

First Look: Examining the Horizontal Grid Layouts Using Eye-Tracking

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Past eye-tracking literature has shown that users typically scan information on a traditional text-based web layout. It is widely known as the "F-shaped" pattern, and evidence of this pattern is inevitable within search engine result pages (SERP) due to the hierarchical nature of how the results are presented. In the new Windows 8 interface, search results are arranged horizontally in a grid format and it is currently unknown if users view the grid-based layout similarly to the traditional list layout. This study used eye-tracking to specifically compare two SERP layouts (Grid vs. List) with two types of tasks (Information vs. Navigational) to see if differences in gaze patterns exist. Differences in viewing patterns were found between the Grid and the List. Users had more fixations in the top left quadrants of the Grid. Results also indicated differences in the number and order of fixations between the two types of tasks.