# Manipulating people via their eyes, but not literally.

## This time.

Nate Heagy, Sept 25 2008

# A brief history of me

- print designer in 1994 or so

- web designer in 1996

- programming a few years later

- UI design + development now

  - at some point my soul was crushed by a client, as usual.

# Clients v. Designers

- have money

- want to give you money

- thinks they're good with visual stuff, which is demonstrably false (that's a different talk)

- has not enough money

- want to take money *(nonviolently ...?)*

- is good with visual stuff

# Clients/Viewers

- someone that views your design and makes a decision

    - client paying for a design, eg. a new logo

    - visitor to your web site, decides where to go while there

    - user of your software, decides what to do

# What to do about viewers?

- "help" them make the right decision *without hurting them*
  - 3 sample techniques that have a measurable impact on their decision
    - yes, I have measured it

# Is it really possible?

- Yes

# For sissies, *aka people that have "morals"*

- When presenting options be careful not to accidentally influence the viewer

- When making a decision, be aware of things that might be influencing you

# 1. Make it bigger

# 1. Size

- Making things bigger makes them more noticeable

  - They notice it, they like it.

- Helps users find something, *if you're nice like that*

Logo A          Logo B

- 2 similar logos
- Asked which they prefer…
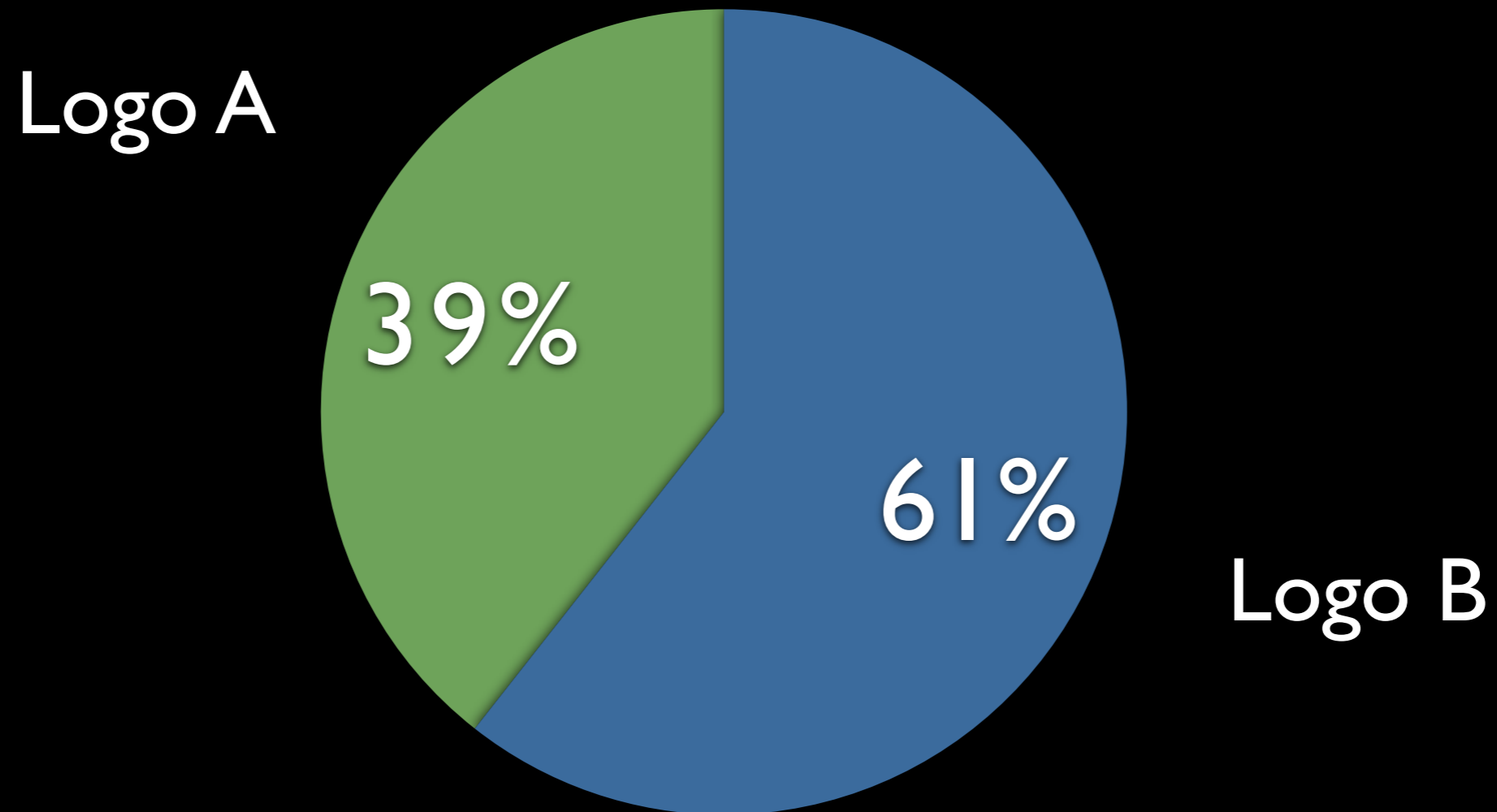
Logo A

