

## LIPPINCOTT

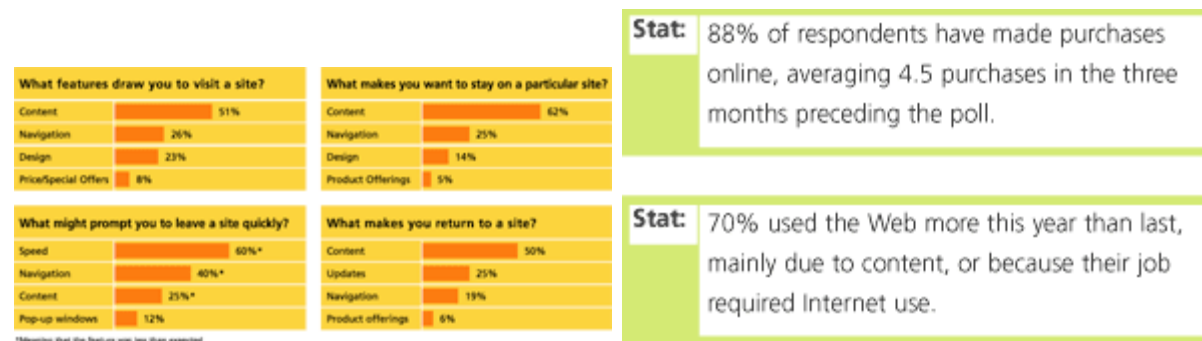
## Content, Speed and Navigation: The Winning Trifecta of an Effective Website

### Survey Reveals Key Visitor Preferences

The media has paid much attention to both dot-com crashes and the latest in Web innovations—the hottest and hippest features, the cutting edge concepts in interactivity and design. But we don't hear much about the e-business success stories that are slowly but surely surfacing. Success isn't measured by "hits," so what is it that sets those sites apart? What draws their visitors in, and more important, compels them to return?

To find out, we conducted an informal survey about consumers' Web habits, and the results confirmed what we had long suspected. It's not the up-to-the-second features, stereo sound and clear video that matters most. It's not even arresting graphics (which is hard for designers to admit). These elements—important though they may be—serve no purpose without good content to support them. Content is King—the lifeblood of an effective Internet brand. And if a site does not offer speed and ease of navigation, visitors are likely to leave quickly, never to return again.

The accompanying statistics and comments show that solid content—which can include products found on e-commerce sites—drives our participants to a site, and the breadth, depth and freshness of the information is the primary catalyst for return visits. Useful, usable and updated content can reinforce an incumbent's already strong brand, shore up a flagging one, or establish a leading position for a startup pure play company. Conversely, superficial or dated information drives them away just as quickly, and will weaken a brand's reputation, as will an inability to navigate the site quickly and easily. Bottom line: good content, speed and ease of use will help build and sustain brand loyalty. Without them, the site will end up in the newspaper columns for all the wrong reasons.



Top 3 "favorites":
<b>Yahoo; Amazon; Ask Jeeves</b>
Most often visited:
<b>Yahoo; The New York Times</b>
Most memorable icons:
<b>Yahoo logo; AOL logo</b>
Most memorable sounds:
<b>AOL's "You've got mail"</b>