The Problem

But there is a dark side to Web “surfing” and “cruising:”
- Unfamiliar terms
- Long delays
- Deep sites
- Confusing navigation

We believe these can lead to stress and tension, which can plague users.

Some Outcomes of Interest:
- Ease of Use (EOU)
- Behavioral Intentions (to return)
- Perceived stress

Most have been measured subjectively (questionnaires).

Objective Measures (some new)
- Ease of Use: Number of steps to complete the task
- Behavioral Intentions: Actual choice during a study
- Stress: Physiological (arm band)

This study investigates a theoretical model with both “objective” and “subjective” data. We are unaware of a previous study that uses both approaches simultaneously.

Theory

Theoretical base: information foraging theory (Pirolli & Card, 1999).

Information seekers rely on cues to find what they are looking for.

If cues have low “information scent” or they have to wait very long, their search is impeded.

A previous study in our lab has shown delay and familiarity to be important factors in ascertaining the “cost” of the search (Galletta et al., 2006).

H1: High scent decreases disorientation
H2: Low delay decreases disorientation
H3: High scent increases EOU
H4: Low delay increases EOU
H5: EOU reduces stress
H6: EOU reduces switching

Our Model

Design

- 2x2 Experimental Design
- Mock website: “Food Market”
- Scent: familiarity of categories
- Low scent: brands
- High scent: categories
- Delay: 0 or 6 seconds
- Participants: undergraduate psychology pool subjects

Tasks and Procedure:
- Put on Body Bugg arm band
- Sign consent form while it “warms up”
- Browse for specified products on the randomly-assigned website
- Make a decision about whether to switch sites for another set of tasks
- Questionnaires for subjective measures

Results—SmartPLS

Bold paths are significant

Subjective Measures

Objective Measures

Analysis of Reversals

Conclusions: Scent reduces backtracking. Delay does too! Perhaps by forcing efficiency.