The Art of Internet Advertising: An Analysis of Consumer Preferences Concerning Design Elements in Web Based Image Advertisements (Work In Progress)

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BACKGROUND

Basics
• The internet has become the principle way that advertisers interact with consumers
• Web based advertising is a relatively new field and the best techniques for reaching consumers are still being discovered.
• Little research has been done concerning the types of images used in web based advertisements.
• My research will focus on revealing user preferences specifically pertaining to the images in advertisements.

PURPOSE

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Through my research, I hope to reveal some simple guidelines regarding the types of images that product promoters should use if they want to successfully convey their merchandise in a positive manner. Ultimately, this will increase purchase intentions and lead to more product sales.

The Age of the Internet has brought about unprecedented connectivity. This massive network has become the prime way advertisers reach consumers.

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Abstract / Literature Review / Methodology

Topic
The age of the internet has brought about vast changes in the ways that advertisers interact with consumers. Advertisers need to understand the most effective ways to create a positive image of a product in a consumer's mind. Past research has indicated that the internet has become the prime medium for which consumers develop ideas about products. Little research has been done concerning the imagery used in advertisements on the internet regarding their effectiveness in persuading internet users to make purchases. Through the creation of my own advertisements, with many variations in color, text, size, page orientation and other variables, I will conduct a survey to gather information regarding consumer preferences. This information will reveal trends in what imagery and design elements consumers find appealing when they encounter internet advertisements and will inform advertisers so they can make better decisions when promoting products.

Literature Review

The age of the internet has had a massive effect on the current strategies utilized by marketers and web designers in reaching consumers and effectively capturing buyers' interests so that they will ultimately make a purchase. The internet has become the prime way that consumers develop attitudes about products and also an increasingly easy way for consumers to make purchases (Wang 2008). The importance of a well designed website has become much more important to web marketers because consumer attitudes about products, in this new age of internet use, are heavily influenced by consumer interactions with company web pages (Wang 2008). Telepresence, which is the feeling that a web site user gets of being transported to another place when using a web page, has become a very important indicator of website effectiveness. Intuitive web usability and interactive advertisements have been proven effective in creating better feelings of telepresence when creatively and uniquely implemented (Coyle 2008). The first impression that a consumer has about a web site is an important indicator of purchase intentions (Mirdehghani 2009). First impressions are heavily influenced by the color and texture of a web page (Mirdehghani 2009). Texture and color are also closely intertwined elements of web pages (Mirdehghani 2009).

Little research has been done in determining what specific elements of images on web pages are more effective than others in increasing telepresence, web site usability and purchase intentions. In fact, James Coyle suggested in his research in 2008 that further research is necessary in discovering which types of images create more engaging website experiences than others (Coyle 2008) Because all of these image elements are positively correlated, if an image element were to increase one of these factors it is likely to increase them all. The tested images in this experiment will be selected based on the elements and principles of design and whether the image would be considered well designed or poorly designed. Images will also be divided by whether they contain text or lack text in a similar way to Mirdehghani's research in 2009. The tested effects will include whether the image increases purchase intentions or not, whether or not the image makes the web site easier to use, and if the image increases feelings of telepresence.

Methodology
My methodology will be simple but effective in gathering information about consumer preferences considering imagery in advertisements on the web.

• I will create a number of ads that users will chose between based on the simple question of which ad do you prefer.
• All ads will be of a similar construction and in order to test specific variables, one thing about each ad will be different than the ad it is being compared too.
• The people who take part in my experiment will take a survey at the beginning in order to collect demographic information so that trends can be analyzed at the conclusion of the survey.
• Tested variables include color features like opacity and hue, types of text coupled with images, black/white images versus color, photographs vs art/computer generated graphics, and still images vs moving/ changing images (gifs)
• After users are exposed to all of the ads and their variations they will be asked to rank the ads from most appealing to least appealing.
After the experiment is finished, all of the data will be evaluated and put into easily understandable graphs and charts to demonstrate my findings.

