a few words to his wife before his next meeting with a client.

Claire is a student at the university. She is in a computer lab, answering emails, when she receives a card from a friend. She follows the link and collects the card, and is then intrigued by the amount of cards available. She thinks of browsing through them for some ideas on a project that she is doing, or

maybe just looking at the funny jokes some of the cards have. If she finds a good one, she might even share it with her friends. Claire does not have a class for the next hour or so (or she would not be in the lab writing emails) and so she has some free time to look the choices carefully. Perhaps she would even fire up the search engine and look at more than just this particular card site.

3.2.2.

1001 Postcards has a huge selection of cards and a very elaborate categorization scheme – sorted not only by holidays and occasions but by various other topics like objects, artists and movies. Luckily it provides a few one-click selections, a

list of "top 30 categories" and a search function conveniently located at the top. As with most e-cards, the primary objective is to facilitate communication – a card must reach its receiver. The pick-up location occupies a prominent space on the page. The site is liberally sprinkled with sponsor ads but are in the 'standard' places, thus not too distracting to the users. However, the "Pick a category" drop down menu is way too long for anyone to reasonably go through it – just watch it scroll!

Our grandfather Alex will probably be confused by the sheer number of categories as he scrolls down the page. If he is not looking for a holiday card, he would probably pick something from the "top 30" list and start from there; or perhaps click the "back" button and try another site. On the other hand, Claire might well like a huge list to choose from. She can do the "fun stuff" or send a card starring her favorite actor. Since Claire has the time to look around, she will probably send more than one card to her friends, perhaps even for the various occasions listed in the left column.

3.2.3.

At the **123 Greetings** site, its homepage is formatted using a very large table. This is unfortunate as browsers need to load all the table information before displaying the entire table, and thus users will have to stare at a blank page for an extended period of time while table data completes loading. A nice thing about this site is that it provides a 'reminder' of nearing holidays and occasion – useful if one visits the site regularly, or happens to be sending a card for some other occasion. It has a lot more obscure events ("Cotton Candy Day"?!) than some others. This listing (right column), however, seems more haphazard than the chronological listing that appears on the left column of 1001 Postcards.

Instead of a drop-down menu, 123 Greetings provides a at-a-glance menu of the popular topics at the top of the page, saving the users from scrolling down looking for an index. If a user examines the page carefully, he can find extra services to manage his cards, popular selections of cards and help, all listed beneath an ad in the left column. This left column is most likely to be ignored starting from the ad. User attention has been diverted to either the center column that lists the selections, or the right column which lists occasions.

After waiting a long time for the page to download over his 33.6K modem, it was not gratifying for Alex to find only an extended list of card choices. He feels he should have been able to download a similar text list much faster. While he is at the site, he looks at its list of cards for little known events. He has never seen the special "Jazz Day" category before in the stores, and probably would not know what to make of it nor who to send to. Bob would definitely appreciate the "midweek crisis" card, right at the top in plain view, but being a busy person, he might not even have the patience to wait for the page to load.

3.2.4.

Activegrams can be seen as one of the 'speciality' e-card websites. It has a lighter air than others and more character. The user can mail his recipient a series of animated cards based on various protagonists, fake news and memos. The cards even come as attachments instead of the recipient having to pick them up. The banner ads on this site constantly stay on the page since they are housed in a separate frame. This decreases the number of banner ads that the site can display, but maximizes the chance of visitors seeing the ads.

Claire enjoyed her time going through the list of funny quips at Activegrams. Alex, on the other hand, is more baffled than finding anything suitable for his needs. Clicking through the various links, Bob decides that he does not have the time to
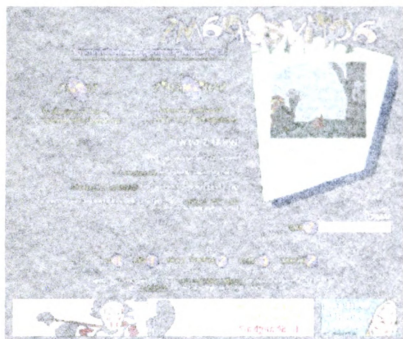
click a link for just one card. He needs to be able to scan through a number of cards quickly.

Card 4 You presents a similar long listing as 123 Greetings and 1001 Postcards. Each of its categories, however, comes with a little icon and some blurb about it, which helps the decision process. One can easily identify the "Animals" and the "Games and Flash" selections. It uses ads and mailing lists to draw customers.

This site is definitely more friendly to Grandpa Alex, with pictures and explanations to help him make more sense of the

selections. Although "Christmas" and "Love" might be familiar to him, "Karaoke" or "Weekend" pretty much belong to the online categories. Bob and Claire might also find the icons and examples useful.

3.2.6.

Keeping with the theme of its site, **Care2** donates 10% of its ad revenue to environmental funds. The categories also differs from the usual. Instead of "congratulations" or "get well", it has classifications like "wild animals" and "adoption". The white, lighter background on the right diverts the attention of the user from the green background menu on the left. Most of the 'useful' links, like holiday greetings, are thus

in a less conspicuous location. To make matters worse, each
item in this menu has a border around it, making it appear
like a banner ad if not inspected carefully.

Aged Alex or busy Bob might not notice the menu on the left,
and instead browse through the categories on the white
background. Since this is a site that places emphasis on a
"nature" theme, Alex and Bob might not be able to find
something familiar or suitable for their tastes. Claire, on the
other hand, might be attracted to the "Friendship" and
"Loony Toons" selections.

3.2.7.

As one of the major greeting card manufacturers, **Hallmark** has a large pool of talented writers and artists to draw its e-card selections from. On one hand, Hallmark is able to capitalize on its brand name, yet on the other, it is likely that a visitor to Hallmark's site will have a certain expectation of the quality of the e-cards. It is no wonder that many of the e-cards come with animation and music, some even in Flash format. The categories are also in the more familiar shelf language, with broader groupings of "milestones", "just a note" and "special collection" to the more defined ones like "anniversary" and "blanks". This front page listed quite a selection of thumbnails versions of e-cards with various topics to make it easier for a visitor to go straight to the relevant page. Hallmark has obviously been subsidizing this site with sales from its related gifts and flowers site, since I did not find any kind of advertisements on the pages.

Other than the fact that Alex might be a little miffed by the bleeding edge in web technology and has to install Flash, the Hallmark site would be wonderful for Alex, who is already familiar with the card categories, and would feel right at home with many of the featured cards in plain view. These highlighted cards are quite a handful to choose from, especially for Bob, who needs just to send a quick note without going through the hierarchical menu of choices. These many choices are also just what Claire likes, including the humorous Shoebox collection.

3.2.8.

Just Postcards is rather similar to Card 4 You with its icons
layout. It does not, however, provide the "Top cards" choices
that Card 4 You does. An experience surfer might overlook
the top banner automatically (I know I do) and thus miss the
holiday card link. Instead of putting ads at the top of page,
Just Postcards left them at the bottom. With the popular card
link at the top of the page (special events and holiday cards),
the effectiveness of the ads is questionable, although I am
pretty sure that the "Jokes" mailing list generates a certain
amount of revenue from its sponsor ads as well.

In comparison, the categories for Just Postcards look smaller

than Card 4 You, which actually makes it easier to go through. Since it does not provide further explanation, Alex might be a little perturbed by some of the categories (for example, "dessert") while Claire will just try out the link. The spaces between the icons are spacious enough for Bob to easily spot the "I miss you" category, if he ever scrolls down enough.

3.2.9.

Another card company, **American Greetings**, offers a few free e-cards as an enticement to its other paid card products – better designed cards, create-your-own cards and paper cards. And like Hallmark's, it uses strategic placement of

numerous thumbnails of various cards helps expedite the card selection process. It also carries a few comic series that might keep users coming back. It is interesting to note that American Greetings is the only one that uses a hybrid method to generate funds – ads, draw and membership, compared to the others who depend almost entirely on banner advertisements. As such, the better card designs have been restricted as a paid member privilege, effectively disappointing visitor expectations.

The site looks great at first with various choices, but Alex runs into a snag. He had picked a card he likes, but he cannot send it without paying for the membership. Alex will soon learn to notice the "FREE" label beside the thumbnail image, but Bob might not want to spare the time or energy to go down the blind alley. Claire, who likes to browse around, does not think that this site offers enough choices.

3.3. Toys

The toy business is a very commercial and kids-driven economy.
Other than the standard set of 'must-haves' – Lego and teddy bears
– the demand for toys is mostly fueled by the popularity of a
product among the children, especially school kids. Manufacturers
create and fuel this hit wave and use all sorts of marketing gimmicks
to get children to persuade their parents to buy them the toys of
their dreams.

An eCommerce interface becomes acceptable either by its
intuitiveness, or by mass indoctrination – people learned to use it
and are now familiar with it. The tabs-on-top-and-categories-on-left
pioneered by Amazon is pervasive in most online storefronts. It has
became the de facto interface and presumably works well for sites
with massive amounts of standardized merchandise, so why re-
invent the wheel?

Fortunately, every merchant in this category realizes the need for
customers to easily locate a particular toy, and offers a search
function.

Most of the sites have a 'shop by' area, where users can search
through merchandise by age, category, brand, characters, etc. This
is especially useful in helping users narrow in on what they want.
This function, amazingly, is unique to the toys sites. I suspect it is
either a very common phenomenon that merchants notice in
physical toy stores, or that site designers copy extensively from each

other.

In a typical retail store, the sales assistants always greet the customers and ask what they can do to help. Such customer service is a way to keep the customer in the store and hopefully they will find something to buy. Asking for recommendation is a typical response for someone buying a toy for a relative's or friend's offsprings, since most are not buying toys for themselves but for an unfamiliar child whose needs and interests change quickly from year to year. The recommendation section of an online toy store should thus be rather extensive and easily accessible, yet the sites I visited seldom provide such a guide or advisor.

I also noticed that order tracking is not of great concern with online toys stores, and I am unable to understand why this is so. A customer who places an order online wants the product as soon as possible, and an order tracker eases the anxiety especially for a child.

I find it disturbing that most of the sites are designed for the 800x600 or larger screens. With a smaller window or screen, the customers can easily miss out the right column entirely, where most of the speciality shops and coupons and offers are located. As for target audience, the sites that I have examined talked more to the parents than the kids, which is reasonable, since the parents are the ones with the money.

3.3.1. Profiles

Delia's adult son recently bought her a computer so she can receive all the digital photos he takes of her three grandchildren. She read in a magazine article that she can now go online to buy toys and have them sent to her grandchildren without her even leaving her living room. Delia thought she would give it a try. Delia does not know a lot about computers or toys. She just wants to spend some money on her grandchildren and make them happy. But spending money on a total of eight grandchildren is quite a bit. Delia hopes she can find something wildly popular at a discounted or affordable price. Not being in touch with the grandchildren everyday makes her somewhat unsure of what appeals to them nowadays. She would most likely make use of any recommendations she gets, though she may not realize such services are available online or where she might find them. She could ask the kids, but that would spoil the surprise.

Being a father who works full-time, Eric is less attuned to the daily necessities of his children, but he prides himself on keeping on top of what toys and games they like. He would sometimes supervise the computer games that his 8-year-old son and 11-year-old daughter play, and, being a child at heart, more than often joins them in building models or playing PlayStation games. Eric has a little time during his lunch hour and wants to get a Toy Story 2 figurine for his son's birthday,

since the son was rather excited about the movie the whole family went to see last weekend. Eric is also experienced enough to remember to get an item of lesser value for his daughter, in the name of fairness. But since it is not her birthday, Eric is considering getting something more educational in nature.

Fiona is a 10-year-old who watches the Pokémon cartoons almost religiously. She has a small collection of cards and games which she plays and trades with her friends. The Harry Potter magic is also brewing strong in school. Fiona aced her end-of-terms recently and her mother said that she can get something under $50. Fiona has the time to look online for the perfect toy or game to impress her friends and make her popular.

3.3.2.

The bricks-to-clicks **Toys 'r' Us** is a late comer to the eCommerce scene, and had its fair share of trouble during the release of their annual Toys 'r' Us Big Book with severe server crashes and site inaccessibility. I happened to be attempting to visit their site during this period and was turned away all but one time. Toys 'r' Us uses the familiar 'tab' interface to sort its departments. The big attractive animated graphics of "Today's hottest toys" catches the eye, and displays a toy car and Barbie just below it, satisfying the most generic buyer's basic concern for a gender-based toy. Presenting sales items on the first page is as common a ploy as window dressing in a physical store, serving to draw visitors into the store to look

at some other items. Each of these special items on the main page has an "add to cart" button nearby, encouraging impulse shopping. I doubt that any one would click on these buttons without reading the detailed descriptions on the items' individual pages, and thus Toys 'r' Us will successfully entice shoppers into the e-store and promote other deals or more profitable products. Toys 'r' Us is also very sensitive to consumer demand, creating a separate department "Pokémon Central" for the current hit collectables.

