

Abstract

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**Avoidance Attitude Towards Visual
Material? Effects of Camcorder
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Individual Verbal and Imaginal
Traits on Selective Exposure to
Online Headlines**

Two quasi-experiments were conducted to test the effects of camcorder symbol, a "peripheral cue" (Elaboration Likelihood Theory, Petty & Priester 1994) attached to positive and negative headlines with low or high utility. In addition, we tried to detect the role of verbal and imaginal/visual individual differences (Paivio 1975) in the process of headlines selection.

First experiment. A portal for students was created based on a real news portal. Four students group (N = 250) were exposed to online headlines and they selected the preferred ones by clicking. Camcorders were attached to headlines with low utility in

the first, to headlines with high utility in the second and mixed in the third condition. The fourth was the control group. A regression analysis showed that those with high scores on both verbal and visual scales selected more and more headlines with low utility, avoiding headlines with the camcorder.

In the second research (N=160) in experimental group we primed respondents' dominant cognitive style – verbal or visual – with a supraliminal stimuli: a camcorder in the upper left corner of eight nature photos. In both conditions there were presented exactly the same headlines that those in the third condition in the first experiment. Like in the first experiment, those who were high on both visual and verbal scale (11%) presented again a typical avoidance attitude towards headlines with camcorder. Using an eye-tracker, this avoiding attitude was confirmed. Sexual differences will also be presented. Results could be valid only for reading online headlines.