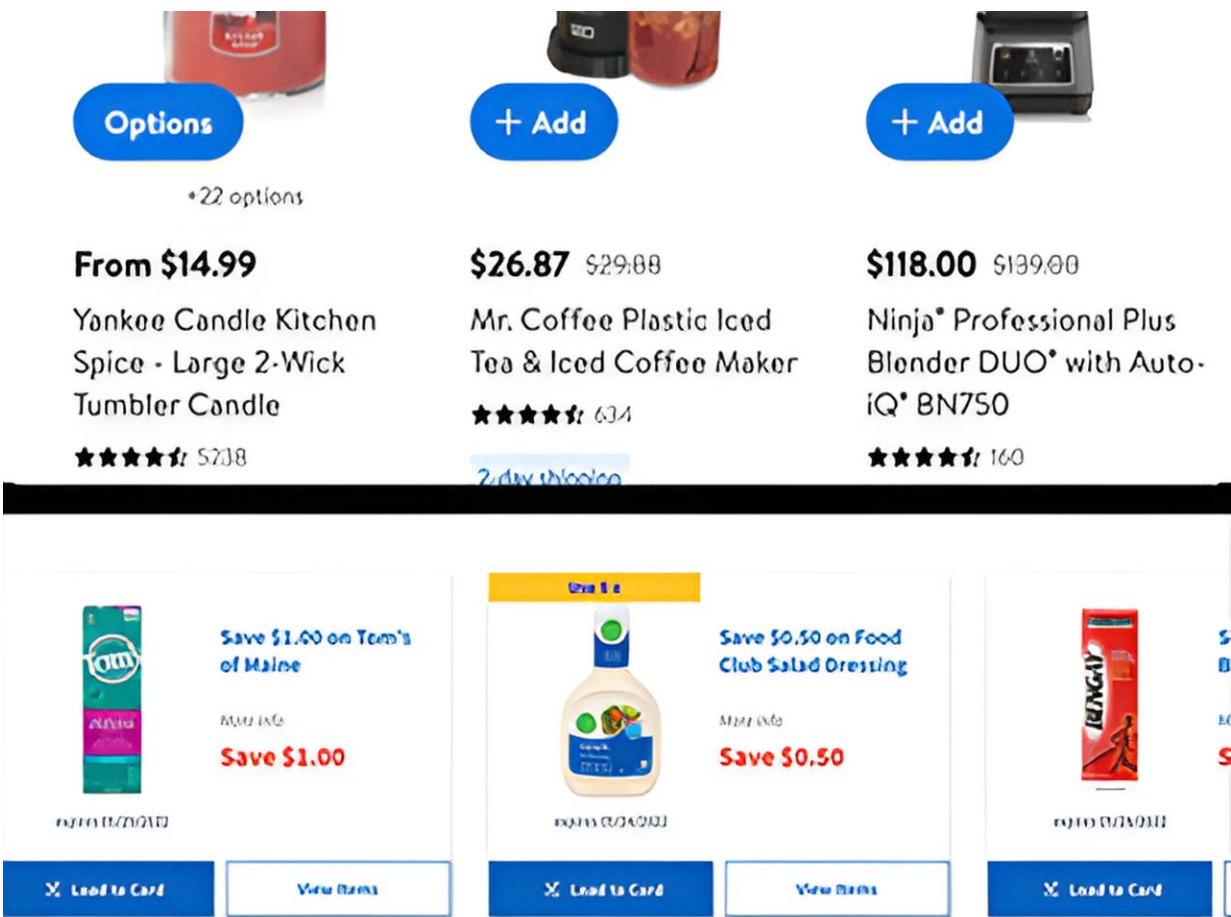


Online shoppers more likely to click ads with curvy designs and spend more money, says study

December 19 2023, by Cassidy Delamarter



Examples of curvy (top) versus sharp (bottom). Credit: University of South Florida

As you shop online, you may be drawn to digital ads with curvy designs without even realizing it. According to a new study from the University of South Florida, consumers click on curvy call-to-action buttons, such as "Shop Now" or "Add to Cart," at a significantly higher rate than those with sharp angles.

"It's actually rooted in natural and evolutionary instincts," said principal investigator Dipayan Biswas, the Frank Harvey endowed professor of marketing. "According to research from different disciplines, our natural instincts send us signals that sharp angles usually denote danger and that we're more likely to get hurt. In contrast, curvy designs are perceived as friendlier and more approachable."

Biswas says this feeling leads people to subconsciously prefer things, including digital ad designs, that are soft-edged and curvy. As [published](#) in the *Journal of Consumer Research*, Biswas tested this concept through click rates and eye movement studies in the Muma College of Business Customer Experience Lab. The novel findings reveal how the shapes of virtual elements can subconsciously influence click-through rates.

"We studied a hotel search button and we consistently found the click rate was higher when the elements were curved," Biswas said. "It translated to an increase of nearly 15% in total revenue."

According to Biswas, this means companies can potentially manipulate consumers into clicking and subsequently spending more through the use of curved call-to-action buttons. For companies that put little thought or reasoning behind their [design](#) element choices, Biswas says this study could be eye opening for them.

"This information is a very powerful tool in the hands of companies if they can influence your behavior without you realizing it," he said.

For [shoppers](#), this means when you're browsing the web on a holiday shopping spree, you become most susceptible to subliminal tactics, such as [design elements](#), which can lead to more unplanned purchases. Biswas encourages [online shoppers](#) to set a budget to offset such digital influence.

"Having a budget will give you a benchmark to keep things more conscious-oriented and you're less likely to be influenced by variables like these."

Biswas plans to continue researching digital ads and examine additional elements that he believes can also impact click rates and user engagement.

More information: Dipayan Biswas et al, Curvy Digital Marketing Designs: Virtual Elements with Rounded Shapes Enhance Online Click-Through Rates, *Journal of Consumer Research* (2023). [DOI: 10.1093/jcr/ucad078](#)

Provided by University of South Florida

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