Given its history and size, Toys 'r' Us will probably appear on every search result for "toys" or any online toy store directory. Delia would definitely feel comfortable with the Toys 'r' Us name, as she has most likely purchased toys from them before. Since Delia is shopping for several grandchildren, she notices the "by Age" category on the left, and thinks that it might be the best way to get some ideas – much easier than shopping in the toy store. But Delia also wants a variety: buying the whole set of a series of toys would seem fair to all her grandchildren. The "by Category" link might work.... She is not worried as she waits for the pages to load; after all, she is not a rushed schedule.

Eric's shopping list is less generic than Delia's. He has already determined that he wants a Toy Story figurine. The first thing he looks for on the page is the Toy Story logo. Seeing none, he might click on the "hottest toys" link, or simply move on to another site since he would rather buy both toys from the

same store and save on shipping cost. The use of a minor character from Toy Story 2 – Tour Guide Barbie – was ineffective advertising on this prime space. However famous Barbie is in her own right, one of the movie's main characters, e.g. Woody, might have caught Eric's attention more successfully.

As for Fiona, she would immediately head to the "Pokémon Central" department, clicking the icon button even before the page has completed loading.

3.3.3.

Even though I had cookies turned on, **toysmart** interpreted

my non-Netscape, non-Explorer browser incorrectly and gave me an error message which advises me on how to turn on cookies, and would rather forgo any kind of sales or publicity by turning away potential customers who do not use the two "traditional" browsers. Not very smart, toysmart. Such problems aside, it is interesting to note that toysmart carries furniture, a first that I have observed among the online toys stores. Toysmart also has a "Children's Favorites" column on the right, highlighting the current favorite protagonists – it seems to be missing Pokémon, though.

After looking briefly through right column and deciding that there is too much text for her ailing eyes, Delia glances sideways and notices the "Top 10 Toys" and "Toys under $25" links – what wonderful help with her shopping. The animated "free shipping" label at the top also pleases both Delia and Eric. Buzz Lightyear from Toy Story 2 in the center and on the right catches Eric's eyes easily. Glancing down further, Eric also finds the "School at a Glance" picks, which might be useful for his daughter's gift. Unfortunately for Fiona, no Pokémon toys or games are listed anywhere. The search engine also reported 0 item with that name. Fiona is really disappointed with this site. She might have changed her mind and decide to get a Harry Potter book if she happened to glance down the list on the right far enough.

3.3.4.

Proving that one can sell toys online, **eToys** has successfully captured more than 50% of the online toy business in 1998 and is still the current leader. [Gree, 93] eToys did not manage this feat by being online, but because customers can easily find toys on their site. Part of the reason, beside ironing out the logistics, lies with the user-friendly interface. By expending some effort to organize and sort toys into logical categories, eToys made a successful decision on how to advertise and draw people in. I am confident in saying that its interface is *the* one that has been mimicked by so many other sites. The strategically placed "last minute gift" is a neat idea to get the indecisive or last minute buyer to buy a gift

certificate. For somebody who is undecided, eToys offers the most selections in terms of types of recommendations – instead of just recommendations for toys under a certain dollar amount or suggestions for toys for a certain age group, eToys also has other suggestions like "special needs" and "fantastic finds".

The "200 under $20" link on the recommendation list in the left column, if Delia scrolled down far enough, looks like a great place to start – it fits her budget and 200 toys seems like an awful lot to choose from. Eric, however, is unable to find a link to Toy Story products, except perhaps under the "hot list" link or searching for it. Too bad it wasn't his wife shopping, or she would probably be interested in the Gap discount. Intent on his search for Toy Story products, Eric probably will not read through the fine prints on the left column for "Action Figures" and attempt to search there. On the other hand, scrolling down the page a little, Fiona easily finds her Pokémon shoppe icon and off she goes.

3.3.5.

To make things clear for the user, web pages are usually divided into menu and contents sections. Most of the time the menu stays on the top or left, and the contents occupy the rest of the page. Occasionally, a designer might plan a third column to hold extra information like special offers or services, news and other dynamic information. **ToyTime**'s page has four columns instead of the normal three column format used on many sites. The first column of menus and second of special items are pretty much standard. The third seems to mimic the speciality shops of eToys. I question the wisdom of this column since it only lists a few of the toys available and requires the user to click again to see the full
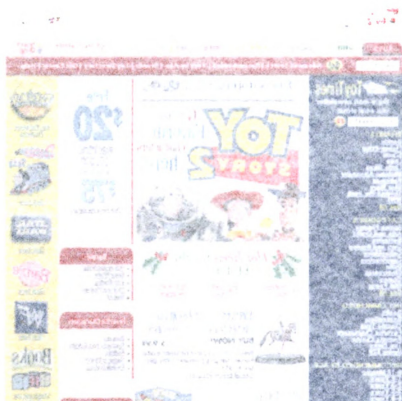
selection, which is the same as clicking on "Dolls" and then on "Barbie" (or just clicking on the brand "Barbie"). This third column is also slightly difficult to read because the bounding boxes of its listing seem to lead the user's eyes towards the icons in the fourth column. All in all, I find the page layout of ToyTime's homepage rather disorientating and haphazard – there are too many lines that do not help separate the page into easily processable visual, and thus logical, chunks.

With eight grandchildren, Delia is probably going to spend more than $75, and would promptly click on the "Free $20" coupon. The sweepstakes on the right catches her attention, too. After filling out the lengthy sweepstakes forms, Delia continues to look for some suggestions or some good sale items. Not knowing what toys to look for, she finds there are too many headlines screaming at her – Toy Story 2, Furby Baby, $20, $75, Enter to Win, Win $500 a Day, Deal Time – all on the top part of the screen. In addition, the primary colors used beg for her attention.

The Toy Story 2 gang should claim Eric in a heart beat, and he reckons that ToyTime should have the largest and most complete selection of Toy Story products.

Fiona would find the Pokémon icon and go straight there, ignoring the rest of the ruckus on the page.

3.3.6.

A speciality store is **Are You Game**, which carries only toys
for the mind – games and puzzle. Are You Game does not
have as many categorizations as eToys due to this specialized
nature. However, there are extra sortings, hidden in the drop
down menus on the left, listing types like "brain teasers" and
"magic" under "Your Interests", and "Dr. Seuss" and
"Peanuts" under "Your Favorites". These menus will take
some exploring for a first-timer, but are not very difficult to
remember, although I think "Your Favorites" should be
named "Favorite Character". The rest of the page is pretty
typical of other toy sites – thumbnails of the product listed as
specials on the front page, with super savings and other ads.
Notice, however, on the lower right hand corner, is the "Our
Favorites" recommendation link. This is surprising, since a

recommendation link is like a sales associates making suggestions to the customers. Leaving it in this most inconspicuous corner is, in my opinion, not the best way to garner business.

Since most of the games are for multiple players, Delia thinks she might be able to get away with buying one game per family, which means she has to select the games carefully, catering to the ages of the kids. Two of the three families have children of similar age, and the third has a variance of six years between the youngest and the eldest. In order to find a game suitable for them, Delia would have to think hard about what the kids enjoy most and look under those categories. In a physical store, she might have to read the instructions to figure out whether or not the game is suitable, but unfortunately, this is not given in the detailed description of the game, even as a summary. Well, at least the categories in the drop down menus are using large enough fonts.

SmarterKids targets its sales pitch at the parents, providing more in-depth reviews and ranking of the educational toys. This is actually quite a good selling point, which is why SmarterKids reserves a unusually large area on the screen for the age group category, coupled with icons. It also offers a "Parents Center" for advice seekers. If I were the designer, I would move the "learning style" survey to the top of the page or into this "Parents Center" to let the parents find matches for their children.

SmarterKids would be perfect for Eric, in search of a 'parenting tool' for his daughter. He might have to look

somewhere else for the the Toy Story figurine, but he will be
sure to bookmark this site the next time he needs some
advice. Delia could use of the advice on the site as well. There
are the "Gift Ideas", "Best Sellers" and "20 under $20"
recommendations, which she could not go too wrong with.
With only two main columns/colors of information to tackle,
Delia can definitely understand the layout of the site much
faster than some of the other sites.

3.4. Clothes and accessories

A study by PeopleSupport finds that women make up 50% of
online shoppers. [Bung] Also, in an article distributed by the
Washington Post, the reporters reported that,

> "...women are not only going online for the first time
> at a greater rate than men, they are opening their
> purses to electronic merchants faster than predicted.
> ... made women hungry for the convenience and lower
> prices the Internet promises [Stou]."

Shopping for clothing is very personal yet the customer rarely
knows in advance exactly what he or she wants – color, texture,
style, size and fit are all important considerations for such items.
The customer likes the option of feeling the fabric, trying on the
item, matching it with other items and so on. Trying to imitate this
shopping procedure as closely as possible is an online challenge,
which prompted Internet-based companies to open up physical
stores. [Stei] The other alternative for the customer when unable
to try on the clothes at the store would be to risk ordering it, then
returning if unsuitable. Thus, sizing measurements and the return
policy should be in a prominent and/or easily accessible place on

the page. And because it has to be customized, I relaxed the rule of the 'front page', for my analysis, to the secondary pages leading into either the men's or women's section.

I found the largest variance in the design of the online storefront in this category. There are the usual new items, sale, customer service, categories, shopping basket, etc., but the look and placement of these menus and choices vary so much from site to site that a user usually has to re-learn the interface of each site. Although a similar look-and-feel helps the user, it also nullifies the uniqueness of the site. It is thus necessary that each of the sites who emphasize selling 'individuality' be different in layout but similar in function. Like design or advertisement companies, a major part of the site design is to impress.

It is also interesting to note that most of these sites do not have a search function. The products are so irregular that there is really no standard to address them, for example, jeans, pants, trousers, chinos, stretch, regular, twill, cargo, khaki, etc. can all be used to describe various types of trousers-like wear. The color naming convention is also non-standard with names like oatmeal, ivory, bone or cream referring to similar yet slightly differing shades. Unless the customer already has the catalog number handy, it is almost impossible to find an item based on the 'name' of the piece of clothing. Furthermore, the menu hierarchy of most sites are shallow enough for the user to engage in only a few clicks before getting to a page which they can browse through specific selections.

I elected to look at the ladies' clothing section of the these stores, if there was a choice. Most of the sites were selling winter clothing, with the possibility of their summer stock on sale. Although they are all selling coats and gloves, each of the site pushes its own style and fashion, instead of factory-pressed products as with toys.

3.4.1. Profiles

Although very few men will shop for female clothing, Gary represents the population who shop for someone dear. Gary needs to get a birthday present for his wife but feels uncomfortable walking into a boutique alone. He knows her size and somewhat her style and taste in her wardrobe, but he really wants something that is vogue and slightly spicy to surprise her. Gary does not really know the names of the boutiques, nor the different classifications of women's clothing. He might even not have the particular measurements that are required by some companies, for example, he probably does not know his wife's arm length or inseam measurements. In other words, Gary needs lots of help, but is somewhat embarrassed to ask. He thought he might give online shopping a try, hoping that it might provide enough information for him to make a decision.

Helen is a mother looking for a good deal on the web together with her pre-teen daughters. Her kids are rapidly out-growing their current set of clothes, and Helen would like

to get something cheap but chic. Instead of going to the local mall with the unmanageable kids, Helen is amicable to the idea of an afternoon of quiet shopping, not having to constantly tend to the kids. Helen has been keeping in touch with technology and she is not uncomfortable with the Web, using it almost daily to send emails to her friends. Like most bargain hunters, she is drawn towards a sale. After settling her kids down in front of the computer, Helen closes her eyes and thinks of all the boutiques and clothing stores she frequents in the mall, plugs the store names into her browser, and hopes that they will lead to the relevant sites. Helen also goes to a search engine to look for some potential sites and finds links to most of the the major brands/designers.

As a college senior, Irene needs to get a few good outfits for her upcoming interviews. She will need formal blouses and pants, some shoes and possible a suit or two. Irene is on a budget, but she knows that she will have to spend some money on a good suit. From experience, she knows that especially for suits, she will have to try them on for their particular cuts and fits, and most likely she will have try on quite a few before finding something that really fits. With this in mind, Irene is also on a look-out for the company's return policy and any 'personal shopper' services that might help her in securing the best fit with the least price. The college town Irene lives in does not have a large mall with the classy boutiques she needs, thus she thought she might be able to find a better selection using online stores, crossing the

accessibility barrier.

3.4.2.

