

Floating Objects Label Study

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THIS IS NOT A DEFINITIVE FINAL REPORT

FORMATIVE evaluation studies like this one often:

- **are conducted quickly**, which may mean
 - small sample sizes
 - expedited analyses
 - brief reports

- **look at an earlier version** of the exhibit/program, which may mean
 - a focus on problems and solutions, rather than successes
 - a change in form or title of the final exhibit/program

Floating Objects Label Study

Predictions vs. Many things to try

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Summary

There were no significant differences in holding time for the two labels.

Goals

We tested the exhibit with two different labels, to see if there were differences in visitor holding time.

Methods

We compared two versions of the label:

- (1) Multiple Things to Try — the label showed visitors photos of different objects floating in the air
- (2) Make a Prediction — the label asked visitors to make predictions about which objects or orientations of objects would float the highest

Table 1. Two versions of the label tested in this study

Multiple things to try	Make a prediction
 <p>This label features a purple and green background. It includes several text boxes with instructions and questions, such as 'Can you get the heavier objects to float?' and 'Can you get two eggs to float in one air stream?'. A central circle highlights the title 'Floating Objects' and the text 'All of the objects can be levitated in the air streams, but some are trickier than others.' There are also images of objects being levitated by a stream of air.</p>	 <p>This label has a solid green background. It features a central circle with the title 'Floating Objects' and the text 'All of the objects can be levitated in the air streams, but some are trickier than others.' Below this, it says 'Cover one nozzle with your thumb to levitate the heavier objects.' There are two text boxes with 'Before you try it, make a prediction:' followed by questions about a football and a plastic ball. Images show a hand covering a nozzle and objects being levitated.</p>

Analysis consists of coding 2 one-hour videotapes recorded on 4/27/02.

Results

Visitor holding time

There was no significant difference in mean holding time between the two label versions ($F_{62} = .97, p = .33$). The median holding times were:

- (1) Multiple Things to Try = 2 minutes, 7 seconds
- (2) Make a Prediction = 1 minute, 40 seconds

See Figure 1 for holding time distributions.

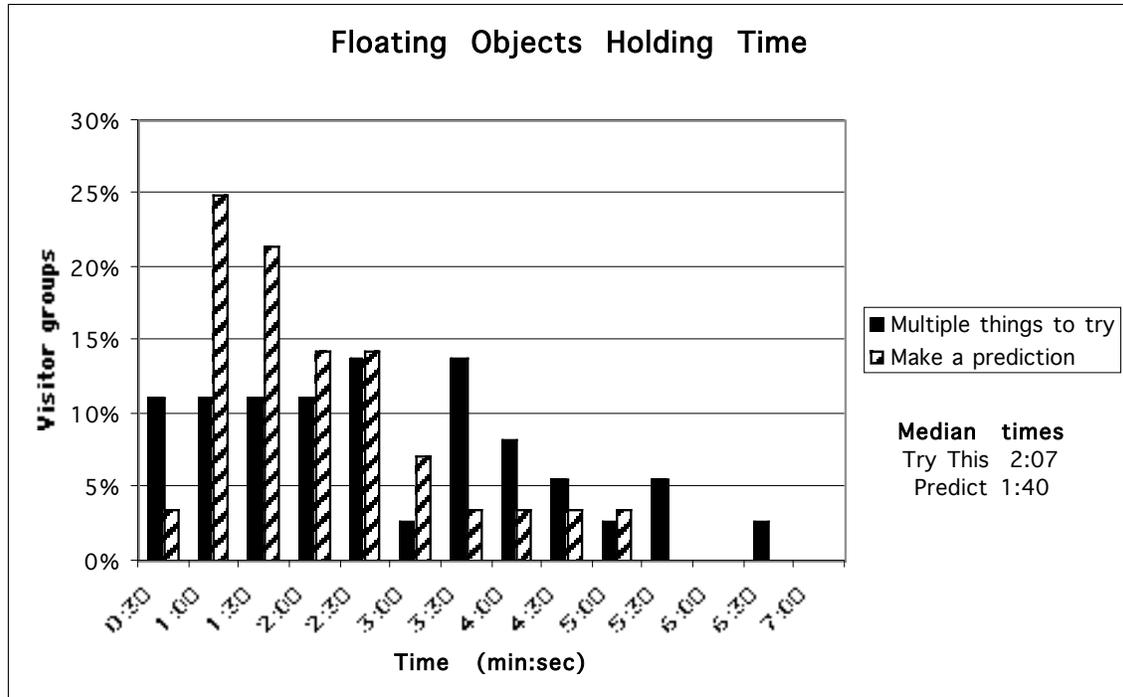


Figure 1. Holding times for different visitor groups in Versions (1) and (2).

Conclusion

The label versions did not seem to make a great difference in the holding time of visitors. The Multiple Things to Try version seemed to hold visitors a bit longer, but this was not statistically significant.

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