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Text Readability

Educational Web site designers want to know how to make screen text easily readable by their learners.

This page presents a series of studies designed to let you experience for yourself what text design features work best, and then combine your own results with those of others to give you some idea of the parameters that work for most people.

This on-going Web study is being carried out by Dr. Bob Hoffman (Bob.Hoffman@sdsu.edu) and his students in the Department of Educational Technology at San Diego State University.

It is designed to be a learning tool for graduate instructional designers, and results may be published in an academic journal.

Here are several short experiments you can do to learn about designing body text for the Web:

- **Type Alignment & Case**
  Flush left, flush right, or center? Initial caps or all caps? Which read faster?

    - **Objective Experiment**

- **Type Font**
  Of the most common type families or "styles" for the Web, which are most -- and least -- "readable?" Here are two experiments -- one subjective and one objective -- to help you settle that question for yourself:

    - **Subjective Experiment**
    - **Objective Experiment**

- **Contrast**
  Black on white? White on gray? Gray on black? What contrasting color combinations are more readable?

    - **Subjective Experiment**

- **Line length** (Coming soon)
  Can lines of text be too long -- or too short -- to read easily?

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