Eddie Bauer lists only one special item (laptop case) on its storefront homepage. The rest are links to holiday shopping and other departments. Since an English-speaking user's eyes tend to start reading from the left, the picture on the left naturally guides the eyes to the main menu (men's, women's…) using the same background framing. It seems strange that the major attractions of the page is to get people to sign up for the mailing list and watch real video rather than purchase clothes. The menu on top has a drop down sub-category list for users whose browsers have DHTML

capabilities, or defaults to the first sub-category for users without DHTML. Each sub-category is then divided into yet another level of product classification users have to sort through. For example, women's -> sweaters -> solid cotton sweaters, patterned cotton sweaters, sweater vests, and cardigans. This is great for database management and merchant classification, but may not coincide with the train of thought of a casual shopper, since a random shopper would most probably have little idea of the name of the product he or she is looking for. Fortunately, the site provides a thumbnail for each category, and all product names are listed in this same page, avoiding the need for the user to burrow to a deeper layer for the wrong items.
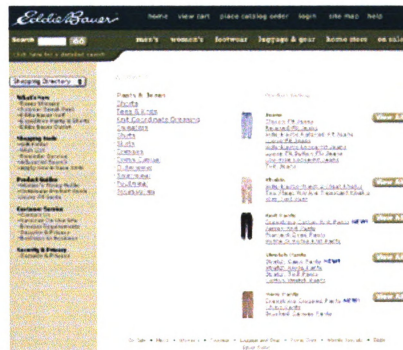
To Helen, a bricks-and-mortar Eddie Bauer store looks very different from their online storefront. The familiar men's and

women's division in its bricks-and-mortar stores is not the center stage here. However, Helen swiftly adjusts. She takes a look at the "Bonus Buy" selection, decides she is not interested, and goes to the "women's" department (either through the drop down menu on the left, or the overhead menu on the top). After clicking through a few categories, Helen realizes she has to click on the "view all" button to take a closer look at the products – the thumbnails are simply too small to tell the difference in order to make an informed decision. This expands the subcategory menu on the left and loads pictures of each item in that product line.

The dress clothes from Eddie Bauer are a little difficult for Irene to locate, since she has to go under "Dress Casual" and look for "Blazers & Jackets". She would have spotted this section immediately if she had walked into a physical store.

3.4.3.

Compared to Eddie Bauer, **Gap**'s page is more focused on getting the users into their shopping area – men's, women's and others – using complementary colors, large but simple graphics, and limited choices. The page is also small enough to fit into even the smallest screen settings (640x480), which a lot of sites are ignoring. Gap used to have a comparison page, where the user can view two similar products side by side. (Great for products like jeans.) I was quite disappointed when they removed this feature, probably due to the high maintenance and need for multiple images and modeling.

SHORT SLEEVE T'S

LONG SLEEVE T'S

Gap uses a similar classification as Eddie Bauer, except for the "view as images". With the same amount of magnification, Helen is able to look at all the selections under a category instead. Although it takes longer to load, Helen gets to compare the entire catalog on a single page, rather than clicking back and forth among the different sub-sub-categories. This overall view would also benefit Gary, not having to guess at the names of items.

3.4.4.

The mail-order powerhouse **Lands' End** duplicated its large inserts from its catalog onto the web page, featuring a detailed shot of a single jacket. This would look great in a printed catalog, but the browser window is unable to display it all, both size and details, and thus loses the effect it achieved in the catalog. This picture serves more as window dressing than anything else. Lands' End cleverly left the "women's" and "men's" link on this picture, which is good since the dark-blue-on-blue tabs on top do not really get noticed as a menu. On side note, the way my window was sized (640x480), I missed the entire column on the right numerous times, until I was taking screenshots. This is because of the large amount

of white space in that corner, deceiving users into thinking that they have seen everything on the page. As such, items listed on the bottom right are likely to be overlooked.

Lands' End has a lot more categories for Irene's needs, tailored or casual, sorted in "petite", "tall", and "18W~26W". Clicking on "Tailored" lists all the sub-categories with a thumbnail. The thumbnails in the sub-sub-categories are more visible, but not as detailed as one might like them. Irene can also take advantage of the "Personal Model" who would try on clothes for her. Like Eddie Bauer, Lands' End's "view all" lists only images from the sub-sub-category, and Gary would have to move in and out of the categories to find

something, confusing him further since he is already
unfamiliar with the names and terminology.

3.4.5.

Like Gap, **Dockers** presents a minimalistic page, with key
items and distinctive text. The special links on the left, khaki
'ticket' and "Mystery Men" logo, stand out a lot more than
other sites with a million and one things on them. Again,
Dockers' page fits into a 640x480 window easily, giving the
user a overall view of the available choices. The only thing I
was unhappy about is the interaction with the menu on the
left. A mouse rollover expanded a pseudo sub-menu, a
description set in list form which gave the appearance of
being clickable. I was quite disappointed when I was unable
to click on this list, or on any of the pictures in the squares
above.

The women's page does seem to have a more sophisticated air compared to the others that Irene has seen. Browsing through the choices provided by various links to other selections, although not in an easily visible or strict hierarchy, is more congruent to the way Helen shops in a physical store shops – by related items – since she does not have anything precise on her shopping list. For example, the Trends collection can be found through "Collections" -> "See The Trends Collection," and can also be found on the individual item page (e.g. Capri Utility Khakis). This keeps the 'browsing' users like Helen around and interested in the collections, but might annoy goal-oriented users like Gary by leading him round and round to the same items.

3.4.6.

Again, simple and distinctive graphical choices as we look at **J. Crew**'s page – men's, women's, specials, sales - all neatly within the smallest window size. By listing menu items horizontally (instead of vertically in a column) saves a lot of redundant wrapping space. The site also maintains this horizontal flow in their clothing list, where the user would scroll and read through the selections in a left-to-right manner. One would think that this less common presentation will disturb visitors, yet J. Crew neatly resolves this problem by having each model's arm, elbow or hand intrude into the unused white space of her neighbor. This then creates a sense of continuity as the user notices a part of the next model and realizes that there is still more to the page.

All the information that Gary or Helen need is on one single page once they click into the "women's" department, with typeface and color differences indicating hierarchy. Irene

even got some help from the "ideas @ work" consultant for working clothes.

3.4.7.

Teenagers would definitely want to check out **dELiAs**. Its flashy and 'gossipy' colors and looks work well in attracting girls of that age. With fashion guides and astrology readings, dELiAs aims to create a sense of community to keep its users coming back and sharing. Whether intended or not, the page layout is slightly disorganized, with five or more regions of information – sales bubbles in the center, highlighted topics on the left, related information on the right, a shopping-related sphere on the top right, and a tiny menu in the top

center. The user's eyes will be guided to the center bubbles, but more time is needed to understand the other bubbles. For example, the "Yours is a sign..." Taurus bubble and the "Number among the great..." hash bubble are expansions of the lounge bubble (forward triangle in light blue) in the menu. With no guide as to which sub-menu they belong to, the user has to immerse herself into the symbols on the page first before comprehending this subtle relationship. This same example also shows the Taurus bubble in orange while being part of the lounge, which has a light blue bubble. The designer has thus missed using color as a useful relationship defining tool.

The model-in-a-bubble really brings forth the discounted items to Helen and her two daughters, especially her middle school girl, who is sensitive to what the "in" things are. Also, the yellow bubble with "Start Shopping" and other essential links channels Helen's attention towards her task so that she does not feel too lost in the site.

3.4.8.

WORLD PIECE

oc tabs pa to the after and to ps d .

SpecialHOLIDAY Sale at WORLD PIECE
20% - 50% OFF all items
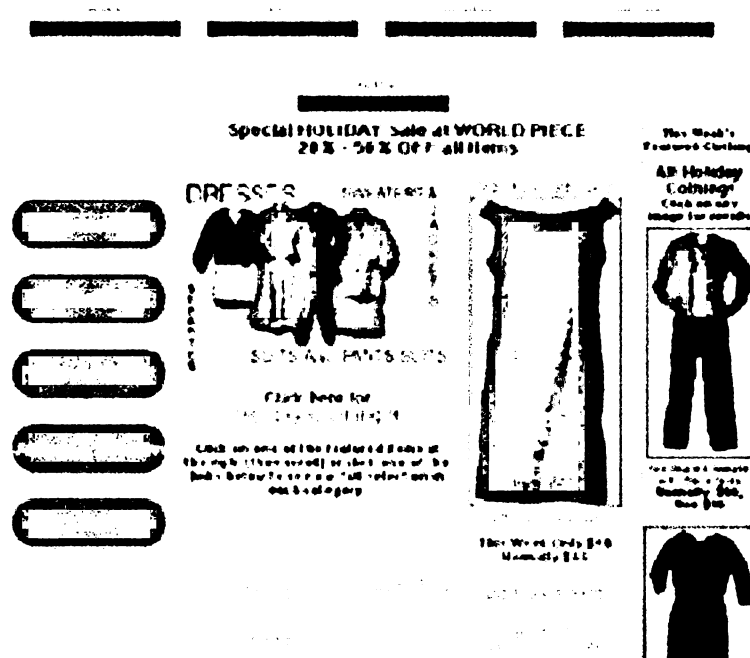
World Piece is by far the least sophisticated page among all. It does not have models to parade the clothes, nor graphic artists to touch up images. The font sizes are different, images are dithered, and buttons are bland. The page layout also needs work. I was quite surprised to discover that the company is actually serious about its site, since it does frequently update its selections.

WORLD PIECE

Irene was not impressed by World Piece's page at all. She took a look at the suits and pants selections and decided that the site does not inspire confidence nor assurance, but instead left a disconcerting feeling that her orders would be filled by amateurs. The description of each item is very detailed and honest, but she encountered several database errors while retrieving the images, leaving her with the impression that although the company may be good at selling clothes, it is not good at selling clothes online.

3.4.9.

The Canadian branch of the Italian casual-wear company, **United Colors of Benetton**, understands doing business with Americans very well, listing on its first page the exchange rate. The left corner spots an artistic menu for "women's", "men's" and "accessories". The menu below it, however, needs some work to allow more space between the five menu items. The generic photos that occupy the majority of the page, although clickable, do not say much. I had to guess from the URL in the status bar of the browser window where each will lead me to – top left: women's; top right: men's; bottom left: sweaters; bottom right: not a link.

The sweaters page that Helen landed on listed all the different sweaters with pictures. Once the all the images are loaded, she could glance through all the sweaters without too much clicking and further waiting. Gary is also grateful that he does not have to guess at the category of clothing but simply look at pictures for items he could purchase.

3.4.10.

BlueFly has very distinct icons indicating clear categories. While identifying some special topics like "holiday" in the page, the column on the right looks like a database driven sales item that updates daily. This keeps the site changing and encourages users to return to see what is new. BlueFly plays to the users' fashion sense by utilizing a designer list. It looks similar to some other catalog pages, but with BlueFly there is a subtle hierarchy of importance, achieved by varying font size.

Helen first scrolls down the right column of the page to look at today's "FlyBuys" and then starts picking through the categories under "Womens", looking for cheaply priced designer products.

Clicking on "Womens" brings up two types of search options – by designer or by category – and lots of other Cosmopolitan-ish columns. This suits Irene's purpose since she can get advice and a good deal on trustworthy products.

Even Gary found the site easy to navigate, with the obvious choices in a distinct color; if only he could retrieve an extensive list of merchandise... .

3.5. Computing

Buyers of software and hardware are more likely to know what they are looking for than aimlessly browse around. The need for a good search function in a prominent and easily accessible location on a page is thus essential. In cases where the user does not know the name of the product, s/he will at least have some idea what functionalities s/he is looking for. Thus, a secondary search function an online software vendor should provide is classification by common functions.

In some ways, selling computing products is very much like selling books or toys – there are standardized units of measurements and specification so one cannot really go wrong. In fact, these specifications are more precise than toys or books, and a typical user will have to do some research on them to even begin to compare the different products.

On the other hand, there are also the intangible measures of usability, upgrades, bugs, technical support and price protection that a user needs to be aware of. For example, a user might have purchased a graphics application from a vendor on Monday and the company announces a new version on Tuesday. Can the user get a free upgrade or rebate? What should happen if the user found out, after trying, that this application is incompatible with some other software or hardware s/he is using? We do not experience such concerns when purchasing other kind of products – if the shirt does not fit, we return it; nor will a teddy bear get too many upgrades in its lifetime.

Not so for most software – if the shrinkwrap is broken, the user is stuck with it. A handful of companies get around this problem by delivering downloadable demos, but most do not bother. Even with demos, it is unlikely that the user will uncover every little incompatibility problem. These intangible assets or liabilities of an application can only become apparent with extensive use. With the availability of user feedback and discussion on the vendor's website, it will help build the confidence and expectation of a potential user for a particular product. By building this trust, the vendor can in turn benefit from a successful transaction and/or future transactions. It is unfortunate that customers have to do their own research, since I have yet to find a software vendor site which provides this service.