Logo B

- Logo B had bigger type
  - 61% preference

# Viewer preference:

Logo A

39%

61%

Logo B

# slightly offtopic

- Amazon's Mechanical Turk is awesome!

  - mturk.com

  - Canadians have to pretend to be American (hint: Califorina, 90210) Amazon takes your filthy Canadian money anyway

    - Ethics are for communists, Red.

# 2. Make it Red

# 3. Color

- "If you can't make something bigger make it red"

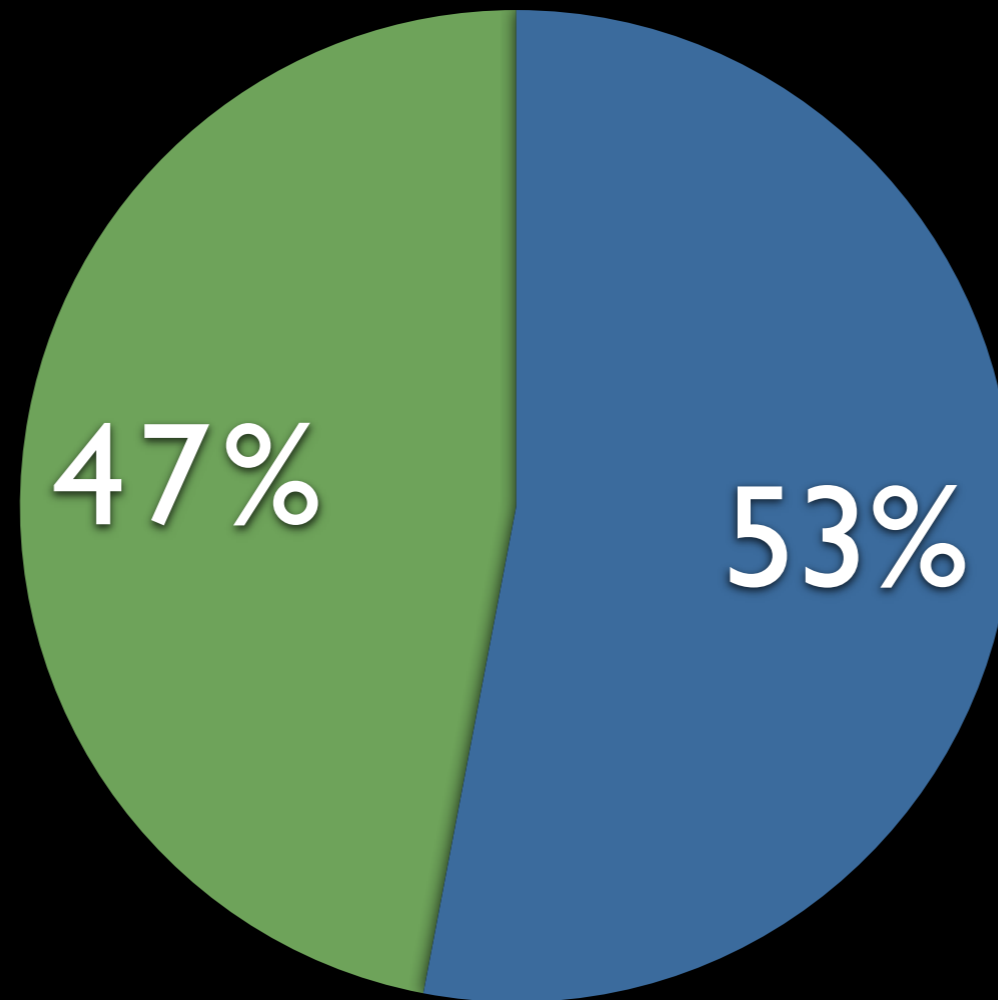- People will usually notice (and prefer) reds and highly saturated colors

