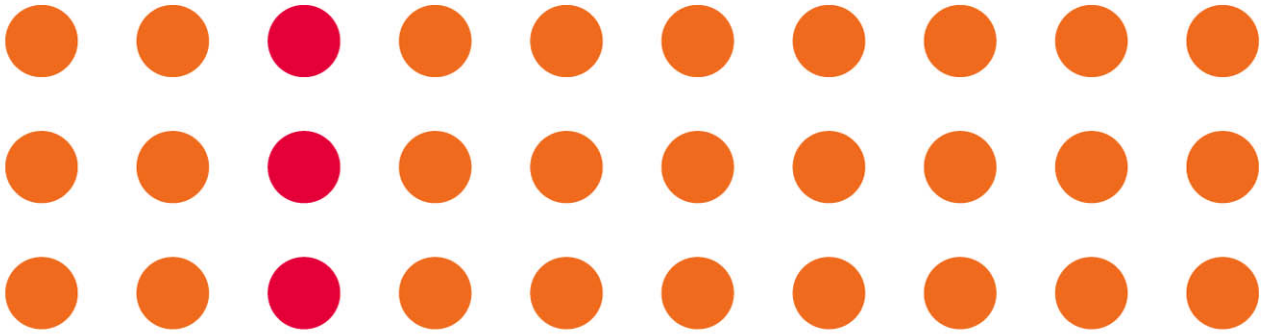

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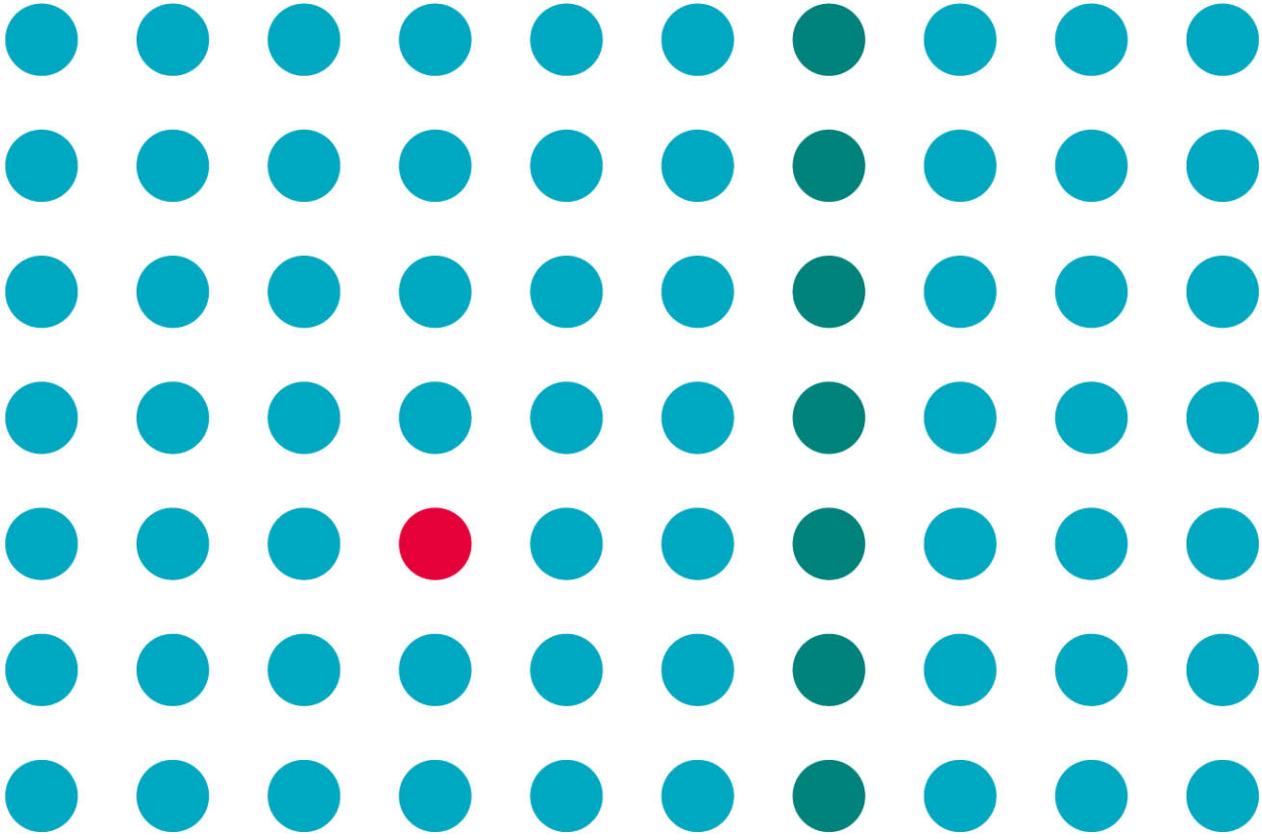