An observation of online computing stores disturbs me – the ability to display a large amount of special items on the homepage often causes the store to construct pages larger than the lowest screen size (640x480 pixels). Most vendors employ similar presentations – menu on the top for various departments. Some of them use the left hand column for related information like auction or affiliate sites, while others place their category indices there. It is, however, alarming to notice that most sites appear to not have essential links like a search function or help button because they are placed in the oft missed extreme right of the window.

While browsing around, I noticed that due to the variety in colors and such, a lot of popular items have a 3 days to 2 weeks availability schedule. This discourages users from placing an advanced order, not knowing when their order would be shipped and would rather check

back later. Thus another service that online companies should provide is email notification, if requested, of product availability.

3.5.1. Profiles

Part of Mary Ann's job description is to be a purchasing agent for her department. Buying things for an R&D department gives her more freedom in terms of store selection, since a large number of the purchase requests are new technology items which the regular suppliers of her company do not usually carry. Mary Ann has learnt a lot about online shopping thanks to this role, and has experienced her fair share of troublesome purchasing processes. When she needed to shop for a new digital camera, Mary Ann naturally starts looking through online stores which she is familiar with, comparing prices and specifications. She is looking for a camera with the same functions as a normal 35mm camera, but has download capabilities.

It is the summer holidays, and Nora just got a spanking new computer as a present, in preparation for the start of high school come Fall. She will be installing various productivity software plus a few games on it. Talking to some of her upper classmates, Nora found out that she will need a word processor plus a drawing/charting program. She has also been dying to get her hands on the immensely popular game "The SIMS" that her friends are raving about. Since both her parents are out working during the day, Mother told Nora

that she could log on and scout the prices for the software, and mother will buy them for Nora once she has the chance to sit down and approve them. Nora is no stranger to the Internet, as she has done projects in school that required research on the Web. This is, however, Nora's first online shopping experience. She will have to find the right software (her friends have given her some suggestions), and look for a store with competitive pricing.

Olga knows that her father, a retired engineer, likes to tinker with his computer. She thought that she would surprise him with a little gift (under $100) since he had volunteered to pay for her trip to Europe. Olga is a medical intern and is thus on call most of this semester. Although there is a computer in the staff lounge, Olga feels that she should not hog the machine, since other interns and doctors also use the machine to check their emails. She thought she might be able to make use of the interim time between shifts and seeing patients to look for a new gadget that her father might like. Though familiar with the Web, Olga does not have too much time nor energy to carefully compare each product for prices and specifications. All she needs is something new that falls within her budget and works with her father's computer.

3.5.2.

Outpost is certainly not a new comer to online sales. I remember a "Cyberian Outpost" in the haydays of the web start-up, sporting an distinctly different interface, with the front page holding national flag of different countries, directing users to their closest distribution centers around the world. The recent Outpost homepage has evolved gradually to the Amazonian style, as more and more departments are added to its selections. Its right column highlights the special items with colorful pictures and very concise text. As every customer will need to check out the details of the product, there is no point wasting screen space for the front page. However, I find that Outpost does not make good use of its

prime real estate on the first scrolling page of the screen. It spends two-thirds of this space explaining the obvious. For example, there are three links to its "After Holiday Sale" – each of them already using a slanted word to draw attention – going overboard with this advertisement. In addition, the search box on the far right is hardly visible to a customer with a small window size. As experienced online shoppers learn, a hidden cost to watch out for is the shipping. Instead of flaunting a "Shipping Showdown" with Amazon at the end of the page, Outpost could have easily place its true price, free shipping policy in big bold letters at the top of the page. On a personal note, Outpost has so far been my favorite site to price products, as I found out on numerous occasions that its selection is by far the most extensive.

After doing a little research on the Web, reading up on digital cameras and their features, and using Active Buyer's Guide (http://www.activebuyersguide.com/) to narrow the range of cameras, Mary Ann is ready to look for a store. Her first hit is Outpost, having frequented the store in her previous purchase endeavors. Ignoring the rest of the page, Mary Ann seeks out the search box and types in the name of the camera she has in mind. She then navigates swiftly through the site, often opening different windows to compare the features side by side. Mary Ann is already familiar with Outpost's shipping policies and has no problem locating links to functions she frequently uses.

Outpost looks like a good place for Olga. Upon hitting the
Outpost page, Olga is immediately attracted to the "sale"
links, hoping that she can find a good bargain there. Olga
also discovers that with every product that she clicks on,
Outpost advertises its free overnight shipping policy.
Although slightly more expensive, Olga finds this "true cost"
of the listings simplifying her task. And with the extensive
product selection, she can do effective comparisons within the
site.

Per her friends' suggestion, Nora plugs in Outpost's URL in
her browser. She looks through the big-ticket items
advertised on right of the page, and determines that they are
useless to her cause. She carefully clicks on the "Computer"
tab, bearing in mind that she might need to come back to this
page again to click on the "Games" tab. Unfortunately, Nora
does not manage to get too far down the hierarchical menu
before she is stuck wondering which sub-category "word
processors" belong to. She looks around on the page, and
finally saw the search box. That solves her problem. Nora
recalls a friend recommending "Word-something" as the
word processor, and she retrieves the special editions of
Microsoft Word with rebates, among others. She clicks on it
to place it in her cart, but also writes it down on paper since
she does not know if Outpost will remember her cart. Typing
in "draw" or "chart" did not get her too far in with her search
for other software, and Nora decides to ask her mother at
night. Nora then clicks on the "Games" tab, and again uses

the search box to find her game easily.

The electronic/computer store **Egghead** merged with the
online retail warehouse OnSale (which sells mainly
discontinued products) to create an all-in-one shopping site.
To help customers navigate, Egghead places a location tracker
"You are here ->" beneath the tabs. Not only does it pinpoint
the page in the site to any lost customer, but also benefits the
customer who used the search engine to pull up a certain
product. The customer now learns, for example, that
Egghead classifies a particular USB hub under "Datacom"
products, and can proceed to investigate other USB hubs, or

alternatives to them. Besides placing a big prominent "Free Shipping" logo in the main column of the screen, Egghead utilizes this space effectively for hot items with big icons and red price tags. Since the rest of the page is in a pastel/lavender color, these icons and text stand out significantly.

Mary Ann decides to try looking at Egghead + OnSale, in hopes that she might chance upon good deal. She briefly glances through the special items on sale, but none of them catches her eyes. She finds the search box and types in her request. Since Mary Ann does not frequent Egghead, she wonders what the "Superstores" drop-down menu does. She looks around carefully, and surmises that it must mean to search "Computer products," "Software" and "Electronics" (blue tabs). She wonders why she has to search the "Auctions and Surplus" separately.

Olga has seen Egghead mentioned in some articles, and thought she would try the store out. She does not see anything that might interest her father among the hot items, but notices the big "Free Shipping" sign on the right, and the "Top Ten" list just above it. Suspecting that the popular items might contain a new gadget or two, she proceeds to check the site out in more detail.

3.5.4.

buy.com establishes itself as a low price Internet superstore. The white search and order tracking boxes are extremely apparent on the dark background. Unfortunately, this dark header takes up half of a 640x480 screen window, and it can definitely be more thrifty in the use of space. The 'department' tabs at the very top of the page ("Computer," "Software," etc.) are easily missed, as more and more users get used to the tabs running across below the company logo. The page also spans wider than the 640 pixels minimum, causing more misery for those already hampered by a small screen. My primary gripe with buy.com was that it required the user to first choose a store from its menu then type in the

keyword to search for. If the user did not pick a store to search in, an empty search result would be returned. (Incidentally, between the time I started this project, I had the opportunity to give the buy.com a detailed account of all the interface problems I discovered in their site. They have since then corrected most of the problems, including the above mentioned searching pitfall and several other interpretation problems.)

As with Outpost, Nora encountered a similar problem at buy.com: she was unable to deduce the hierarchy of categories. She quickly learns that going through the categories is not the best way to look for her software, and starts using the search functions. Since she is still unfamiliar with software titles, the advertisements and top ten items do not mean too much to her.

The little computer in the hospital lounge is unable to display the full page of buy.com width-wise. Olga tries to scroll horizontally constantly, checking out the special items on sale, but it soon becomes a hindrance to her ability to look the site quickly.

3.5.5.

eCOST specializes in computers and consumer electronics, advertising that they save the customer time and money by carefully building their infrastructure, passing the savings on to the customers. It boasts of keeping its low costs current to the day. eCOST lists its categories half way down the middle of the left column. It uses the top of this column for help topics, which I believe benefits customers less than a list of categories. Also, eCOST attempts to highlight the three special promotion products – "Stylus Color 740", "Nikon Coolpix 950" and "Microsoft Project 98" – by setting them on colored backgrounds; visually, this approach conceals these advertisements in the same positive (blue) space. I noticed

the "FREE FREIGHT" and "Buy Now" buttons, but hardly saw these specials items, let alone their prices.

The screen size of eCOST is once again problematic to Olga. She is also unable to find a link that indicates something cool and new, and all the advertised items are big-ticket items which she cannot afford.

Mary Ann immediately notices the digital camera link for "Nikon Coolpix 950" at the center of the page. A bit out of her league, but she is excited and looks around the page, locating the "Digital Cameras" link. Rather than using the search function, Mary Ann decides to use this categorical link.

3.5.6.

NetMarket seems like a Jack-of-all-trades place, selling popular household items by using a warehouse membership system. Like Egghead, it lists the logical page location in its

category classification, providing a sense of direction for customer navigation. So far NetMarket is the only site that provides (pseudo) reviews and helps assist the decisions of its customers. It has a list of "Buyer's Guides" for the newer and more complicated products. For an inexperienced customer, getting a brief overview of the product and its category, with a list of parameters to watch for or compare against, is almost as helpful as having a salesperson asking pertinent questions.

Mary Ann chanced upon NetMarket from one of the banner ads some time ago, and saved it in her bookmarks. She occasionally comes to NetMarket to look at its sales items. Even an experienced shopper like Mary Ann is curious about NetMarket's Buyer's Guide for digital cameras. She looks through it briefly to confirm the check list she has prepared by browsing other digital camera sites, making a few extra notes. Unfortunately, NetMarket only carries a few varieties of digital cameras, and Mary Ann is not satisfied with its selections.
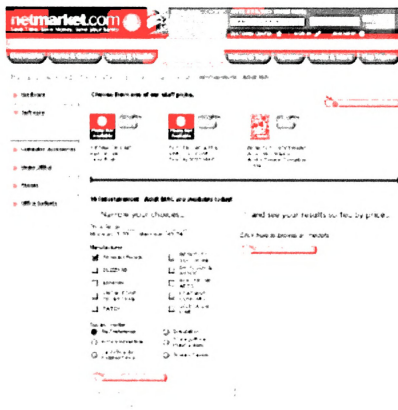
Nora finds the categorical search on software in NetMarket very helpful. Instead of typing in a word in the search box and hoping to get a list of possible products, she gets to narrow her choice by answering questions about what she is looking for. She also gets to check out a couple of other games in the same category as "The SIMS."

