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By [Heidi Adkisson](#)

Designing for color blindness

Approximately 8% percent of Caucasian males have some type of color blindness (more correctly referred to as color deficiency). Despite this fact, major sites rely on users' ability to distinguish red.

Several years ago, we conducted a usability study for a client whose site made extensive use of red links with underlining disabled. Furthermore, the navigation scheme relied heavily on links embedded in text. As it happened one of the participants in this study was red-green colorblind. In order to navigate, he wound up having to run his mouse over text to see which text would "display the little hand." This needle-in-a-haystack technique (which he reported using on other sites as well) was only partially successful. It was a painful and instructive session.