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New Riders
VOICES THAT MATTER™

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to the memory of Miles and Jeanette Schwartz.
Wish you were here to share the book with.

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HOW PEOPLE READ

HOW PEOPLE REMEMBER

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HOW PEOPLE FOCUS THEIR ATTENTION

WHAT MOTIVATES PEOPLE

PEOPLE ARE SOCIAL ANIMALS

HOW PEOPLE FEEL

PEOPLE MAKE MISTAKES

HOW PEOPLE DECIDE

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF DESIGN

Whether you're designing a Web site or a medical device—or something somewhere in between—your audience is comprised of the people who will benefit from that design.

And the totality of your audience's experience is profoundly impacted by what you know—or *don't know*—about them.

How do they think? How do they decide? What motivates them to click or purchase or whatever it is you want them to do?

You'll learn those things in this book.

You'll also learn what grabs their attention, what errors they will make and why, as well as other things that will help you design better.

And you'll design better because I've already done most of the heavy lifting for you. I'm one of those strange people who likes to read research. Lots and lots of research. So I read—or in some cases, *re-read*—dozens of books and hundreds of research articles. I picked my favorite theories, concepts, and research studies.

Then I combined them with experience I've gained throughout the many years I've been designing technology interfaces.

And you're holding the result: 100 things I think you need to know about people.

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4 THERE'S A SPECIAL PART OF THE BRAIN JUST FOR RECOGNIZING FACES

Imagine that you're walking down a busy street in a large city when you suddenly see the face of a family member. Even if you were not expecting to see this person, and even if there are dozens, or even hundreds, of people in your visual field, you will immediately recognize him or her as your relative. You'll also have an accompanying emotional response, be it love, hate, fear, or otherwise.

Although the visual cortex is huge and takes up significant brain resources, there is a special part of the brain outside the visual cortex whose sole purpose is to recognize faces. Identified by Nancy Kanwisher (1997), the fusiform face area (FFA) allows faces to bypass the brain's usual interpretive channels and helps us identify them more quickly than objects. The FFA is also near the amygdala, the brain's emotional center.

People with autism don't view faces with the FFA

Research by Karen Pierce (2001) showed that people with autism don't use the FFA when looking at faces. Instead, they use other, regular pathways in the brain and visual cortex that are normally used to recognize and interpret objects but not faces.

We look where the face looks

Eye-tracking research shows that if a picture of a face looks away from us and toward a product on a Web page (see **Figure 4.1**), then we tend to also look at the product.

But remember, just because people look at something doesn't mean they're paying attention. As you consider your Web approach, you'll have to decide whether you want to establish an emotional connection (the face looking right at the user) or direct attention (the face looking directly at a product).

FIGURE 4.1 We look where the person looks

People are born with a preference for faces

Research by Catherine Mondloch et al. (1999) shows that newborns less than an hour old prefer looking at something that has facial features.

The eyes have it: people decide who and what is alive by looking at the eyes

Christine Looser and T. Wheatley (2010) takes pictures of people and then morphs them in stages into inanimate mannequin faces. She shows the stages and has research subjects decide when the picture is no longer a human and alive. **Figure 4.2** shows examples of her pictures. Looser's research found that subjects say the pictures no longer show someone who is alive at about the 75 percent mark. She also found that people primarily use the eyes to decide if a picture shows someone who is human and alive.

FIGURE 4.2 An example of Looser's and Wheatley's people to mannequin faces

Takeaways

- People recognize and react to faces on Web pages faster than anything else on the page (at least by those who are not autistic).
- Faces looking right at people will have the greatest emotional impact on a Web page, probably because the eyes are the most important part of the face.
- If a face on a Web page looks at another spot or product on the page, people will also tend to look at that product. This doesn't necessarily mean that they paid attention to it, just that they physically looked at it.

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