Survey Design
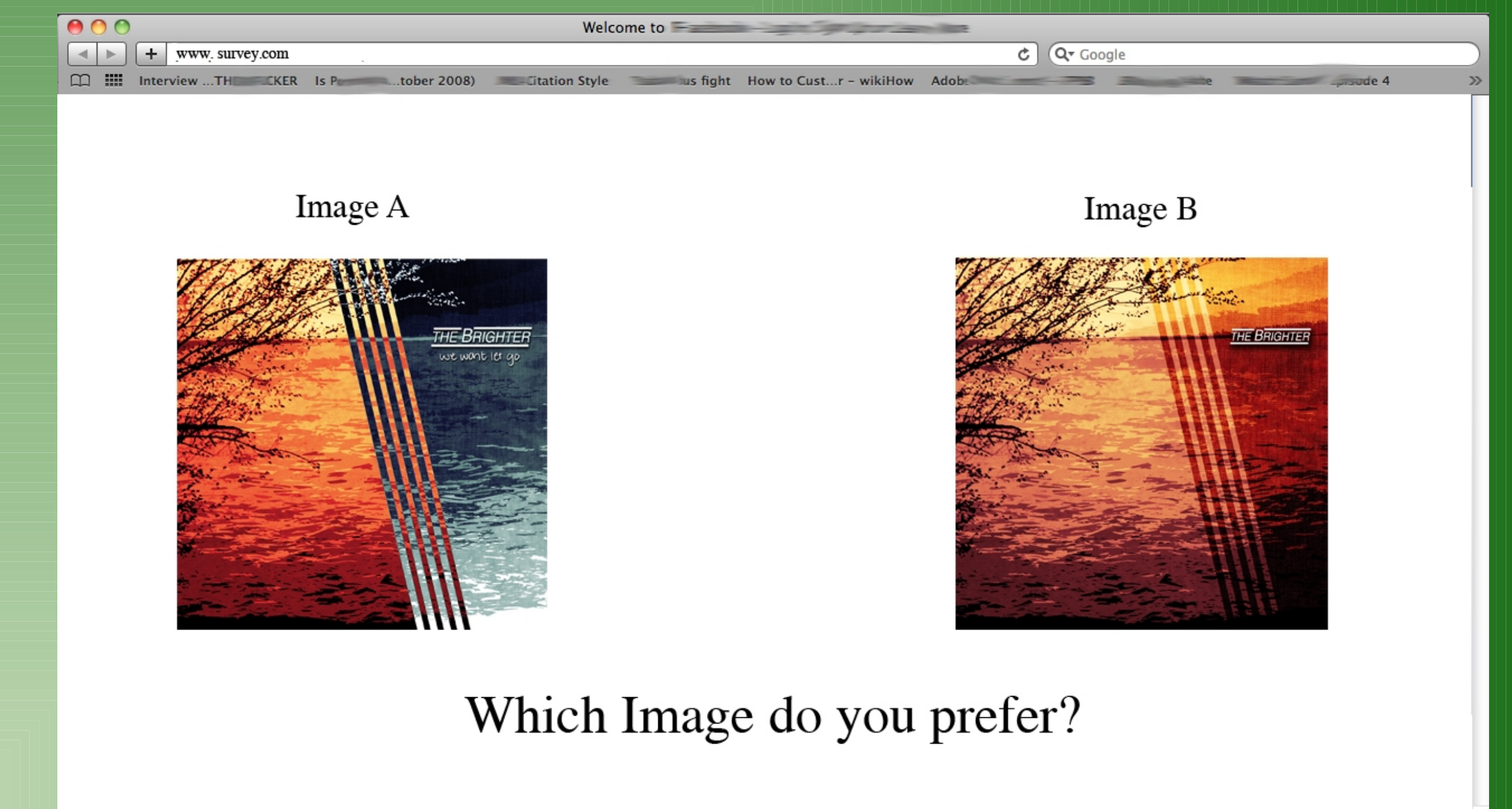
The image above is the theoretical survey design I will use. Two closely related images will be compared. The images above are only different from each other in very few ways. By altering only one or two image elements, we can determine if those specific elements are more attractive to a consumer, (such as the color of the images right side as seen in the images above).