Logo A

Logo B

- Logo A is now red

# Be careful with color

- All options must still be good *just not awesome*

- People will notice if you go too far

# If you're yellow:

- Present options using the same color palette

- Color can be a useful UX tool, just make sure it's intentional *and relevant*

# 3. Ask the right question

# 3. The right question

- Often employed by salespeople

- Used to great effect in politics:

  - "Do you agree that Québec should become sovereign after having made a formal offer to Canada for a new economic and political partnership within the scope of the bill respecting the future of Québec and of the agreement signed on June 12, 1995?
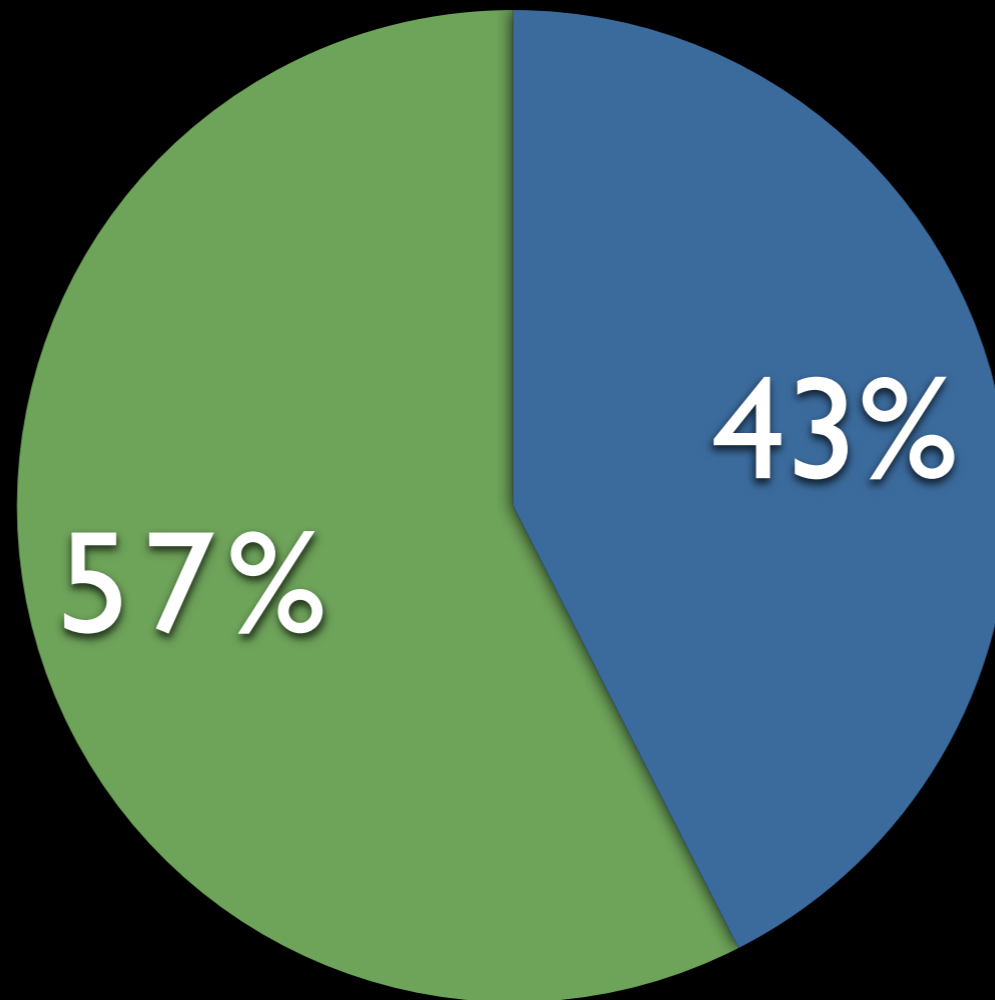
  - Political polls.  *Ask Todd S.*

Logo A

Logo B

- Now asked, "Do you prefer Logo A?"

