

The Never Ending Web Page

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Have you noticed anything different about some of the websites you've been visiting lately? In particular, have you noticed that the menu bars have been shrinking and the page lengths, growing. I mean really growing. A LOT! In fact some of the most popular websites you go to don't have page bottoms. I'm serious, go take a look at your Facebook or Twitter feeds and try to find the bottom of the page – can't do it, can you...it's practically infinite!

Even the pages that eventually end are still pretty long and give you all the information on a single scrolling page. And if they do have a menu bar, it doesn't take you to another page, but rather to a different part of the page you're already on.

This is an awesome site I was on the other day that perfectly exemplifies what I mean...



So, why this simple change?

Well, A long time ago the easy answer to “How do I break up all the stuff I want to tell my loyal audience?” was with buttons that took you to different pages. Fast-forward to today and you realize that clicking has become more of a chore and scrolling is slowly taking its place.

I for one love this new trend. It's cleaner, simpler, and easier to follow, but of course, it has its critics...

Critic: “If there's nowhere to click, how are you going to track what your visitors are clicking on? Your analytics are going to suck!”

Me: “Have you never heard of a scroll heat map before?...and it's not like there's no clicking occurring at all, we're just talking about minimizing the number of clicks necessary to navigate the site.”

Critic: “That's stupid, nobody wants to tediously scroll down a page to find what they're looking for.”

Me: “Actually, when done right, they do! It's more engaging! Plus, you avoid load times, and distractions caused by having to click on something.”



But let's talk about the real reason this shift is occurring. I blame it on technology!

Let me explain what I mean.

A decade ago, my computer had a mouse with at least two buttons; my phone had at least a dozen buttons to play with, and my iPad...well, that didn't exist yet.



These days my mouse has been replaced with a laptop trackpad, my smartphone only has one button, and my iPad...well, I still haven't bought one, but you get the idea.



The point I'm making is that our clicks have turned into swipes, slides, and of course, scrolls. Even typing on some mobile devices now doesn't require you to click the individual letters, but rather swipe across the keyboard to spell your word.

Naturally, that simple change has carried over and we have become acceptant of these new endlessly scrolling websites. Today's technology has conditioned us to get information so easily we don't even have to click.

So is scrolling or clicking better? I'll leave it up to you to decide, but next time you're online, or even on your smartphone or tablet, give it a try and see if you can find the bottom of your favorite website.