The question "Which Image do you prefer?" is intentionally simple because the average person knows little about the specifics of color, pattern and the other elements that I will be evaluating.
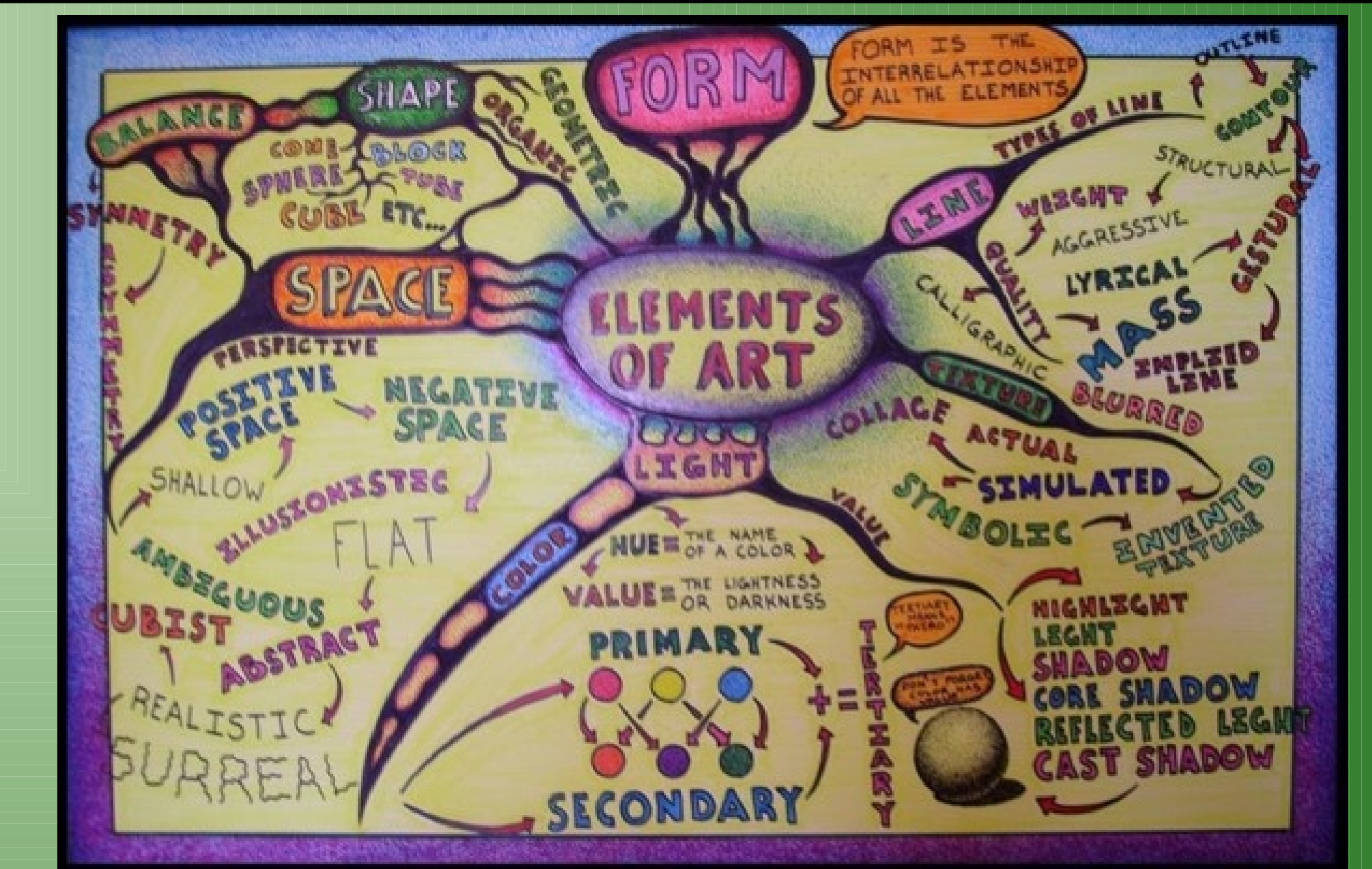
Above is a chart illustrating the elements of art. These elements are the same image elements that I will test in my survey

REFERENCES

Coyle, James R., Andrew Mendelson, and Heeman Kim. "The Effects of Interactive Images and Goal-Seeking Behavior on Telepresence and Site Ease of Use." *Journal of Website Promotion* 3.1/2 (2008): 39-61. *Academic Search Complete*. EBSCO. Web. 10 Feb. 2011.

Mirdehghani, Maryam, and S. Amirhassan Monadjemi. "Aesthetic Evaluation of Web Pages Using Texture/Color Features and Artificial Neural Networks." *International Review on Computers & Software* 4.1 (2009): 34-41. *Academic Search Complete*. EBSCO. Web. 10 Feb. 2011.

Wang, Alex. "The Effects of Integrating Advertising and Product Publicity on Web Usability." *Journal of Website Promotion* 3.1/2 (2008): 84-101. *Academic Search Complete*. EBSCO. Web. 10 Feb. 2011.

http://www.mindmapart.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/04/elements-of-art-by-michael-petiford.jpg (picture of the elements of art)