

"Net Rage"

A Study of Blogs and Usability

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CATALYST GROUP DESIGN
USABILITY AND USER INTERFACE DESIGNERS

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Overview and Methodology	4
2.1 Objectives and Scenario	5
2.2 Methodology	5
3. Executive Summary.....	7
3.1 Overview.....	7
3.2 Understanding the Page – What Is It?	7
3.3 Commenting	9
3.4 RSS	9
3.5 Finding Other Posts.....	10
3.6 The Main Blog Page	11
3.7 Overall Reactions.....	12
4. User Interface Issues Summary.....	13
4.1 Overview.....	13
4.2 Reiteration of User Interface Issues	13
5. Appendix: All Observations	15
5.1 Overview.....	15
6. About Catalyst Group Design.....	19

1. Introduction

It's no secret that blogs are a hot topic. When both Walter Mossberg (*Wall Street Journal*, June 15, 2005) and the Pew Internet and American Life Project (January 2005) weigh in on the subject, something is going on – especially in the wake of the attention devoted to blogging in the 2003 presidential elections. Add to all this IBM's mid-May decision to promote employee blogging; *BusinessWeek's* April 27th, 2005 cover story on the topic; and Microsoft's June 24th, 2005 announcement that RSS will be bundled into Longhorn - and you have a full-scale phenomenon. Finally: Technorati and PubSub, search engines for the "blogosphere," currently index 7million and 12 million blogs, respectively.

But how "real" is the phenomenon in terms of the experience of the everyday Internet user? Are blogs truly ready for uptake by millions who regularly use the Internet – but who so far have neither written nor knowingly read blogs?

Answering this question from a cultural or content perspective falls to others. But as researchers and designers focusing on user experience, **Catalyst Group Design** set out to test just how well, from a design perspective, blogs would perform for a typical end-user.

Our conclusion: Even assuming mainstream interest, current blog design standards – at least in terms of navigation, nomenclature and taxonomy – are a barrier to consumer acceptance. In fact, the design of most blogs can incite "net rage" (in the words of one test participant).

Just this week, "bloggerati" like Steve Rubel (Micropersuasion.com) and commentators like the *New York Times'* David Pogue have weighed in on these consumer acceptance issues – mostly with regard to RSS, or the mechanism by which blogs can be "syndicated" by publishers. The following report gives some additional shape and substance to the realization that blogs need to meet a different standard of behavioral requirements and expectations if they are to succeed with the mainstream internet audience.

2. Overview and Methodology

From June 29th through July 1st, 2005, Catalyst Group Design conducted usability testing in New York City, NY in order to gather qualitative feedback regarding mainstream internet users' ability to understand and use blogs. Our overall findings are summarized in this document.

Usability testing was conducted with nine (9) participants on a live site. Specifically, we chose as a testing platform one of *BusinessWeek's* seven recently-launched blogs, a personal finance destination called "Well Spent" (http://www.businessweek.com/the_thread/wellspent/). This site was selected – after a review of over 100 other blogs – for a combination of reasons:

- It represents a likely direction for "mainstream" blogging – in that it is part of a family of blogs integrated into to a well-recognized, branded web destination. As such it is a "business" blog, rather than someone's hobby and is clearly intended for broad readership.
- Well Spent focuses on a topic – personal finance – of interest to most adult Americans regardless of demographic differences.
- Correlative to the factors above, it was possible to create a realistic scenario by which mainstream users would arrive at a blog post landing page on Well Spent – specifically, by searching for 401K information on Google.
- Despite being part of the BusinessWeek site, Well Spent contains most "classic" blog functions including:
 - RSS subscription mechanisms (XML buttons)
 - Main page with both full and truncated postings
 - Landing pages with full postings and comment mechanisms
 - Previously posted comments
 - Recent posts
 - Trackback capabilities and recent trackbacks
 - Archives
 - Recent comment logs
 - Author photos and contact information

2.1 Objectives and Scenario

The overall objective of this test was to explore the ability of people who were capable internet users to navigate, use and understand a blog. *Our intent was not, therefore, to critique the BusinessWeek blog Well Spent.* In fact, many of the reasons supporting our choice of Well Spent as our test case are also reasons that *BusinessWeek* should be praised for attempting the difficult task of integrating multiple blogs into its existing site. The core assertion of this report is that the design challenges typified by this integration must be overcome if Blogs and RSS are to achieve mainstream acceptance.