# 57% pick A

## 46% improvement over initial B&W



Logo A

43%

57%

Logo B

# How

- graphic design:
  - Be all like, "most people I've shown this to like logo A best. Do you?"
  - or "Don't you just love logo A?"
- UX
  - make dialog boxes easy to understand
  - lead toward most common case

# How to ruin it.

- Self-defeat: "You prefer Logo B, don't you?"

- Poor sabotage: "Logo A is great. Logo B is ok but even ugly Logo C is better."

  - Client: "Ya, Logo C is awesome"

# Sissysayswhat?:

- What you say when presenting options is really important!

- Have a few neutral phrases prepared:

  - "Let me know what you think" is my person favorite, and I'm awesome

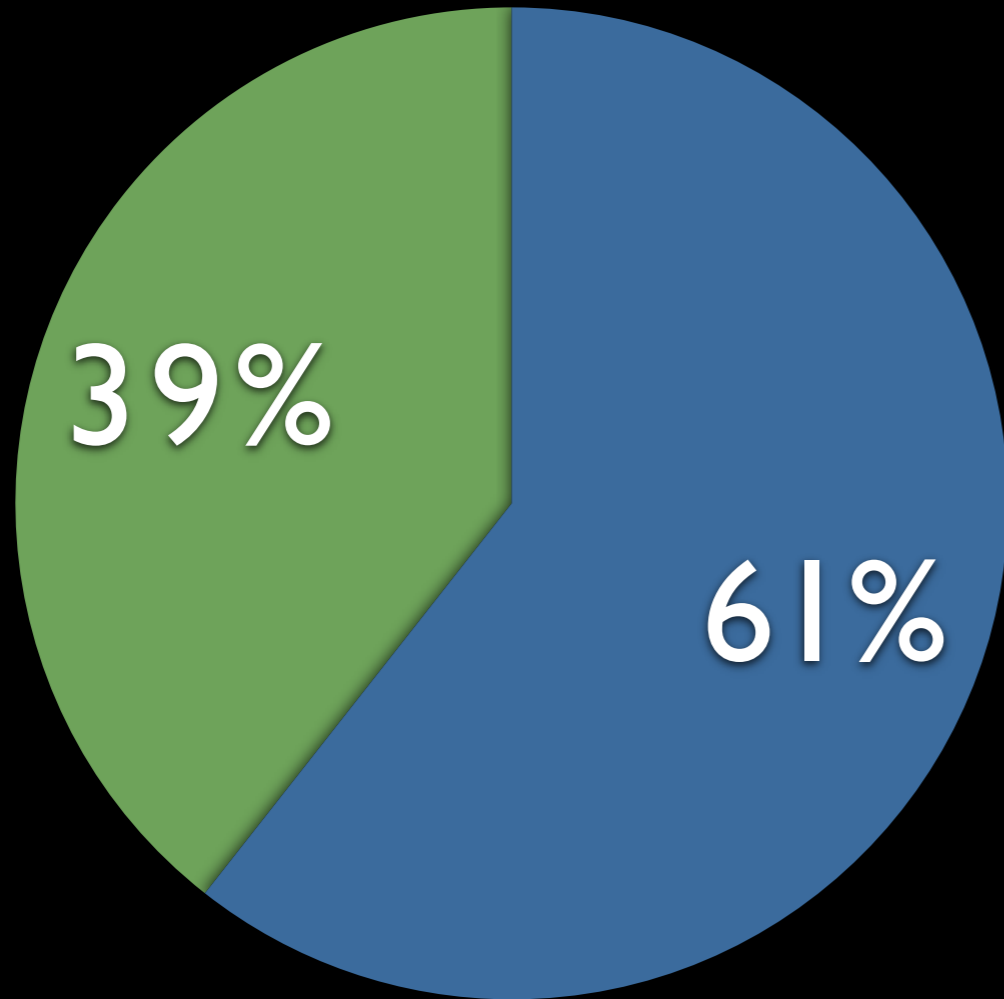- Let the viewer notice things themselves
