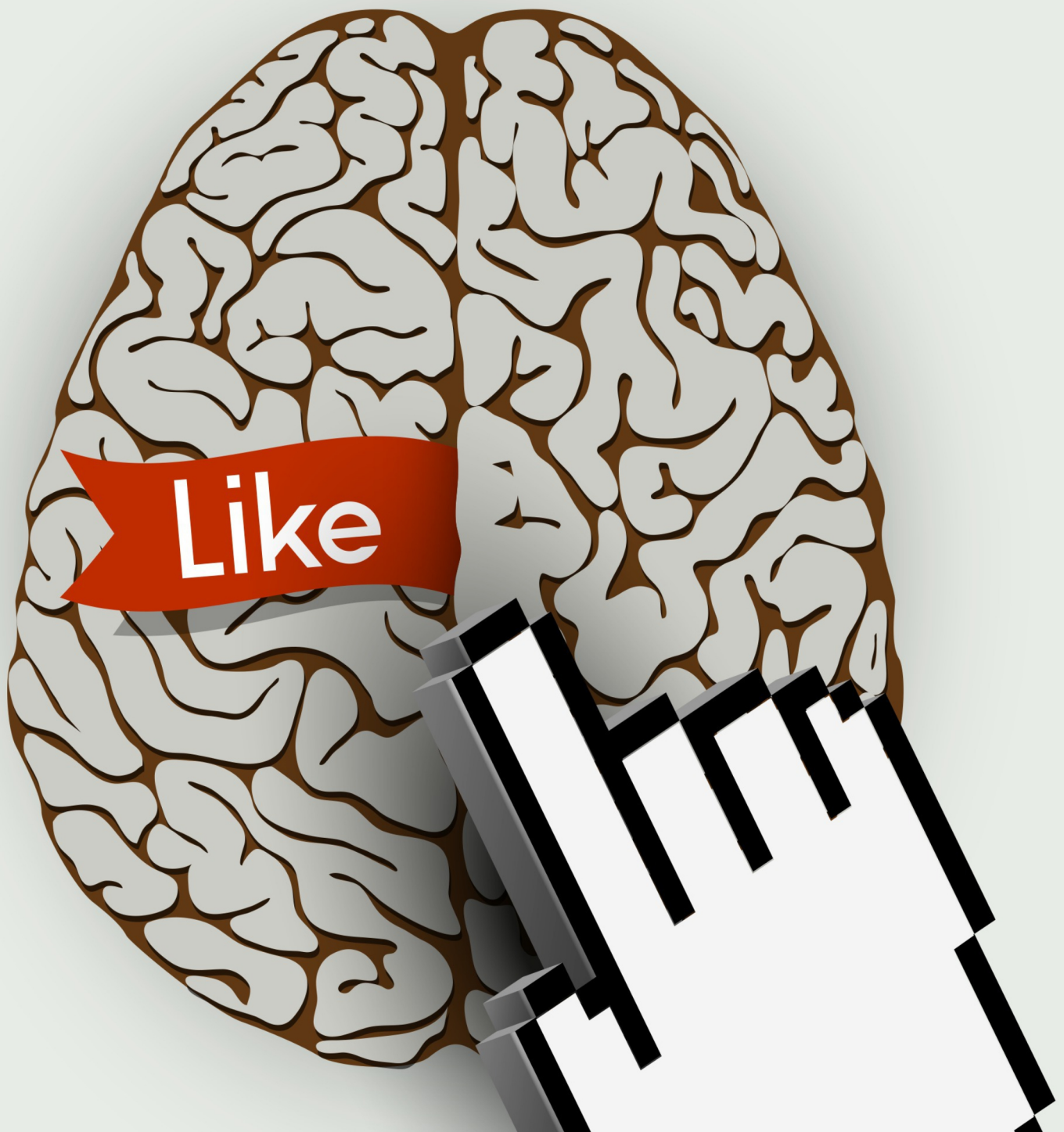


Five Psychological Factors That Will Boost Your Website

By Graham Jones, The Internet Psychologist



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People spend very little time giving your website a chance. Indeed, the average time that any of us spends on a web page is around three seconds. That's not long for someone to decide whether they have come to the right place if your business is the right fit for them, or to find out if you can provide what they want. If they cannot see the one thing they are after within three seconds, they are clicking away from your website and heading off to Google to find an alternative. You don't want that to happen, do you? So, you need to be able to convince your website visitors that the page they are looking at is precisely the one thing they wanted. That's where psychology comes in.