Rather than using the qualitative feedback to implicate Well Spent's page design, however, Catalyst was principally interested in what that feedback would suggest about design issues for standard blog features. To this end, we were interested in obtaining feedback from the participants as they worked through tasks that they would normally be expected to encounter when using a blog – even a “business” blog like this one.

During the testing sessions, we focused on:

- Whether those tested recognized that they were on a blog, vs. some other kind of website.
- What their reaction was to learning that they were, in fact, on a blog.
- Whether they understood how to post a comment and what the outcome of such a posting would be.
- Whether they knew what trackbacks were.
- Whether they comprehended both how to subscribe to the blog and the larger mechanism of RSS.
- Whether they could locate other types of posts, by date or by topic.
- Whether they could find the main page of Well Spent.
- Whether they could navigate around the main page.

The starting scenario for the test assumed that the most likely circumstances under which mainstream users would randomly encounter a blog would be through performing a Google search on a topic of interest and then clicking on a promising link. This scenario also assumed that, as blogs gain popularity and prevalence, people would be more likely to enter a blog at the post (via search), rather than the main page, level.

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 Testing Sessions

The Well Spent site was tested in a controlled one-on-one environment led by a moderator who asked participants a series of qualitative and task-based usability questions. Each test session lasted approximately 60 minutes. A note taker recorded observations throughout each session and video equipment was used to document the proceedings.

All of the participants satisfied the following screener requirements:

- A mix of men and women (5 males, 4 Females)

- Used the internet *at least* 10 hours per week for activities other than email
- Mix of income and age
- Regular consumer of news and other information online
- On the Internet for at least 2 years
- Do not write their own blogs
- Either do not knowingly read blogs, or read blogs infrequently

Nine interview sessions were completed over a three-day period. During each session, we explored the following screens:

- Post landing page
- Well Spent homepage

A description of each task was conveyed to the user and they were then asked to demonstrate how they would perform the task while thinking aloud. Also, users were asked to describe what they expected to occur before they selected a link or button so that their expectations could be compared with what actually happened.

If a user was unable to proceed or indicated that they would go in an unfruitful direction, they would be encouraged to explore the screen for other potential options. If they still could not proceed as intended, the moderator would indicate the next step and encourage the user to continue with the task unaided. It should be emphasized that the user was not assisted in completing the tasks in any way unless it was obvious they were not proceeding as intended.

2.2.2 Findings

On the following pages, Catalyst outlines both observations derived from the usability test as well as design issues likely to be associated with mainstream blog adoption. We do not make any specific design recommendations, however, given that our primary goal is speculating about the design challenges associated with broad consumer behavior – rather than critiquing a specific site.

In this fashion, the report differs from a standard Catalyst client report – which usually includes not only observations and issues, but also design solutions.

3. Executive Summary

3.1 Overview

This section of the report represents the most comprehensive summary of Catalyst's test results. For particularly salient parts of the test, it contains the following types of information:

- *Commentary* – when deemed necessary, Catalyst provides a paragraph designed to help set up or frame our test observations.
- *Observations* – trends in participant behavior during the test, culled from thorough review of transcripts and digital video as well as mouse movement.
- *Verbatims* – quotes and/or paraphrases from users during the test that illustrate specific observations.
- *User Interface Issues* – design concerns derived from observations and verbatims (also gathered separately in Section 4).

NB: the observations in the Executive Summary represent only a selection of all those noted during Catalyst's three-day test. Specifically, we have highlighted and commented upon patterns that we viewed to be most pertinent to "core" blogging behavior, or which raised the most pressing issues. For a full set of our observations, unaccompanied by commentary and verbatims, please see Section 5.

3.2 Understanding the Page – What Is It?

3.2.1 Commentary: Surprise and Confusion

It is true that participants were selected for their ignorance of blogs and blogging. However, they were also targeted because they had a solid working knowledge of not only the Web, but also of how to use it to find information that interested them. It was thus interesting to contrast the degree of certainty they displayed on one hand – when first encountering a post on Well Spent – with their visible astonishment on the other, when told they were looking at a blog. Despite having fuzzy ideas of what blogs were, those tested clearly wanted to understand "where" they were, especially if it was a medium that was not familiar to them.

