By **Blink Staff**

By

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People bring a history of well-established routines when they use websites, desktop applications, and mobile apps. These expectations influence their experiences. For example, taking an image control as a credit card payment option can lead a customer to call customer service. This is just one example from the hundreds of usability studies that Blink has conducted. Understanding user expectations has enabled us to make detailed recommendations and help clients deliver great user experiences.

From our research, here are two examples showing how expectations influence the user experience.

Keep it easy for the users to navigate

We tested the current version of a website for IT professionals against a proposed new design. Users found it easier to complete tasks with the revised design. They gave kudos to consistency, typographic choices, and information organization. However, most participants could not tell how to return to the home page from different parts of the website. When asked why they were thrown off, users answered that they expected the usual means of navigation. We recommended that the development team leverage best practices to match users' routines and follow-up with a card sorting study to further gauge their expectations.

Guide users on new features

We recently tested a new service for smartphone users. Users were impressed and many wanted to subscribe. There were also undecided participants who wanted more information. These users misunderstood the innovative aspects of this service to be phone features. When we talked to them, people said that they were surprised about not being better informed. If they knew, it would have helped them commit to the service. We recommended developing an introductory system to educate the users.

These two examples illustrate one reason why investing in user research and design, to better understand your customers' expectations, can help inform design decisions that reduce risk.