The psychology of convenience

We think of convenience as an uncomplicated way of doing something. From a psychological perspective, it is more about survival instincts. Our brain is continuously monitoring what we are doing and trying to get us to do it with the least amount of effort. The reason for that is your unconscious brain is working to ensure that you have enough resources to cope with emergencies that could threaten your survival. If you did things that took a lot of effort, you can't store much energy in reserve. That means if you faced a threat to your existence, your chances of surviving would be slim. So, your brain continually gets you to do things with the least amount of effort so that it can be sure you save some energy should your survival be at stake. Online, this translates into people wanting to do things as quickly as possible, in the fewest clicks. Their survival instinct is making them want to "do it now" and not waste any more time. That means your website needs to work the way they expect it to work. Otherwise, they will spend too much time trying to work out what to do. Given that most people's web experience is with a small number of highly popular websites, it means your website needs to work like them. This means having a prominent search box, top middle of the page. It also means having horizontal navigation and your phone number top right of the page. The psychology of convenience means that if your website is slow, hard to use and doesn't do things the way the top sites do, then your visitors will leave as their survival instinct is unconsciously telling them it is all too much effort.

The psychology of being liked

One of the top personal drivers we all have is the need to be liked by others. Indeed, the psychologist Maslow developed a "hierarchy of needs" in which being loved by others and being seen to have achieved was

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deemed to be much more important than food, shelter and feeling secure. Much of what we do each day is tied to our desire to be appreciated by others. It is an important element in our self-esteem and is known to be a factor in psychological well-being. Your brain is constantly seeking signals that other people like you. They do this by asking questions about you, the show they are interested in you. Online this happens when a web page is interested in you, the visitor. Sadly, many web pages are focused on the owner of the website, rather than the visitor. Those pages are all “me, me, me” rather than “you, you, you”. It’s like going on a date where the other person just rambles on about themselves all night. That’s a relationship going nowhere. The same is true online. If a web page does not demonstrate instantly it is interested in the visitor, then the person looking at it quits quickly.

The psychology of being informed

One thing your brain is always doing is assessing the risks you are taking. It wants to be sure that the actions you are taking are not going to cause a threat to you or lead you to harm yourself. Your brain does this by seeking as much information as possible so that it can make the best assessment of the situation. When it comes to websites, this risk-reduction mechanism also kicks in. It makes you want to seek as much information as possible. So, if a web page is thin on information, the visitor’s brain is telling them the risk is high. Hence, they seek out an alternative website that has more detail. Online stores, for instance, get much higher sales when each product has lots of details and facts and figures available. Visitors do not check out all the information; the mere presence of lots of detail allows the visitor’s brain to assume the risk is lowered because should it be needed the information is available. When your web pages lack detail, your visitors unconsciously think “high- risk”. It is no surprise that the most shared items on social media are, in fact, very long – around 1,800 words or more. People like detail as it helps them be more informed which appeals to the brain’s risk-reduction system.

The psychology of personalisation

In much the same way that a person is seeking to be liked, their brain also wants to know they are being cared for. Security and safety are an essential part of our psychological needs that drive many of our behaviour patterns. This is where personalisation comes in. Something that is personalised, just for us, shows firstly that the company cares about us as an individual, but it

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also shows that we can feel more secure. If an item is specially made for us as an individual, we can feel confident in that it will be “just right” for us. Online, personalisation is possible in many situations. When you log into many web services what you see is different to what another person will see when they log in. So, if your web pages do not demonstrate personalisation, you reduce the security feelings that people will associate with your products and services. The customisation makes your visitors feel more cared for by your organisation and keeps them safe in the notion of increased security.

The psychology of trust

If you are to convince people that your web pages are precisely what they need, then they are going to have to trust you. The psychology of trust is interlinked with other psychological factors such as the psychology of being liked and the psychology of personalisation. That stems back to the time when we were born. Our parents demonstrated they were caring for us, loved us and did everything they could for us. In return, we learned to trust them because they apparently had our best interests at heart. However, there is another element of trust which is essential online, and that is the extent of the knowledge that someone shows. As you grow up, you start to trust authority figures such as teachers or doctors because they clearly know a lot more than you do when you are a child. This means that as we develop we trust people with knowledge. The same is true as an adult. When someone clearly knows their stuff, when they have studied a subject in depth, when they are recognised by their peers as experts, then you trust them. On a web page, this means that visitors only tend to believe the site if the owner can be trusted. Sometimes that is due to the company being a well-known and trusted brand. At other times it is down to signals of knowledge, such as the web pages having markers of accreditation from relevant professional bodies, or that the site is quoted and referred to by others.

