Study "The Influence of Online Texts on Usability and Willingness to Buy"—Summary

How do you get your visitors to actually read the text on your web pages? There are some established rules that seem obvious. Most of these rules go back to the work of Jakob Nielsen from 1997 when he measured the usability of a website. To date, research data of German websites was missing that could prove that visitors read the text on the pages when it is written according to these rules.

The study presented here shows that **good text can increase** the **number of visitors that are willing to buy** from a company **by 50 percent**.

For this study, 121 persons worked with one of five different versions of the same website. The test persons working with texts that were optimized for web use were much more likely to buy from the company behind the website. They answered "yes" 50 percent more often than the persons using the basic version with low text quality.

Improving the text also **increased trust** in the company maintaining the site **by 12 percent** and the **positive emotions** of the visitors towards the site **by 23 percent**.

The study is based on the work of Nielsen (see www.useit.com/papers/webwriting/writing.html) to be comparable. Nielsen's results could be confirmed while some additional results were found.

For example, the willingness to buy was higher when the text was promotional in style. On the other side, the users rated the text quality and the usability of this version lower than the optimized version that was written in an objective tone.
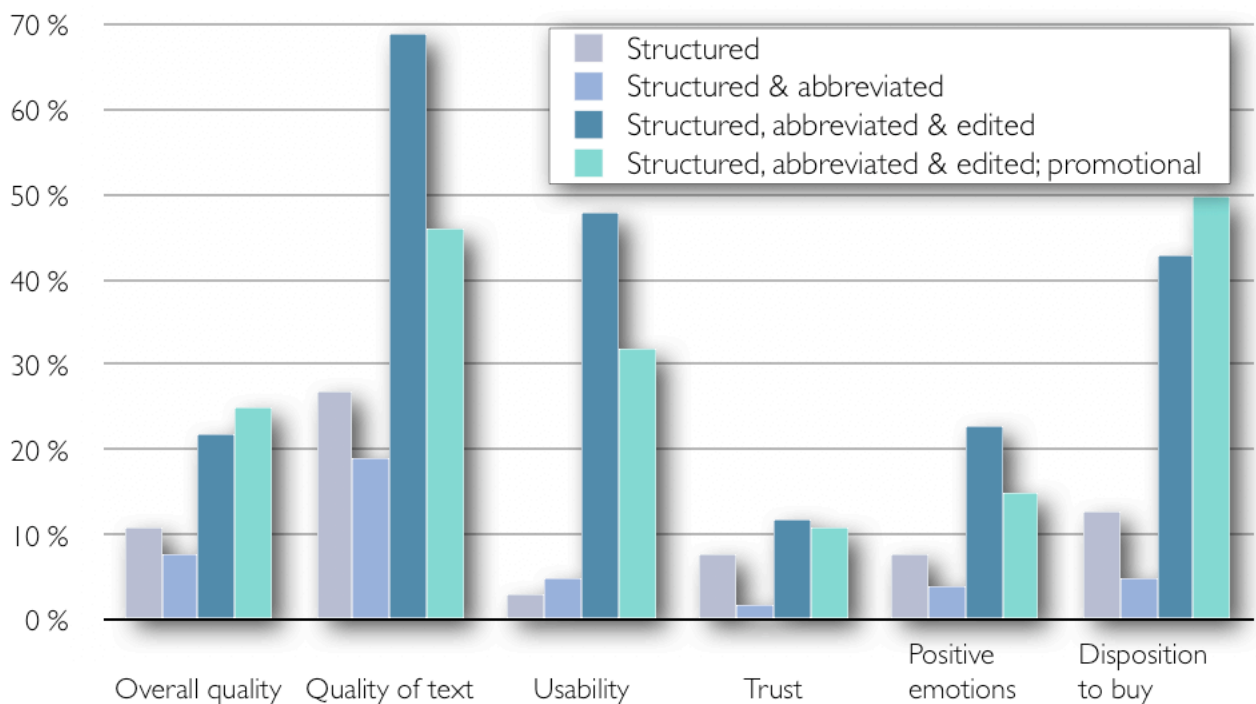

Diagram 1: Increase of user rating in relation to control (unmodified) version (set as 0 percent)
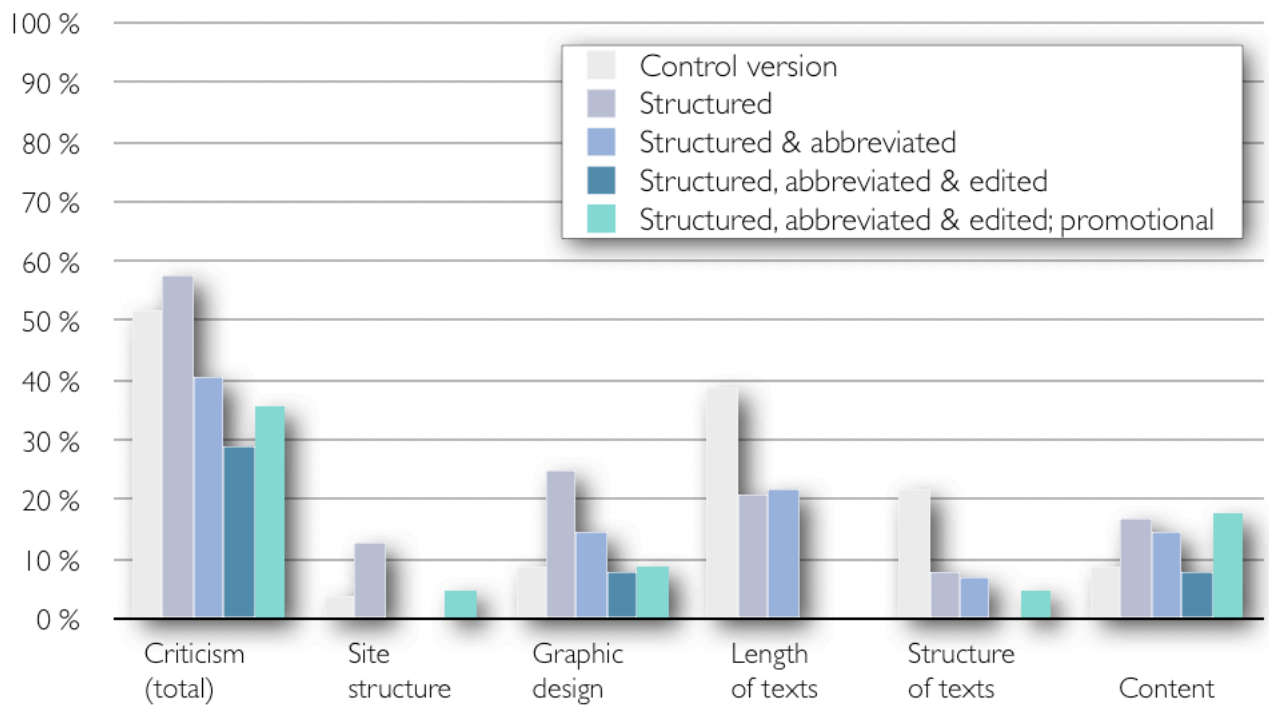
Diagram 2: Criticism of the users expressed in the commentary field of the questionnaire

The complete study is available in German at: www.benutzerfreun.de/text/

If you are interested in details or collaboration, please contact Jens Jacobsen at: mail@jjac.de