Observations + Verbatims

- When asked to characterize what they were looking at, almost every person tested called the post landing page an “article,” with several specifying it was clearly from BusinessWeek. Two participants thought the post was some kind of advertisement or promotion.
 - *I feel I am in the BusinessWeek environment and can navigate to BusinessWeek sections.*
 - *This looks like an article. [By] a writer from BusinessWeek who got paid to do this.*
 - *It looks like an article by Amey Stone informing me about how to get 401K help for \$10 per month.*
 - *[It] looks like an advertisement.*
 - *Seems like [the post] is promoting a service. [It] looks like a specific article that is selling a service.*
- When informed they were looking at a blog, all but one participant was visibly surprised.
 - *Is it? I would not have guessed that. That wasn't what I thought at all.*
 - *I would be annoyed if I was reading this and then later realized, oh, this is a freakin' blog. Wow. Ok.*
 - *I would have to take your word for it. I am surprised if I am on a blog.*
 - *I would not believe that [this is a blog].*
- Nearly all those tested stated there was no clear distinction presented between the blog and BusinessWeek's online magazine – and participants were unanimous in declaring that there was no clear indication on the page that it was a blog.
 - *I assumed I was on BusinessWeek. I don't see any indication [that this is a blog]. I can't see any difference.*
 - *I would think this is part of the main [BusinessWeek] site.*
 - *No indication of [this being a blog] at all.*
 - *It doesn't come out and say 'blog.'*

User Interface Issue(s)

- Visitors may not recognize they are on a blog – both because they have not knowingly seen one before, and because they are most likely to enter one at the post, rather than at the main-page, level.
- Blogs do not always identify themselves – particularly on lower-level pages – literally as blogs, something that test participants seemed to want.
- Classic blog indicators, such as authorial photos, short-form writing, or the presence of categories and archives, are not signifiers for mainstream web users.

3.3 Commenting

3.3.1 A Whole Lot Less Than The Sum Of Its Parts

Most elements of the comment-submission system – email, URL and comment fields as well as Preview and Post buttons – were comprehensible to test participants. This did not equate with a high comfort level regarding commenting, however.

- There was general confusion regarding what would happen once comments were submitted – would they be posted immediately? Screened and posted? Or would only select comments be posted – with others being answered via email? The presence of several previous comments on the post did little to allay uncertainty.
 - *If I press post, it would go up here with the rest of the comments. Instantly, generally. I am used to Craigslist, where [things] get posted first and then taken down [later if they are offensive].*
 - *Once they have approved [the comment] they would put it on the site.*
 - *I would assume there could be a selection [of posts]. Since there are only three posts for a six-day period. It's not clear.*
 - *Someone could get back to me if I put in my email and URL [with a question].*

User Interface Issue(s)

- The core purpose of submitting comments to a blog is not universally understood.
- Few, if any, blogs declare exactly what will happen when a post is submitted – though some indicate after submission that there will be a review. Doubt about whether or not an obviously non-offensive comment will get posted could have a dampening effect on a core tenet of blogging: real-time reader/author dialogue.

3.4 RSS

3.4.1 Mainstream Value ≠ Mainstream Appreciation, Or Use

Aside from commenting and browsing other posts, RSS is arguably the core of what makes a blog a blog. Being able to review dozens – or more – of posts as they update in real time is central to the value that blogs can provide. Unfortunately, the presentation of both the concept and the mechanics of RSS failed utterly with test participants. And in fact, even the basic idea of RSS ran afoul of users' fear of unwanted costs and spam.

- Participants were unanimous in declaring that the site was unclear in explaining the purpose, value and function of RSS. All also felt that the site was aimed at an audience other than them – specifically, technically-advanced people or heavy bloggers.
 - *[Those links and terms] mean nothing to me...There's this whole language you have to be immersed in...I don't feel like it's accessible at all.*
 - *I think it's a free-for-all. They didn't do a good job explaining it. They aren't doing a very good job if they are targeting me.*

- *[It's aimed at] a person that knows blogs inside and out. That is up on blogs, blogs, blogs. Like on eBay, with the...die-hard eBay'ers who know the ins and outs.*
- *I would not know at all [that I could do that with RSS]. I think it's targeted at someone who knows computer programming or website design. I wouldn't see a lot of people knowing about this. It looks like a technical thing.*
- *[As] my first encounter with RSS, I would not know what to do with it...somewhere I would need an education.*
- Even once the basic mechanism of feeds was explained to them, several people's first reaction was to have cost and security/spam concerns.
 - *In concept that could work. Functionality would be a concern – so many viruses exist...I don't know if it could work up to its potential without compromising the security of my system. It sounds like those toolbars you have to download.*
 - *There's a problem with [subscribing]. You can create your own blog for free. I wouldn't subscribe to this for [money].*
- Unclear to most participants was the distinction between the left-hand navigation to other blogs in the BusinessWeek blog family, and the links containing the XML buttons.
 - *I think [one] is their way of telling me that this is a blog. And the [XML button list] is their way of getting people to sign up to get feeds.*
 - *I see the blog names up top. And [underneath] these are the same things. The URL cache looks the same, so these [sections] are the same.*
 - *The bottom section is going to give you the ability to read these blogs in XML. The ones above will just give you what you are seeing right now. [The XML version] is more dynamic, more visually pronounced. More than just seeing the regular text.*