The five psychological factors for website success

These five psychological factors of website success can easily be remembered using the word "CLICK". Your website needs to be:

- **Convenient** – to deal with the psychology of survival
- **Likeable** – to ensure it demonstrates it likes the visitor more than itself
- **Informative** – to help visitors cope with the psychology of risk
- **Customised** – to deal with the psychology of security, making visitors feel it is just for them
- **Knowledgeable** – to demonstrate it clearly knows its subject and can be trusted

The CLICK System checklist

Use the checklist below to determine whether your website fulfills the psychological requirements of your visitors

C – Convenient

- Does your website emphasise convenience at every stage?
- Is every process simple and straightforward?
- Do you have a search box, top middle of the page?
- Is your phone number visible, top right of the page?
- Is your navigation horizontal?
- Are your menu items obvious?

L – Likeable

- Does your website show the visitors that you like them?
- Is your wording “me, me, me” or “you, you, you”?
- Is the page precisely about what people were searching for?
- Do you use social icons, asking visitors to “Like” your page before you have even attempted to show them that you like them?

I – Informative

- How much product information do you carry?
- Can customers download data sheets, product information, etc?
- Do you have articles about the subjects relevant to your products?
- Is your website packed with information?
- Are your articles short or long?

C – Customised

- How good is your online customer service?
- Can customers contact you when they want, in the way they want?
- Do you have personalised pages for each customer?
- Can you tailor their experience of the site to suit visitors?

K – Knowledgeable

- How good are your staff at answering customer questions?
- Can your staff immediately point people to further information?
- Does your website show that you know your subject?
- Do you appear as experts in your field?

The science of **CLICK.OLOGY**

The five principles of online psychology are explained in the acclaimed book by Graham Jones called “Click.ology: What works in online shopping”.

The world of shopping is at a crossroads. While online sales are growing at runaway speed, many businesses are finding themselves left behind, discovering that what has worked so long in offline does not work online, and what works online does not necessarily translate offline: it simply doesn’t “click”.

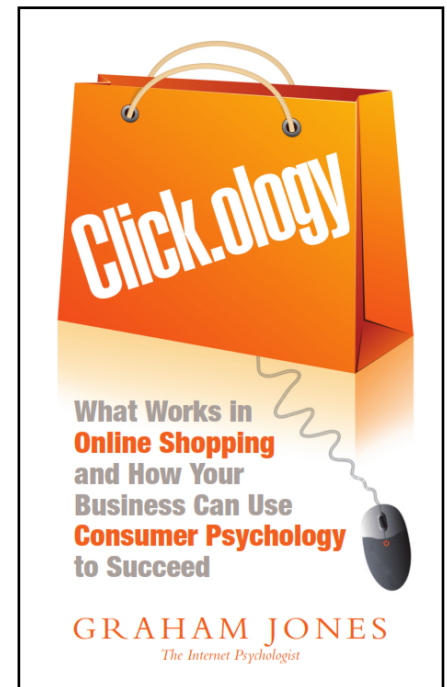
Packed with tips, guidance and real-world case studies – from online niche stores Bellabox and Facetache to the universal appeal of Groupon, and from offline discount stores Dollar Tree and Poundland to the luxury Selfridges – in this informative book Internet Psychologist Graham Jones reveals:

- Why most online shopping carts are abandoned before a purchase is ever made
- Why having a centrally positioned “search box” aids navigation and increases sales
- Why offering free shipping online pays off
- Why it makes sense to be sociable

He also reveals the “why” of consumer behaviour online, how it differs from offline behaviour, and how you can use this understanding to create a store that connects with and engages your customers on both a practical and a psychological level – a store that demonstrates true click.ology.

Using an accessible five-step CLICK system for turning clicks into dollars, the book shows how to learn from the experience of both on and offline and apply lessons to both. Whether you’re running a small business website or that of a big corporation, whether you’re operating purely online or offline too, Click.ology shows how you can thrive in a dynamic retail world.

Check out: <https://click.ology.biz>



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The moral right of Graham Jones has been asserted.

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