4. Redesign

Online stores have gradually established their own culture in page formatting and customers, too, have learnt the schema of a typical online store. They know where the session/customer related links are (top right corner and bottom of page), and the relative positioning of one group of ideas to another (e.g. menus on top with categories on the left).
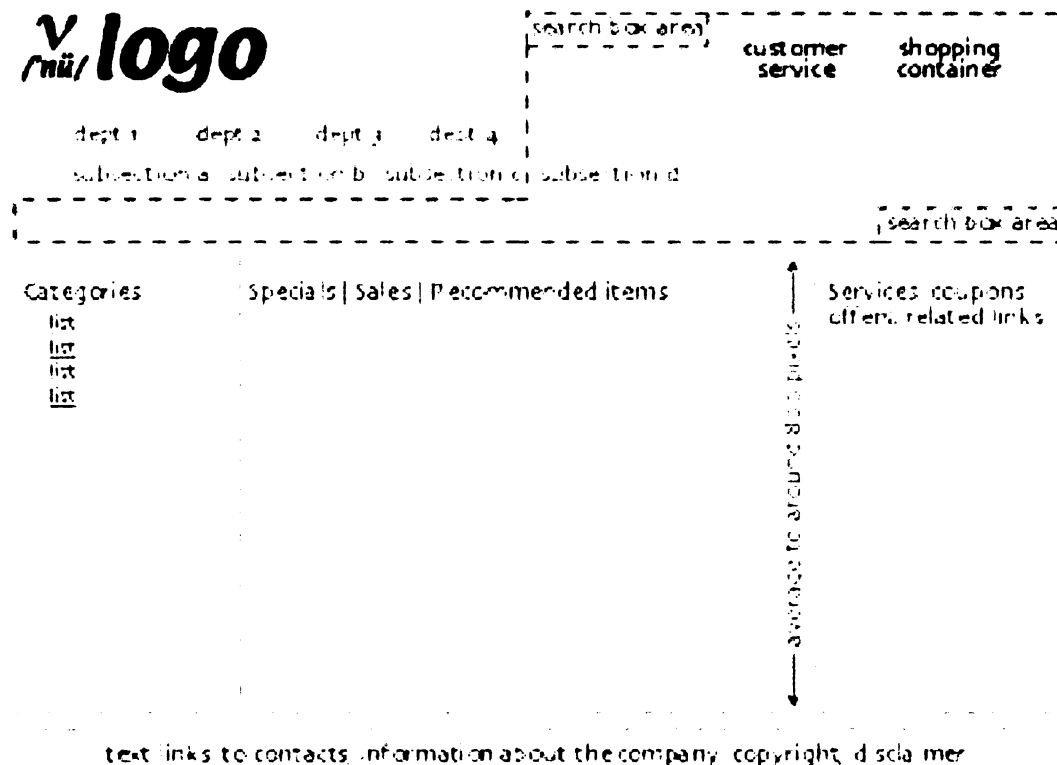
The figure above shows a scheme for a generic online store. The logo is situated on the top left corner, followed with each department types as tabbed selections beneath it. These tabs usually have a little more space below for their respective sub-sections. Over on the right-hand corner a customer usually finds the shopping cart, help button, and one or two

more customer related services like order information and account information. The search function, for those who have it, falls somewhere within the area (outlined in blue), from just under the sub-sections listings to the entire top area on the right of the logo. The red content area is usually divided into two or three columns, with the left column predominantly used as a category index. The 'center-stage' of the page is reserved for special items which the store wants to highlight or advertise, either because of their low prices or because they are the most popular items currently. The right column of the red content area varies from site to site, containing special limited time offers to a variety of lists. At the bottom of the page, depicted in green, one usually finds the links which are necessary but not so important to an enjoyable online shopping experience, like the privacy policy and contact information.

This schema makes it easy for a customer to locate information, but limits the company from expressing its individuality. With numerous competitors around in a tumultuous market, an online store also worries about how it can distinguish itself so that customers will remember it and thus return to it. Customer who have the time might be willing to adapt and re-learn an interface, provided that they can observe that the store has something special to offer, for example, a unique experience, impressive graphics, flashy animations, artistic interpretations or special services.

My redesigns that follow are but one of the many ideas I have. I approached my redesigns based on the issues reviewed in the analyses, reducing as many user-interface problems I could predict, but there were tradeoffs to be made. The sketches provide only the essential elements to help my explanation, and thus may appear rather bare compared to the

real sites. I have left room for items such as the tabbed interface to co-exist with the rest of the elements, but I did not put these extra interfaces in.

These screenshots are again scaled down to fit in the flow of the text, and their full length version are available in the appendix.

4.1. Books

Due to the dominating influence of Amazon, an online bookstore design should not deviate too much from Amazon's layout. My design left the logo and customer services in their respective places. The icons can be reduced to make room for other services or tabbed

menus if necessary. Since a large percentage of users use the search function [Niel, 0797], I placed the white search box on a dark background to accentuate this function. For this search-dominant, goal-oriented crowd, providing related links in the database and maintaining good customer relations is crucial in book sales and traffic, with the latter including email updates when books are available, comparison with other books, customer recommendations and even search links to competitors if the book is unavailable.

With search-dominant users making up the crowd, the insubstantial "editor's choice" has limited abilities to attract attention. With more screen space allocated to a handful of books, the editors can do a better job at providing details and quotations, and even cliff-hanging text that usually appear on the back covers of books. With such exposure, these books stand a better chance with the casual shopper. Little picture icons of the books will help provide a sense of identification and necessary visual space within lines of text.

The left column provides several ways to guide customers, with lists of bestsellers and a popular subject index. Since these links are just a selected few, the "subject" and "popular" headers are both clickable to bring up a more detailed classification.

Promotional offers and coupons can be placed after the list of subjects or book highlights. Since this homepage's main audience is the wandering, undecided customer, s/he would have scrolled down and thus spotted the promotions. I would suggest placing the same promotional ads at the bottom of each page of book description, to

better capture the search-oriented customers who have missed these ads and coupons because they did not glance down the homepage.

4.2. Cards
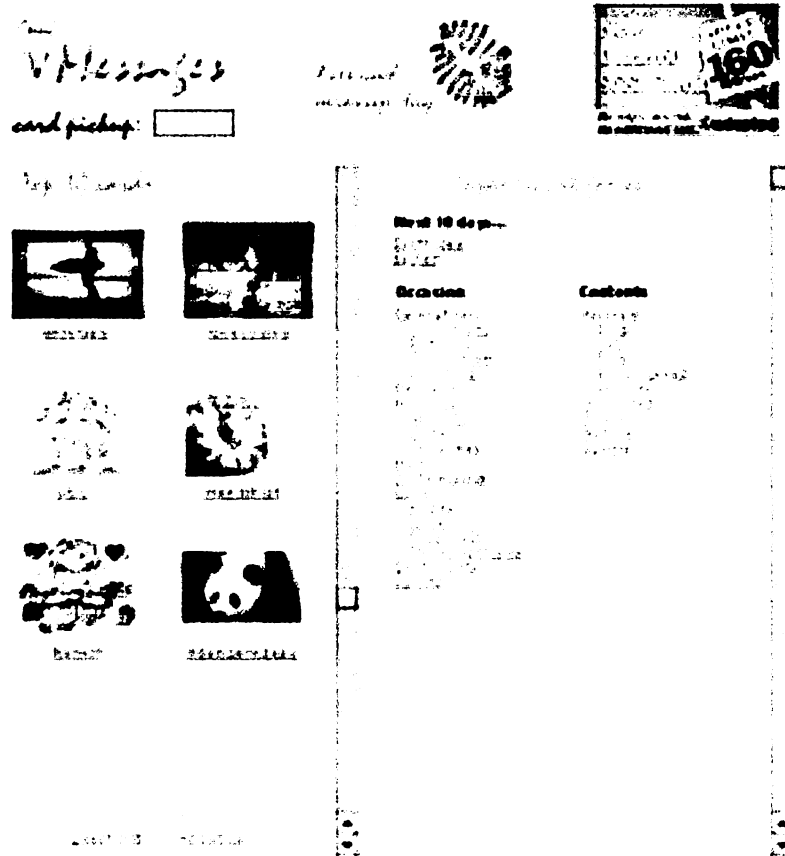
To survive and draw in advertiser funds, an e-card site should prepare and consistently update a large selection of cards. This will keep the users' interest and thus encourage return patronage. Conversely, if the site does not have a large repertoire, it can also compete and survive by collecting and promoting a special series of cards, a comic strip, or cards of particular themes and quality.

That said, let us look at the page layout.

Since there is no need for continuity of the header graphics (logo and pick up area) to the category index, there is no apparent reason to use a standard layout. Also, as most of the e-cards sites have demonstrated, via a lack of a categorical index in the left column, there is even less need to conform to the "index-in-left-column" rule.

The two important sections of an e-card site are the categorical index and the fast-click cards for people in a hurry. I have partitioned my page into two distinct columns using frames, with the latter in the left frame. This left frame lists the Top 10 cards of the site for the past seven days, banking on the fact that a user in a hurry would go for the most popular "Special of the Day". The user can thus swiftly compare and make a decision, click on the icon of the card, type in addressee information and send off a card.

The pick up location must be in an easy to find spot and the top left corner will be an ideal place users who read from left to right. It must also be located near the banner ads, for these banner ads to better draw user attention and hopefully invite clicks. By placing banner ads near the pick up location, advertiser exposure is guaranteed for visitors, especially first timers, when picking up a card.

As Donald Norman reminds us on "banner blindness", users are 'trained' by the schema of free sites to scroll pass large colorful rectangles to get to the 'real' information. [Norm] I suggest

circumventing the results of this training by placing a special day banner (preferably animated) to the right of the logo and pick up area, suggesting that there is more on the right, and thus guiding the users' eyes towards the ad on the far right.

In the right column is a detailed, expanded hierarchical list of categories. This frame is free of graphics so that it will load quickly. Goal-orientated visitors can scroll through the categories according to their individual interest, because this page indexes each card in multiple ways. This expanded view also serves as a site index for the astute user to utilize the browser find function to find specific words or descriptions.

Since the service provided is free, I do not anticipate too many complaints or concerns. I left the "Questions" and "About Us" links at the bottom of the left frame, but it can be easily be repeated in the right one.

4.3. Toys
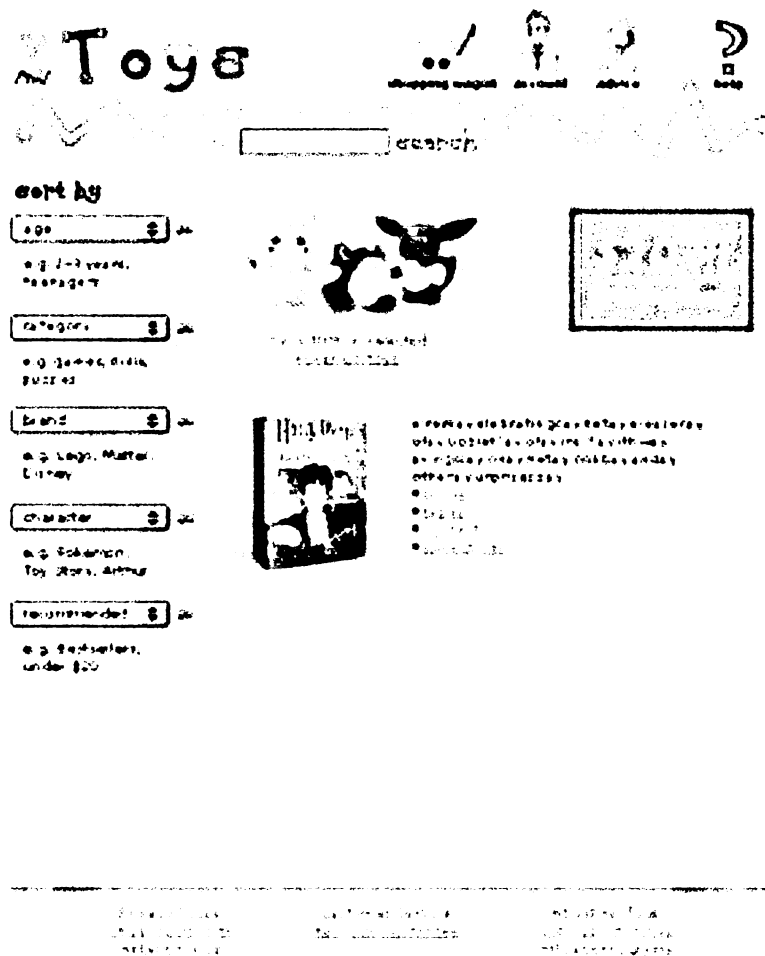
Most of the sites selling toys provide more than usual number of ways for the customer to look for toys. This is probably a lesson learnt from the brick-and-mortar stores sales experience. I have picked the more popular sorting orders (age, category, brand, etc.) out and implemented them as drop-down menus in the left-hand column. Since the user is unable to scan through these menus without first clicking on each, an example or two about each sorting

order is needed to help clarify the general search criteria.

Besides the usual "help", "shopping wagon" and customer "account", I also suggest a help-line "advisor" for parents and educators. This advisor would provide educational and psychological guidelines for the adults through articles and "Questions and Answers" sessions. I can even expand into another area where kids can visit for online chats and network games.

The nü-Toys header color scheme tries to imitate kids' affinity to cheery rainbow colors. As a result, important links and attractions can potentially be overshadowed by the vibrant colors. As such, a lot of white space was left between each element so that they are able to stand out on their own.

A typical way to advertise related merchandise is to put them together with the most popular item – "selling by association". For example, linking all Harry Potter merchandise and activities together will draw more traffic to those link then if they were scattered.

If there are any special events or offers, the customer should get to see it without having to scroll down the page. Therefore, the coupon area should share the same priority as advertised special items; and thus the "$20 off coupon" was placed immediately below the header, next to the Pokémon toys promotion and the most common sorting method menu – "age".