User Interface Issue(s)

- RSS terminology and mechanisms are powerful – but currently also not easily understood.
- RSS value and uniqueness is easily overlooked or misunderstood by audiences used to other “update” conventions such as newsletters, email alerts and bookmarks.
- Without a call to action to actually use RSS and perhaps an explicit assurance of e-security, most people will ignore even brightly-colored XML buttons.
- The fear of spam and spyware cannot be underestimated, as it seems that mainstream experience with the web is teaching users to be extremely wary of persistent or automated functions that are not enabled through trusted sources.

3.5 Finding Other Posts

3.5.1 Blog Taxonomy Is Not Understood

To anyone who spends a fair amount of time reading or writing blogs, certain features are very familiar: recent posts, a category structure that organizes older posts, and archives that contain all posts filed by date. While these appear to be fairly straightforward informational motifs, they mostly proved opaque to those tested, with the exception of archives.

- There was general confusion regarding how to find related posts – with participants being divided between using the search box, going to Blogspotting (which is actually another BusinessWeek Blog), looking for a main page and browsing recent posts.
 - *I would look over here under recent posts.*
 - *I would try search.*
 - *I would click on Well Spent.*
 - *Maybe Blogspotting. I would look at that. It's a bunch of blogs that have caught the moderator's eye, that they want you to look at [to find things].*
 - *I assume from the name that Blogspotting would denote a blog search.*
- Most of those tested had no trouble, however, figuring out that the archives were where they should look for a post written on a certain date – although two people had trouble finding the archives on the far bottom right of the page.
 - *I would go to the archives area. That's pretty straightforward.*
 - *Those I didn't see.*

User Interface Issue(s):

- The connections between current, past, and topically-organized posts is not easy to grasp as they are currently rendered in many blogs.
- Individualized category names in particular are misleading to casual browsers – who may have problems understanding the way categories in general function in a blog environment.

3.6 The Main Blog Page

3.6.1 What Makes a Main Page “Home?”

When entering from the “bottom up” due to use of a search engine, users had difficulty anticipating what the homepage of the blog would be or why they should go there. In addition, they re-encountered many of the taxonomy problems that had plagued them on the lower-level pages.

- Only one participant correctly anticipated what the main page would contain, with every other participant expressing surprise at some aspect of the page – such as it containing many different posts or full and truncated posts vs. just a listing.
 - *I would not have expected to see this. What does this have to do with 401k's or \$10?*
 - *I would not have expected the posts to be all right here.*
 - *This is totally not what I was expecting. It looks like a bunch of articles. Kind of crunched together. I assume 'continue reading' will get me to the full article. These other ones – I guess they aren't all a full page?*
- Regarding the links to Time, Categories, Comments and Trackbacks at the bottom of each post on the Main page, few understood categories and no one understood trackbacks.
 - *Why does it say My Finances?*
 - *Trackbacks? I don't know.*

- *It would take me a while to understand [these]. There's nothing definitive about how to get around.*

User Interface Issue(s):

- Organizational connections between higher- and lower-level pages on blogs generally flow better in only one direction: from the top down. But current web behavior rarely adheres to that convention.
- RSS works against top-down navigation of blogs.
- Truncating some posts and not others leads to user confusion – especially when commenting on both types of posts requires access to a landing page (which for the truncated posts is otherwise unnecessary).

3.7 Overall Reactions

3.7.1 Good News...And Bad

Test participants all had positive attitudes at the conclusion of the tasks, indicating varying degrees of interest and newfound appreciation for blogs. But they expect more from them.