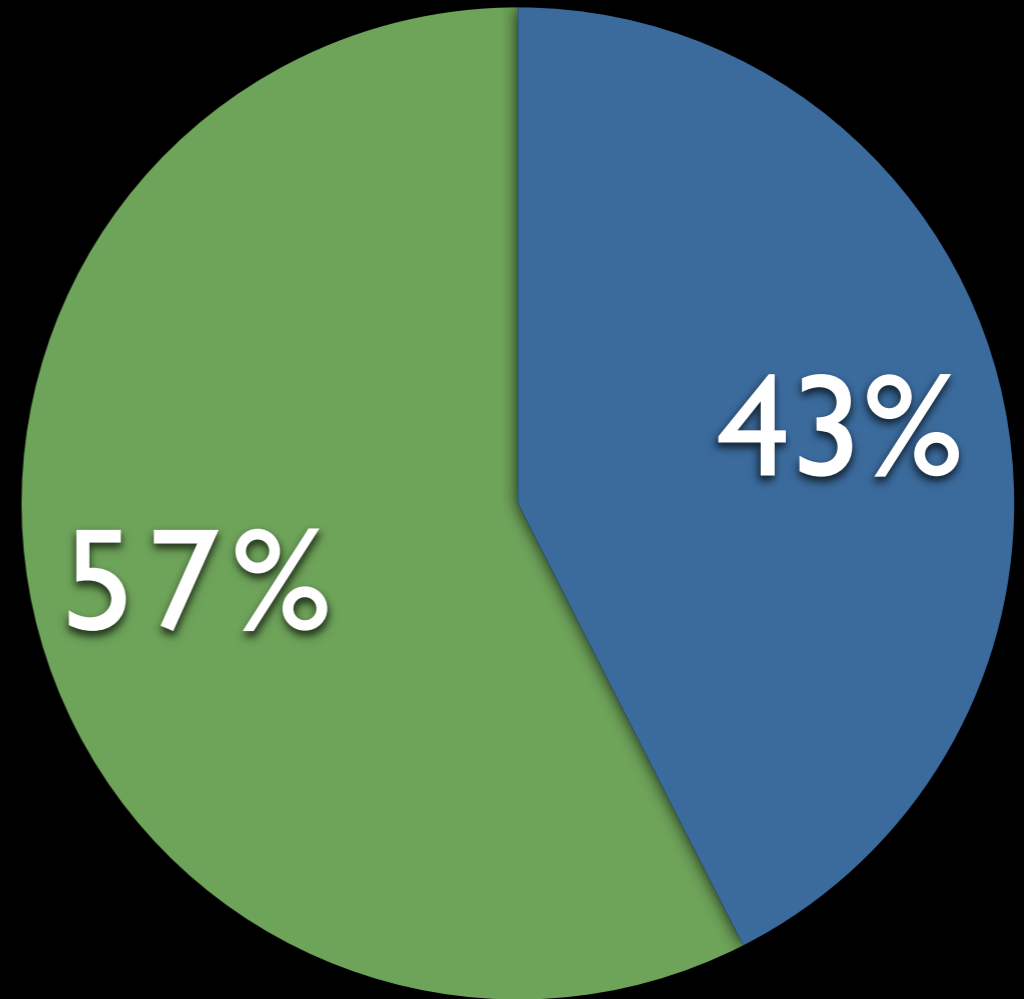
# Bonus: Photography

# 4. Photography

- good photography makes everything around it look good

- for interfaces, people are more likely to notice pretty pictures

- I call this a "bonus" because I didn't "test" it

# Conclusions

# in conclusion

- basically: people like pretty things
  - now you have proof
- be careful, it's easy for viewers to catch on
- have more than two options to make manipulations less obvious

# Conclusions for ethical-type people:

- be careful: unintended difference can sometimes give viewers bias

- reduce differences down to what is really central to the decision

- give up, join the dark side

kthxbai