4.4. Clothes and accessories

Designing a homepage for an online clothing store requires a more impressionable interface than other type of merchandise. To sell its clothes and designs, the store needs to take more liberty with the standard layout in order to express its individually and thus establish its brand. But at the same time, it needs also to conform loosely with the standard layout so as not to confuse a new customer.
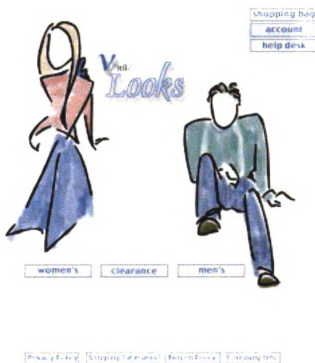
My re-design of an online clothing store combines the layout of typical online store functions (help, shopping baskets, privacy statement, etc.) with catalog layouts (models, index, etc.) The front page to the site is simplistic, compared to other stores, to primarily emphasize the style and emotional appeal of the brand. It spots two models in the seasonal selections. The "help desk" not only answers

shopping and account problems, but also contains a fashion guide. Advice columns will help with the decision process, especially for someone new, like Irene or Gary, or even for someone like Helen who wishes to stay trendy.

As mentioned in the analysis section, the knowledge of the store's return policy is of high priority to customers of this genre, since clothes sizes, colors and proportions are non-standard, thus making the chance of a return much greater. I have placed the "Return Policy" in its usual position at the bottom of the screen, but limited its companions to three instead of the usual ten or more as this will allow it to stand out more effectively.

As comparison of various purchase choices is very important (no one ever walks into a store and buys the first blouse she sees), I would want a site that can display its merchandise side by side. Dockers used to have a neat utility where one can pair one's selection of tops with bottoms, providing a similar experience of trying on clothes in the fitting room. Gap had something similar, too, but both utilities were phased out after a few months. I suspect that they were difficult to maintain due to the necessary high frequency updates. In light of that, I settled for a weekly (or monthly) model. The women's front page shows a model dressed in a set of carefully selected apparels from the store. This aesthetic presentation enforces the opinion of the customer about the store, as well as providing her with some suggestions on colors and clothing combinations. On the right of the model is a list of item descriptions where a customer can click to view details of an item.

Since each brand has its own color codes and descriptions, and a search tree is broad and shallow, I saw no point in providing a search function. Instead, I chose to list the entire collection, in their sub-category names, on the further right of the model. When the customer clicks on the icon, a full selection of the specified category will be displayed pictorially as medium-sized icons. This helps reduce the need for the user to click back and forth from the index text description to the garment picture, and eliminates the guessing game: trying to tell from the text what the actual product looks like. It also fits the profile of a window shopper, doing visual searches for something striking, even tempting her into some items that were not on her shopping list.

4.5. Computing

Online shoppers at computer stores are most likely to be apt computer users. Since they have some knowledge of what they are looking for, they are more than likely to use the search function.

In the redesign of a computing retailer site, I kept the four important functions usually found in headers – order tracking, help, shopping carts and search – in my header. However, I moved them to the left of the header, as that is the first place a user would start reading the page. This de-emphasized the name of the company, but placed the search box in the top-left corner as the first thing a user sees, which, in my opinion, was a fair tradeoff because customers will then remember the company by their service, selection and ease of use.

I deliberately limited the height of the header so that it will not occupy too much screen space on a computer with limited window size. The customer should be able to see the header *and* several other special items on the page. This ensures that the ads will be viewed by the customers, including any limited time offers. However, the number of special items should be limited to seven, as customers will begin to forget what they have seen as the number of items increases.

Due to the speed of introduction and increasingly blurred boundaries in product definition, not only should a good computing store provide a highly visible and versatile search engine that searches both the titles and descriptions, but also a hierarchical category menu that is cross-indexed, with clear navigational compasses. I have thus implemented the idea of a search path (e.g. hardware >> printer >> inkjet) as in some of the sites. It implicitly helps the users navigate and learn about the site structure and product classification. Familiarity with the site means a better chance that the customer will remember and return. The search path also serves as another way to direct the flow of traffic, by pointing out to the users related items through the path to their goal.

For customers who do not know exactly what they want, the left-hand column contains expanded lists of merchandise classification and sub-classification. The customer can choose to go through these lists in detail, or do a search.

By providing a direct and immediate link for potential customers

interested in shipping cost estimates, nü-Tech leaves a good and honest shopping experience in the users' minds, even before they register with the site.

5. General Recommendation

Against the recommendations of one of the renown usability experts, Jacob Nielsen [Niel, 1199], the tabbed interface at the top of a webpage, with a left-hand menu column, remain overwhelmingly popular with the majority of websites. Thus, a newcomer to the online business should follow the "norm", since potential customers are likely to have spent more time at competitors' sites where they have been trained to this schema.

A site that promotes merchandise using its brand name depends heavily on its ability to stand out of the crowd uniquely. However, designers who flaunt the 'rules' do so at considerable risk because information displayed outside the accepted schema will likely be overlooked. [Norm] Nielson expressed these same sentiments in one of his Alertbox articles, "...anything that is a convention and used on the majority of the other sites will be burned into the users' brains and you can only deviate from it on pain of major usability problems." [Niel, 0899] Nevertheless, I feel that plenty of design freedom still exist within the accepted boundaries for web designers to work with. For example, variations in colors and different thematic elements can be used to set the stage and atmosphere of a site, individualizing it while remaining within the popularly used schema.

As screen sizes of 640x480 still exist, one should design within such screen restrictions but be flexible enough for larger window sizes. This is to

empower companies to reach as many users as possible. Another reason is that sites designed for a large screen might have too much content which will overwhelm users.

Due to the emergence of web enabled cell phones, an increasing number of mobile users will access the web with the small screen on their phones. Thus, if the company presents a text version of its site, it can reach an even larger audience. This is, of course, limited to sites that can provide text-only content. Products where an image conveys a lot of details which cannot otherwise be expressed in text (such as clothes), customers would prefer to view a full-color picture and thus the use of a web-enabled cell phone for this kind of purchase will not be popular nor viable at this time.

6. Future Work

There are different parts to a webpage and this analysis is only an overview based on user interface design principles, drawn from books and articles by Brenda Laurel, Jennifer Flemming, Jakob Nielsen, and Donald Norman. There were no detailed analyses of the pictorial layout of the icons, colors, placement of banner ads, and the psychological implications of a design. Since web design is relatively new, drawing much upon numerous and sometimes conflicting principles of user interface, presentation, print, physical store layout, and store window design techniques, there remains much work to be done in formulating a set of principles specifically for the web. A means of assessing the effectiveness of these principles and page designs would be to monitor site traffic or compare financial performance data before and after a re-design.

I realize that role-playing the persona described in each analysis was done through one individual's perspective. Characters defined and role-played by a group should be able to garner more balanced insights.

In addition, further research regarding the choice and ratio of color on a page, and work regarding advertisement banner placement can be done. One can also explore the long term appeal of personalization and community building services.

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8. Appendix

This appendix lists the full-colored screenshots of the sites examined, in the order they were mentioned in the analysis. The screenshots have been scaled down to fit into the formatting requirements where necessary.

All screenshots are copyrighted by their respective companies, and are only used in this thesis under the "fair use" Copyright Act guidelines.

Images in this thesis are presented in color.

WELCOME | BOOKS | MUSIC | DVD & VIDEO | TOYS & GAMES | BESTSELLERS | FEATURED IN THE MEDIA | ELECTRONICS & SOFTWARE | AWARD WINNERS | HOME IMPROVEMENT | COMPUTERS & INTERNET | KIDS | AUCTIONS | ZSHOPS | BUSINESS & INVESTING

BOOK SEARCH | BROWSE SUBJECTS

SEARCH

Books [GO]

BROWSE

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Christian Books
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Cooking, Food & Wine
Entertainment
Health, Mind & Body
History
Home & Garden
Horror
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Mystery & Thrillers
Nonfiction
Parenting & Families
Professional & Technical
Reference
Religion & Spirituality
Romance
Science
Science Fiction
Sports & Outdoors
Teens
Travel

Books

Hello, Joe van Ibben. We have book recommendations for you. (If you're not Joe van Owen, click here.)

Friday, November 12, 1999

What We're Reading
Dear Mister Fantasy

In *Krondor: the Assassins*, Raymond Feist delivers the second installment of his latest, greatest fantasy series.

This time, Prince Arutha is faced with a skyrocketing murder rate in the metro area—and only his most skilled operative (and magical mole) to solve the problem.

Pre-order Michael Crichton's latest, *Timeline*!

Gift of the Day
Collected in a

70% off *The New York Times* 10 Best Sellers

Amazon.com 100 Hot Books
Updated Hourly

1. Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets by J. K. Rowling
2. Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban by J. K. Rowling, Mary Grandpre (Illustrator)
3. Vinegar Hill by A. Manette Ansay

> More Hot Books

10 Under $10
This week's crop of top-notch books at rock-bottom prices.

New and Notable Paperbacks
> In the Meantime

More to Explore — New!

- Accessories
- Calendars
- Gift Certificates
- Holiday Cards
- Reading Lights
- E-books

● Who won the Harry Potter MagicQuest Contest?

Keeping in Touch

- Email Recommendations
- Wish Lists
- Recent Customer Reviews
- Purchase Circles
- Sell books from your web site
- Refer a friend

Need Help?

- Shipping Policies
- Help Desk
- Secure E-mail

We welcome your ...

...handsome slipcased edition, C.S. Lewis' Chronicles of Narnia is an impossibly entertaining spin on good and evil. Give it to your favorite fantasy addict—and check out our assortment of boxed sets.

More Holiday Suggestions!

- Gift Ideas in our Bookstore
- Gift Ideas in our Amazon.com
- Grooming Locations

Interviews, Articles, and More

After the Party
Reformed glamour guy Dominick Dunne talks about social history, Hollywood swinging, and *The Way We Lived Then*. In Exclusive article.

Plus:

- Enter Amazon.com's Your Best Shot contest—and win tickets to the Super Bowl!
- Michael Lewis discovers Silicon Valley spark plug Jim Clark.
- J.M. Coetzee wins the Booker Prize for *Disgrace*.

Featured in the media

Oprah has chosen
Check out Oprah's new book-club selection, A. Manette Ansay's *Vinegar Hill*—and take a look at our Oprah® page.

Plus:

- The Meaning of (La)
- *The Measure of (La)* by Richard P. Feynman
- *The Hundred Days* by Patrick O'Brian

● **More Departures**

Business Bestsellers

1. *The New New Thing* by Michael Lewis
2. ...
3. ... by Spencer Johnson
   ... *The Monk* ...
   by Patrick B. Sabold

● **More Business Bestsellers**

- *Not for Ourselves Alone* , by Geoffrey C. Ward and Ken Burns, in *George* ⊕
- *John Glenn: A Memoir* , by John Glenn, on NBC's *Today* ⊕
- *Sleeping with Extra-Terrestrials* , by Wendy Kaminer, in *Self* ⊕
  ▶ **More Featured in the Media**

🐾 **Go beyond the bestsellers--check out our Buried Treasure of the Day!**

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AUTHORS ONLINE

Live Author Chat
National Book Award winner Ha Jin, author of WAITING, joins us in the Auditorium on Tuesday at 7pm ET.
- Upcoming author chats
- See our latest author archives

BOOKS IN THE NEWS

Goodbye, Charlie Brown
You won't find Journals... paper anymore, but we can offer PEANUTS: A GOLDEN CELEBRATION. We'll ship to you as soon as it hits our warehouse in mid-January.
- Charles Schultz first and limited editions

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Now more than ever, QUICKEN DELUXE 2000 taps the power of the Internet to help you make more informed decisions – for investment, loans, and financial planning.
- Stock a deal! Bargain software

IN PRINTS & POSTERS

What's New in Prints & Posters?
Browse some of our new collections.
- Decorative art of ours
- Flora and fauna
- Entertainment
- Sports

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in ●Books ○Music ○Videos [Find]

books

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT

The Trillionaire Next Door

This tongue-in-cheek book will have day traders and investors laughing hysterically about their jobs and their quest to get rich quick. Author Andy Borowitz's tips for day trading include the *Beverly Hills 90210* tip, Buy when Brandon gets into a fight and sell when Donna whines. (That's good for 10 years of return.) While not scientifically — or financially — sound advice Borowitz certainly wins points for creativity.

Also check out:
● An excerpt from *The Trillionaire Next Door*

● More business bestsellers

Title Info

Title: *The Trillionaire Next Door: The Greedy Investor's Guide to Day Trading*
By: Borowitz, Andy
Format: Hardcover, 112 Pages
Publication: May 2000

Availability: In stock - ships in 24 hours
Our Price: $12.00 Save $8.00 (40%)
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Biography
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No, we're not selling slabs of concrete. Instead, we've assembled some great savings on books, videos and CDs for all the family. Check out the bargains in our sidewalk sale.