- Following the tasks, most felt that blogs were a good or interesting development – with almost everyone saying that they would consider visiting blogs in the future.
 - *I think I would visit blogs [in the future]. It's interesting. It's huge already and it's only just started. I think there is a lot of possibility.*
 - *I would use blogs in the future.*
 - *I will use blogs more in the future. One, I will explore RSS to bring feeds into My Yahoo!. Also, I am just realizing there is much more mainstream information in blogs [than I had thought]. Or I would use them to get the 'off the record' ramblings of favourite writers.*
- However, almost everyone also felt that there was not enough assistance on the site to allow them to take advantage of what was offered.
 - *Some people have road rage. I have 'net rage.' I would just have gone someplace else, without having explored this, because I don't know what's going on.*
 - *The amount of help provided is very limited. There are cues, but I want to know I am in the blog section. Just like [in a newspaper] I want to know I am in the editorial section vs. the opinion section.*
 - *It's not well explained at all. This is the thing with a lot of these Internet trends: people assume you have the knowledge already, because why otherwise would you be looking at blogs? That can be alienating to prospective users.*
 - *There's only so much I can figure out on my own. This is leaving me to do that.*

User Interface Issue(s):

- Mainstream consumer expectations for assistance, education and context far outstrip typical implementation of blog interface and feature elements.

4. User Interface Issues Summary

4.1 Overview

Many of these issues will seem neither earth-shattering nor insoluble to user interface and other designers – especially when viewed as a standalone foundation for design requirements. It is all the more remarkable, then, that blogs have not yet addressed most of these challenges. BusinessWeek is hardly alone in adopting architecture and conventions for its blogs that it probably would never consider for the remainder of its site. But this is exactly our point: most of these issues are easy to deal with – though doing so may alter the format of blogs from what is currently the norm. Exactly how that should happen, however, is beyond the scope of this particular paper.

4.2 Reiteration of User Interface Issues

- Visitors may not recognize they are on a blog – both because they have not knowingly seen one before, and because they are most likely to enter one at the post, rather than at the main-page, level.
- Blogs do not always identify themselves – particularly on lower-level pages – literally as blogs.
- Classic blog indicators, such as authorial photos, short-form writing, or the presence of categories and archives, are not signifiers for mainstream web users.
- The core purpose of submitting comments to a blog is not universally understood, and the design of the comment function may have to take this better into account.
- Few, if any, blogs declare exactly what will happen when a post is submitted – though some indicate after submission that there will be a review. Doubt about whether or not an obviously non-offensive comment will get posted could have a dampening effect on a core tenet of blogging: real-time reader/author dialogue.

- RSS terminology and mechanisms are powerful – but currently also not easily understood.
- Without a call to action and perhaps an explicit assurance, most people will ignore even brightly-marked XML buttons.
- The fear of spam and spyware cannot be underestimated, as it seems that mainstream experience with the web is teaching users to be extremely wary of persistent or automated functions that are not enabled through trusted sources.
- The connections between current, past, and topically-organized posts – is not easy to grasp as they are currently rendered in many blogs.
- Individualized category names in particular are misleading to casual browsers.
- Organizational connections between higher- and lower-level pages on blogs generally flow better in only one direction: from the top down. But current web behavior rarely adheres to that convention.
- RSS works against top-down navigation of blogs.
- Mainstream consumer expectations for assistance, education and context far outstrip implementation of blog interface and feature elements.

5. Appendix: All Observations

5.1 Overview

In this section, Catalyst has collected all the observations derived from the three days of usability testing related to blogging. A subset of these observations is collected and expanded upon in the Executive Summary (Section 3); here, those particular comments are demarcated in italics. However, for those interested in a more in-depth review of how participants performed throughout the test, this section may prove helpful.

5.1.1 Starting Scenario

- Almost every participant preferred to find information online using Google as a starting point – and then branching out to other sites from there.
- No participant had trouble envisioning the blog arrival scenario – i.e., conducting a search on Google for 401k information, seeing a link to a post on Well Spent (“\$10 a month for 401K help,” by Amey Stone), clicking on that link and arriving at the post landing page.

5.1.2 First Reactions

- Just over half the participants stated that the first thing they noticed about the post landing page was the photos of Karyn McCormack and Amey Stone in the upper right hand corner of the page. The presence of these photos was not always a positive, however – especially prior to people understanding they were looking at a blog.
- The next most immediately noticeable page attribute was the “Well Spent” title on the upper left corner.
- Most participants said that the first action they would take on the post landing page was read or skim the article to see if it contained the information they were expecting.

