

# 13 CLEAR FIRST READS



(www.landsend.com, February 13, 2002)

What's the first thing you see when you look at this page? Through a combination of position, font, color, size, and graphic design, the image of the shoes and the headline "Slip into the shoe that's taking America by storm" are the items that pop out best. The first read helps to set expectations and conveys a wealth of subtle information to your customers. This first read tells the visitor that these shoes are featured and popular with other customers.

## \* BACKGROUND

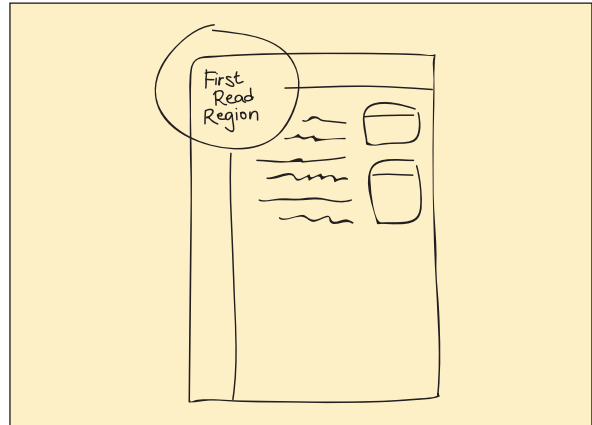
Although your Web page may contain many elements, your customers must be able to easily find the most important item on the page. This pattern covers first reads, a technique from graphic design that helps focus Web pages and gives readers a clear first impression. You can apply this pattern to the creation of a PAGE TEMPLATE (D1), and you can use it with GRID LAYOUT (I1), ABOVE THE FOLD (I2), EXPANDING-WIDTH SCREEN SIZE (I4), and FIXED-WIDTH SCREEN SIZE (I5) when you're designing a page template.

## \* PROBLEM

How can a Web page be designed with a single unifying focus when there are so many visual elements competing for attention?

## \* SOLUTION

Use a first read to give each page a unifying focus on the most important message, and to emphasize the most important element of that page. Use color, size, font, weight, and position to differentiate and highlight the first read. Design for lower-resolution displays, and test your first reads with your customers to see if they are effective.



Use color, size, font, weight, and position to create a first read that unifies your Web pages.

## \* CONSIDER THESE OTHER PATTERNS

Clear first reads should be applied when you create PAGE TEMPLATES (D1). Clear first reads can also be used with the GRID LAYOUT (I1), ABOVE THE FOLD (I2), EXPANDING-WIDTH SCREEN SIZE (I4), and FIXED-WIDTH SCREEN SIZE (I5) patterns.

First reads are often located in the top left corner of a Web page, affecting the layout and placement of NAVIGATION BARS (K2).

If you use an image as the first read, make it a FAST-DOWNLOADING IMAGE (L2). First reads should be placed in SEPARATE TABLES (L3) for faster loading.

- D1
- I1
- I2
- I4
- I5

- D1
- I1
- I2
- I4
- I5

K2

L2

L3

See entire pattern including detailed design considerations and examples in *The Design of Sites* (ISBN 020172149X). Buy it. © 2003 Douglas K. van Duyne, James A. Landay, Jason I. Hong. This pattern card reprinted with permission of Addison-Wesley.