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At Borders.com, we're committed to providing our customers with the opportunity to give back to their community, and to support worthy charitable causes. This month, we salute the nonprofit ALV USA! Links, Inc. Earth Spins. For each sale of a selected books, Borders.com will donate $1 to the charities of

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more about this month's
program and selected books.

MORE HIGHLIGHTS

New Fiction: Jim Lehrer's *The Special Prisoner*

PBS news anchor Jim Lehrer has been carving out a successful second career for himself as a fiction writer. His latest novel is a clear-eyed look at the legacy of war and the nature of forgiveness. Fifty years after he was a POW during WWII, John Quincy Watson, now a bishop, encounters the Japanese officer who tortured him all those years ago. Although committed to a doctrine of forgiveness, the meeting triggers a flood of vivid memories that compel the bishop to seek revenge. *The Special Prisoner* is a gripping novel that famed military historian Stephen E. Ambrose has declared "honest, factual, and a tribute to the men who endured and prevailed over the worst existence imaginable."

Also check out:
- An excerpt from *The Special Prisoner*
- More exciting new fiction

Compelling Travel Narrative: *Driving Over Lemons*

Often compared to Peter Mayle's *A Year in Provence*, Chris Stewart's *Driving Over Lemons* is the tale of life in the romantic Spanish countryside. Stewart, one of the founding members of the band Genesis, purchased his new home in the mountains of Spain without the knowledge or consent of his wife. *Driving Over Lemons* will inspire you to give up the trappings of the modern world and settle in for a life of highlights that come in hearty meals and afternoon siestas.

Also check out:
- An excerpt from *Lemons*
- More books like Travel

Title info

Title
By: Stewart, Chris
Format Hardcover, 256 Pages
Pantheon Books, May 2000

Availability: In stock - ships in 24 hours
Our Price $11.20 - Save $8.80 (20%)

[Add to Shopping Bag]

Hot New Thrillers: Sandra Brown's *Standoff*

In *Standoff*, Sandra Brown returns to top form with the gripping story of an unorthodox kidnapping. Tiel McCoy is a reporter investigating the kidnapping of a millionaire's daughter when Tiel becomes a hostage herself. However, as the tension mounts and the FBI seems grim-faced and worried, the reporter discovers that the "kidnapper" is in fact the daughter's boyfriend, and the young couple have more to fear from the wealthy father than from the FBI. Tiel knows she's sitting on the story of a lifetime, but she must abandon her objectivity in order for everyone to survive long enough to tell the tale.

Also check out:

* An excerpt from *Standoff*

* More new mysteries and thrillers

Title info

Title *Standoff: A Novel*
By: Brown, Sandra
Format Hardcover, 320 Pages
Warner Books, Incorporated, May 2000

Availability: In stock - ships in 24 hours
Our Price $16.10 - Save 20% (20%)

[Add to Shopping Bag]

A New Book for Fathers Who Are Expecting

In *Expecting*, Gordon Churchwell successfully describes the sheer panic and humor of life that comes as part of being an expectant father. Through his personal experiences and through interviews with doctors, midwives, and just about any man willing to talk on the subject, Churchwell paints a vivid picture of how men adjust to having a pregnant woman at their side and a baby on the way.

Also check out:

Also check out:

● An excerpt from *Exercise*

● More books for Father's Day

[ ] Title info

Title: Leaving the Shore
Professional Memoir of
Epilepsy

By: Clarisford, Gordon

Format: Hardcover, 384 Pages
HarperTrade, May 2003

Availability: in most regions in 24 hours

Our Price: $16.10 - Save $3.40 (40%)

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IBM's New Chips Run Fast, Stay Cool
IBM's speedy new chips operate at once, while emp, which eliminate the silicon involved generates less SIC the new silicon-on-insulator technology in combination with Dow Chemical creates by. Click here to learn more.

Tuesday, April 04

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Enter your pickup code

get it!

What are virtual postcards?

Wednesday, December 1, 1999

December Events

send the card ✉ send the card ✉ send the card ✉ send the card ✉

view at full size 🔍 view at full size 🔍 view at full size 🔍 view at full size 🔍

5 ways to select a free postcard to send:

1. Search our collection [search]

2. Pick from our [pick a category ▾] **go!**

3. Try one of our top 30 categories (click here for more)

- Announcements
- Animals
- Babies
- Birthday
- Congratulations
- Everyday Life
- Friends
- Friendship
- Fun/Amusement
- Get Well Soon
- Halloween
- Happy
- Love & Friendship
- Love Notes
- Musical Postcards
- Movies
- Nature
- Pets
- Seasonal Effects
- Sports
- Spirituality
- Teddy Bears
- Thank You
- Thinking Of You
- Winnie the Pooh
- Kids Flicks

4. Browse what's new. Today's Top 30, Yesterday's Top 30, the last 10 cards sent or our Banner Card Selector

5. Browse our category topic (list below)

Postcard categories by topic go to alphabetical category listing

General	Occasions & Messages	Entertainment	People & Life	Objects & Things	World & Travel
Anytime	Celebration	Art	Astrological	Food	North America
Holidays	Birthday	Movie Stars	Kids	Animals	Canada
Announcements	Congratulations	Photographs	Human Rights	Clothes & Colors	Mexico
Friendship	Friendship	Ha/Humor	Romance	Plants & Agriculture	United States
				International Stuff	

Sign Up/Log On To This Site

Our Mailing Lists

The 1001 Gift Store

Ad & Business Info

Questions and answers about 1001 Postcards | Send us comments, questions, requests, feedback

Cancel | Tell-a-Friend | Buy Our

Helium | Martin Multimedia | About Alice Cram | About Leah World

1001 Postcards | 1001.com

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123 Greetings
FREE GREETINGS FOR THE PLANET

Powered by getsmart.com

Find: A Loan For Me | Refinancing | Home Equity | Debt Consolidation

All Search | Birthday | Cute Cards | Ecards | Holidays | Everyday Cards | Family | Flowers | Food and Drink | Friendship
Gifts | Kids | Love | Music | USA | Religion | Special | Teens | Toys | Travel | Wedding

New things to try out!

1st Dec 1999, Wed

Enter Your Card Number:
[ ] View

View Your Card

Cool Services

Looking for a card?
Search for it here:
[ ] Go!

BUILD Your Own Card Site

SELECT a Card From Being SENT At A FUTURE DATE.

Does your business travel?

The Top Cards
Breakup
Autumn
Winter Storm
Birthday Wishes
From the Heart
Champagne

World AIDS Day
Jazz Day

Christmas NEW
Smooch NEW
Theatre Day
Advent Continues
Jewelry Cards NEW

Everyday Cards:
Anniversary
Bachelor Wishes
Bon Voyage
Congratulations!
Daily Wishes
Get Well

Hello
I Love You
Kiss
Miss You
Smile
Sorry

Hanukkah !
[3rd - 10th Dec]

Events & Holidays

1st - 31st Dec Winter

1st - 7th Dec Christmas

8th Dec Cookie Day

9th Dec Cotton Candy Day

16th Dec - 29th Dec Ramadan

18th Dec Human Rights Day

18th Dec Nineveh Lent Day

Get Comfortable

▸ Register
▸ Log In To
▸ Sign Up

Information

▸ Help Me
▸ About
▸ Contact Us

Free newsletter

Add your email address

[Add]

Always There

At Work	**Love**
Congrats Office Humor...	Let's Talk Love Having You
Birthday	**Music**
Happy Birthday Flowers Red	Rock Rock And Roll
Wine	
Chit Chatts	**Pets**
Nothing Howdy Hugs	Cats Dogs And Rabbits Fish...
	Fret
Events & Holidays	**Nature**
Your Wish List Birthday	Public Scheduls Holidays...
Day	
Greeting Cards	**Sports**
Get Well Sorry Good luck	Seaside Hobbies...
Family	**Sports**
Friends Relatives Red Wine	Soccer General Golf
Baking ...	
Images	**Leave**
Say I Thanks On-line	Sad Job... Tom Jacques
Love And Care	**Travel**
Wishes Sorry Forgiveness...	USA Reiges Home...
Greetings	**Vacation**
Free We Couple	Congratulations Made For Each
Hello	Tired
Name Card Wide...	

Still Available

▸ Chocolate Bar
▸ Teddy Bear
▸ Bible Verse
▸ Sexy Wishes For
  Women's Moviemaking
▸ Toy

FREE CHAT
CLICK HERE

activegrams

free email greetings & entertainment

SENTIMENTS
Email the animated message that's just right . . .

SERIES
Email an episode of animated entertainment . . . .

WHAT'S NEW!

Wednesday, November 24, 1999

Celebrate Thanksgiving with an Activegram!

Get a head start on Christmas with Christmas Activegram!

Subscribe for free to Activegrams, and we'll email you new Activegrams before they appear on the site!

Today's Featured Activegram

SEARCH

SUBMIT

SUBSCRIBE   GAZETTE   SCREENING ROOM   INDEX   HELP

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Would you like to win a trip... to Shanghai?

HIS TEETH ARE BRIGHTER THAN HE IS.

FREE

Card 4 You
Melinda Gwinn

Wednesday, December 1, 1999

DISCOVER CARD REMINDER:
You have 5-7 business days to avoid a late fee.

Sign up & Save! Card/Groups Membership   ▸Holiday Cards

Newly updated Hanukkah ✦ | Sing Along ✦ | Plain ✦ | Colobo

Birthday Today | Day Today | Milk Today | Humor Today | Create Today | Mood Today

Your ID:
Password:
[Sign In]
Member? [ ]
New Signup | Lost ID?

What's New
Start Right (Sad/Glad)
Greeting Runners
Christmas Cards Here
Valentines
Mr. Christmas
What's My List
Bottom on Drive
Home or Campus
Join You with Us
I Can't Wait 2 U
Best My Friend

...and more

Weekly Top Cards
1. Take a Bow
2. Giddy, Giddy
3. Shooting star Wish
4. Thank Someone Special
5. A Cheese Piece
6. "Especially" it
7. Bittersweet Thanks
8. Will You be Here
9. Get a Up
10. Friends!!!

previous week

Weekly Top Ripes
1. Have I Loved You
2. (Everywhere you)
3. God is for you
4. Anywhere Us
5. I Can't Card to Miss
6. Ping
7. Sometimes
8. I want a Bottom boy
9. Love is Loads
10. Are You Are II Inside

Christmas is Here Now!
Seasons Greetings, Santa, Snowman and more

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Cake & Candles, International Horoscope, Chinese Zodiac, Belated

Santa's Gone to New Year
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Cool Spot ✦
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Sorry ✦
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Article Humorous Art

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Miss You ✦
Thinking of You, AYY, Kit