5.1.3 Understanding The Page: What Is It?

- When asked to characterize what they were looking at, almost every person tested called the post landing page an “article,” with several specifying it was

clearly from BusinessWeek. Two participants thought the post was some kind of advertisement or promotion.

- It was not surprising, therefore, that when informed they were looking at a blog, all but one participant was surprised.
- Nearly all those tested stated there was no clear distinction presented between the blog and BusinessWeek's online magazine – and participants were unanimous in declaring that there was no clear indication on the page that it was a blog.

5.1.4 Reactions To Mix Of Media

- Over half the participants were unsure of the significance of the post being part of a blog – but almost all felt that a blog was somehow less credible as a source of information.
- Nearly half those tested stated that because of this perceived difference in editorial standards, the blog should be more clearly separated from the main BusinessWeek site. Of particular concern was the fact that the authors' credentials were not readily visible.

5.1.5 Task One: Post A Comment

- Most participants found the comment area at the bottom of the post and understood they could submit a reaction or a question. Almost everyone also grasped the basic function of the email and URL fields, as well as the preview and post buttons.
- However, there was general confusion regarding what would happen once comments were submitted – would they be posted immediately? Screened and posted? Or would only select comments be posted – with others being answered via email? The presence of several previous comments on the post did little to allay uncertainty.

5.1.6 Trackbacks

- Not a single participant understood the function or significance of trackbacks or trackback pings.

5.1.7 Task Two: Subscribe To The Blog

- When asked how they could receive regular updates about new content on Well Spent, half the participants looked for somewhere to submit an email address. Several others simply said they would bookmark the page.
- With few exceptions, participants had not heard of RSS, RSS Feed Readers, or XML. Of those that had, none were certain about the terms' definitions. And no participant understood the process for enabling feeds.
- Ironically, most participants quickly noticed the bright orange XML buttons on the left nav bar. Of that group, most dismissed them because the meaning of the buttons was unclear.

5.1.8 Reactions To RSS

- Participants were unanimous in declaring that the site was unclear in explaining the purpose, value and function of RSS. All also felt that the site was aimed at an audience other than them – specifically, technically-advanced people or heavy bloggers.

- Even once the basic mechanism of feeds was explained to them, several people's first reaction was to have cost and security/spam concerns.
- Ultimately, while people seemed to think RSS was a positive, fewer than half the participants stated unequivocally that they would use it – with others expressing indifference or uncertainty that they would be interested enough in a blog to need real-time updates.

5.1.9 Task Three: Find Recent, Related, Dated Posts

- Most participants failed to notice the Recent Posts category.
- There was general confusion regarding how to find related posts – with participants being divided between using the search box, going to Blogspotting, looking for a main page and browsing recent posts.
- Most of those tested had no trouble, however, figuring out that the archives were where they should look for a post written on a certain date – although two people had trouble finding the archives on the far bottom right of the page.

5.1.10 Reactions To The Left Nav

- Unclear to most participants was the distinction between the left nav module for accessing other blogs in the BusinessWeek blog family, and the one containing the XML buttons.
- Some participants also thought the other blogs in the family were simply other parts of Well Spent.
- Only two participants understood that the remainder of the left nav pertained only to the main BusinessWeek sections.

5.1.11 Task Four: Get To The Main Page Of Well Spent

- Over half the participants figured out how to get to the Well Spent main page without assistance – via either the Main link, or through clicking on Well Spent.
- However, only one correctly anticipated what the main page would contain, with every other participant expressing surprise at some aspect of the page – such as it containing many different posts or full and truncated posts vs. just a listing.

5.1.12 Exploring The Main Page

- On the main page, just over half the participants noticed and understood the significance of the Continue Reading links – though many were thrown off by the fact that only some posts were truncated.
- Regarding the links to Time, Categories, Comments and Trackbacks at the bottom of each post on the Main page, few understood categories and no one understood trackbacks.
- Several participants felt that categories for Well Spent would be the same for every blog in the BusinessWeek family.

5.1.13 Overall Reactions

- Following the tasks, most felt that blogs were a good or interesting development – with almost everyone saying that they would consider visiting blogs in the future.
- However, almost everyone also felt that there was not enough assistance on the site to allow them to take advantage of what was offered.

6. About Catalyst Group Design

Founded in 1998, Catalyst Group Design (www.catalystgroupdesign.com) improves websites and other interfaces through insights into and testing of key audience behavior. The firm specializes in user-centered research and design that extends from core interface architecture into visual design, marketing and branding strategy, and usability-related communications planning.

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