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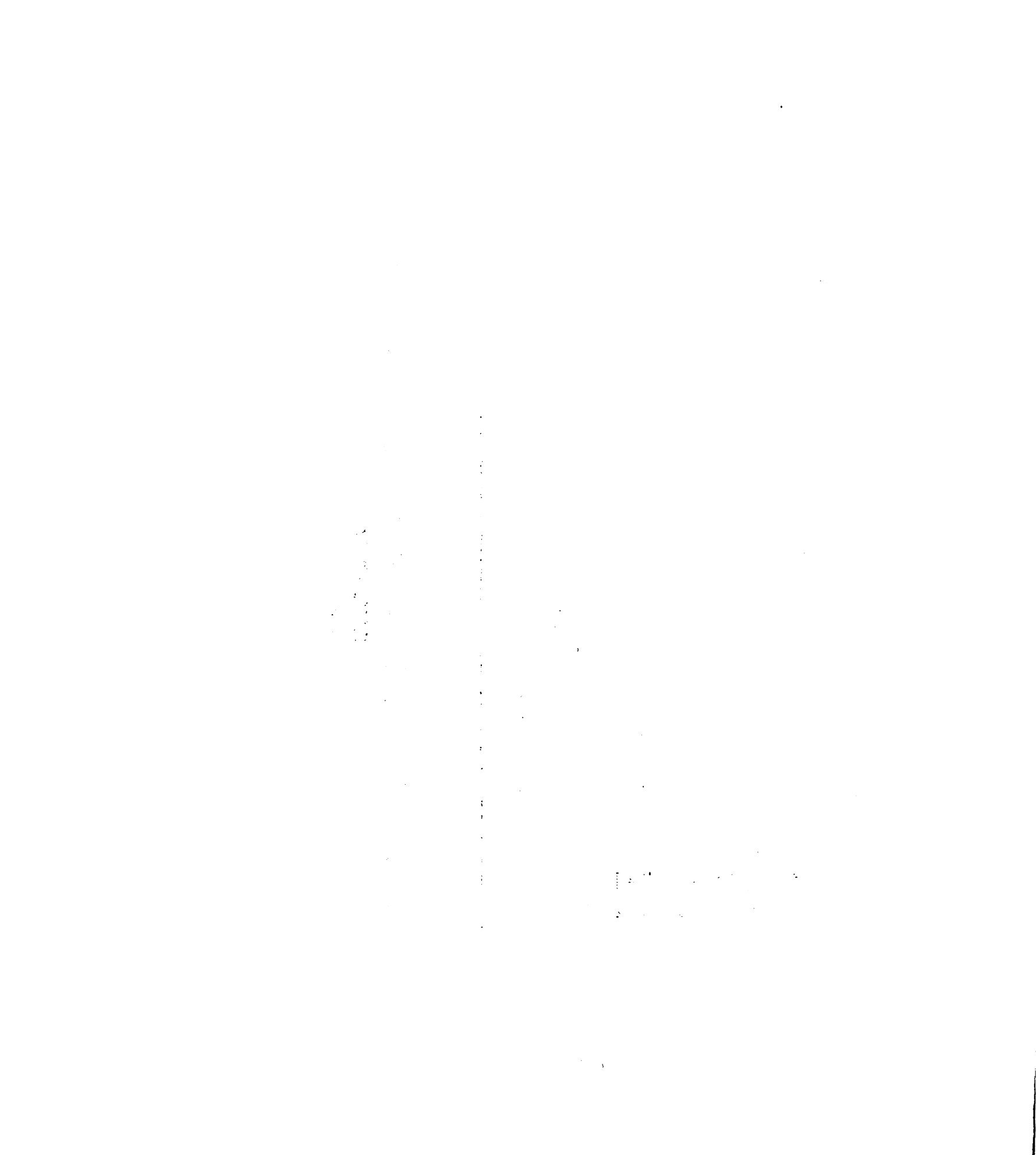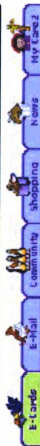
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Upcoming Holidays

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Congratulations
Encouragement
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Good Luck - Goodbye
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Just for Fun
Keep In Touch / Please

Hanukkah Saturday, December 4

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Spinning Dreidel
(Tree Of Life)

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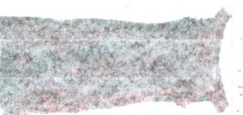
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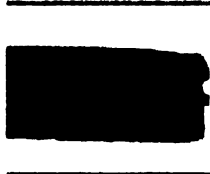
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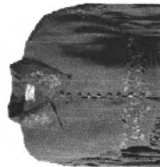
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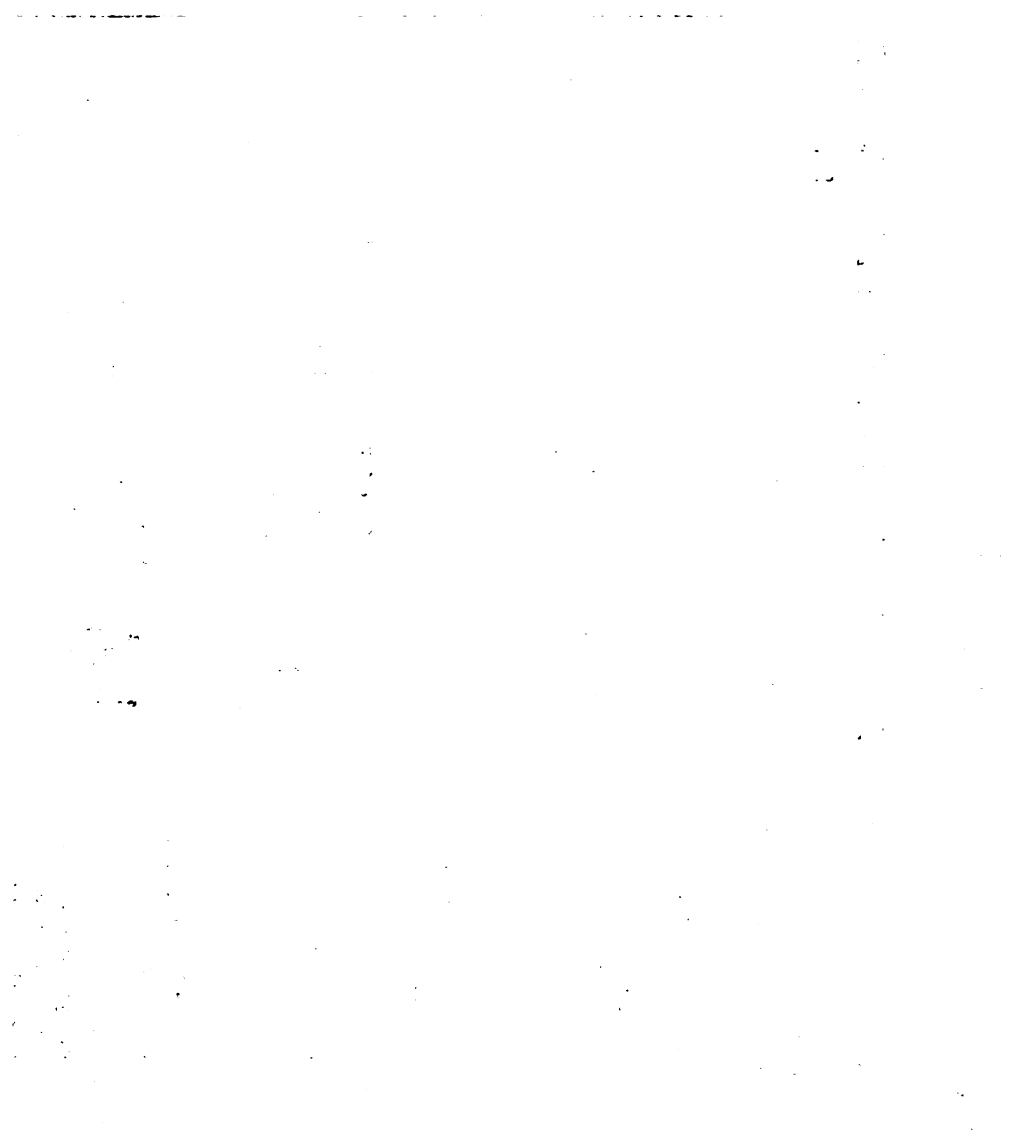
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$499.99

3Com - USR Palm V Organizer
$376.99
Customer...

Top Sellers

Palm IIIe
$227.99

Maxxa MVC-FD91 digital camera
$995.99

RCA RT2760 DOLBY DIGITAL RECEIVER
$449.99

ThinkPad i1480
$1,985.99

Advanced Features

Title begins with

● All Precedence

○ A ○ D ○ R ○ J

○ C ○ D ○ R
○ S ○ T
○ U ○ Z

Rules on Fewer Nos. ONLY

● All Precedence

○ No

○ Yes

˄nd/ᵛBooks

search |_____| account   help   shopping bag

highlight search box with contrasting colors   *Keep flat to accomodate small screens*

Subjects

This week's highlights

Art & Architecture
Bargain Books
Biographies & Memoirs
Business & Investing
Children's Books
Computer & Internet
Cooking, Food & Wine
Entertainment
Health, Mind & Body
History
Home & Garden
Literature & Fiction
Nonfiction
Professional & Technical
Religion & Spirituality
Science & Nature
Sports & Outdoors
Travel

for goal-oriented search ◄

Popular

Bestsellers
  NYT Bestsellers
  USA Today Bestsellers
  nü Books Bestsellers
Award Winners
New Releases
Recommended
Under $10
eBooks

Keep the list small!

Take Time for Your Life
Book: Cheryl Richardson

Inay aay uaintqay eli-keptway ouisianaLay amlethay, aay roupgay ofay ocallay omenway ongregatecay atay ruvyTay ones'sJay eautyBay alonSay hereway haytay ossipgay anday igglegay hileway reparingpay oneay anotheray orfay ife'slay ittlelay ragediestay anday errifictay riumphstay. atelyLay, hetay alktay ofay hetay owntay ashay eenbay 'LynnMay Eatenton'say aughterday helbySay --ay etrothedbay otay andsomehay oungyay awyerlay acksonJay atcherieLay -- ay anday erhay upcomingay eddingvay ay.
Read an excerpt

$ 12.50
save 30%

→ *for the casual shopper*

Dreamside
Book: Graham Joyce

Inay aay ousehay inay ondonLay aay omanway tartssay aay ewnay ifelay, ryingtay otay utpay ragedytay ehindbay erhay. henTay aay rettypay londebay romfay erhay arriagemay, inay lightfay romfay hetay unbearableay ruthtay ofay erhay aughter'sday eathday. orFay uliaJay, heretay isay onay escapeay. Anotheray hildcay awaitsay, anotheray othermay uffersay, anday aay irclecay ofay hetay *%#edBay athersgay arounday erhay. heTay auntinghay ashay egunbay
Read an excerpt

$ 13.50
save 20%

One or two book highlights, linking to excerpts & detailed reviews

Area for promotional banners,
eg. limited time items and
policies, banners for affiliates

Security / Privacy   About Us   Corporate Discounts
Guarantee   Keep Me Posted   Our Partners
Shipping Options   Events   Affiliate Programs

188

vMessages

card pickup: [   ]

Top 10 cards

unsetsay

loveyoylay

atsc

riendshipf

hankst

ndangeredeay

Cards by categories

Next 10 days...
Earth day
Easter

Occasion
Celebrations
  Aniversary
  Birthday
  Graduation
  Wedding
Get Well
Holidays
  4th July
  Easter
  Christmas
Humor
Just because
Love
  Kisses
  Love
  Proposals
  Thinking of you
Sentiments
Sports

Contents
Animals
  Bugs
  Cats
  Dog
  Endangered
  wildlife
Animated
Flowers
Nature
Sports

top 10 cards of the site for easy access

large list of expanded categories

not much customer support necessary →

Questions   About Us

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nü Toys

shopping wagon   account   advice   help

search

sort by   *popular sorting categories*

age   ↕ go

e.g. 2–3 years,
teenagers

Save 40% on selected
Pokémon toys

$20 off
first purchase

category   ↕ go

e.g. games, dolls,
puzzles

special offer shown up on first screen

brand   ↕ go

e.g. Lego, Mattel,
Disney

Harry Potter
Goblet of Fire

e'reWay elebratingca y heta y eleasera y
ofay Goblet"ay ofay ire"Fay ithway
avingssa y onay heta y ookba yanda y
othera y urprissessa y

- books
- tapes
- contest
- collections

character   ↕ go

e.g. Pokémon,
Toy Story, Arthur

recommended   ↕ go

e.g. Bestsellers,
under $20

*a couple of popular topics in this column
with their related links, not just the toys themselves*

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to the men's or women's departments

shopping bag
account
help desk

V'nu
Looks

women's   clearance   men's

important links to be on every page

Privacy Policy   Shipping Estimates   Return Policy   Company Info

Yaska

| women's | men's | clearance | shopping bag | account | help desk |

lim Sa y itfa y
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ona y a istwa y.

its Sa y igh ha y
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ipha y anda y highta y. a pered Ta y
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ipha y anda y highta y.

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m ooth Sa y latfa y rontfa y ithwa y
ipza y openin ga y.

shirts
ashmere
merino ca y a sicba y
silksa y &a y ilk/Lycra
refined sa y otton ca y
chunk ysa y otton
ca sual ca y otton
la mbswoolca y
extu redta y oolwa y

pants
antspa y iewva y all
ta ilored a y oolwa y
refined a y otton ca y
chinos
de nimsa y &a y orduroy
ca sual ca y otton

skirts & dresses
efined ra y otton
silkca y &a y tretch
novelty sa y opsta y
&a y l ouses
ca sual ba y a sicsba y

suits
ool
lea thenwa y &a y uede
cottonsa y. orduroyca y.
de nimwa y &a y othera y

swim
outerwear
sleepwear
accessories

| Privacy Policy | Shipping Estimates | Return Policy | Company Info |

order tracking

help/ account

shopping carton

nü v-Tech

keep flat

Search

You are here: home >> *path*

special event, coupons

Categories

Hardware
  Desktops
  Laptops
  Palm tops
  Towers
  Servers
Software
  Productivity
  Educatainment
  Utilities
Accessories
Network
Memory

See our **Auctions** and **Sales**

UMAX scanner
$49.90

Brand

Apple
Acer
APC
Compaq
Dell
HP
IBM

AGFA eSMILE
Digital Camera
$59.50

Diable II
$39.99

extended list of popular categories and brands

a couple of hot items

Privacy Policy
Shipping Estimates

Rebate Programs
Customer Support

About nü-Tech
Affiliates

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