

Poynter.

# EyeTrack: Tablet Research

THE POYNTER INSTITUTE FOR MEDIA STUDIES

**#poyntertab**

How do people  
choose what to  
read on a tablet?

And how do they read,  
once they choose?







# Poynter. EyeTrack Tablet Research

Name	Date	Age
Ann Adair	6-20-12	4
Luanne Dietz	6-20-12	
Cassandra Pinyan	6-20-12	
Ray Epp	6-21-12	
Molly Jacobsen	6-21-12	
Bentan Heles	6-21-12	
Debbie Reeser	6-21-12	
Shocum	6-27-12	

We asked them.



We watched them.

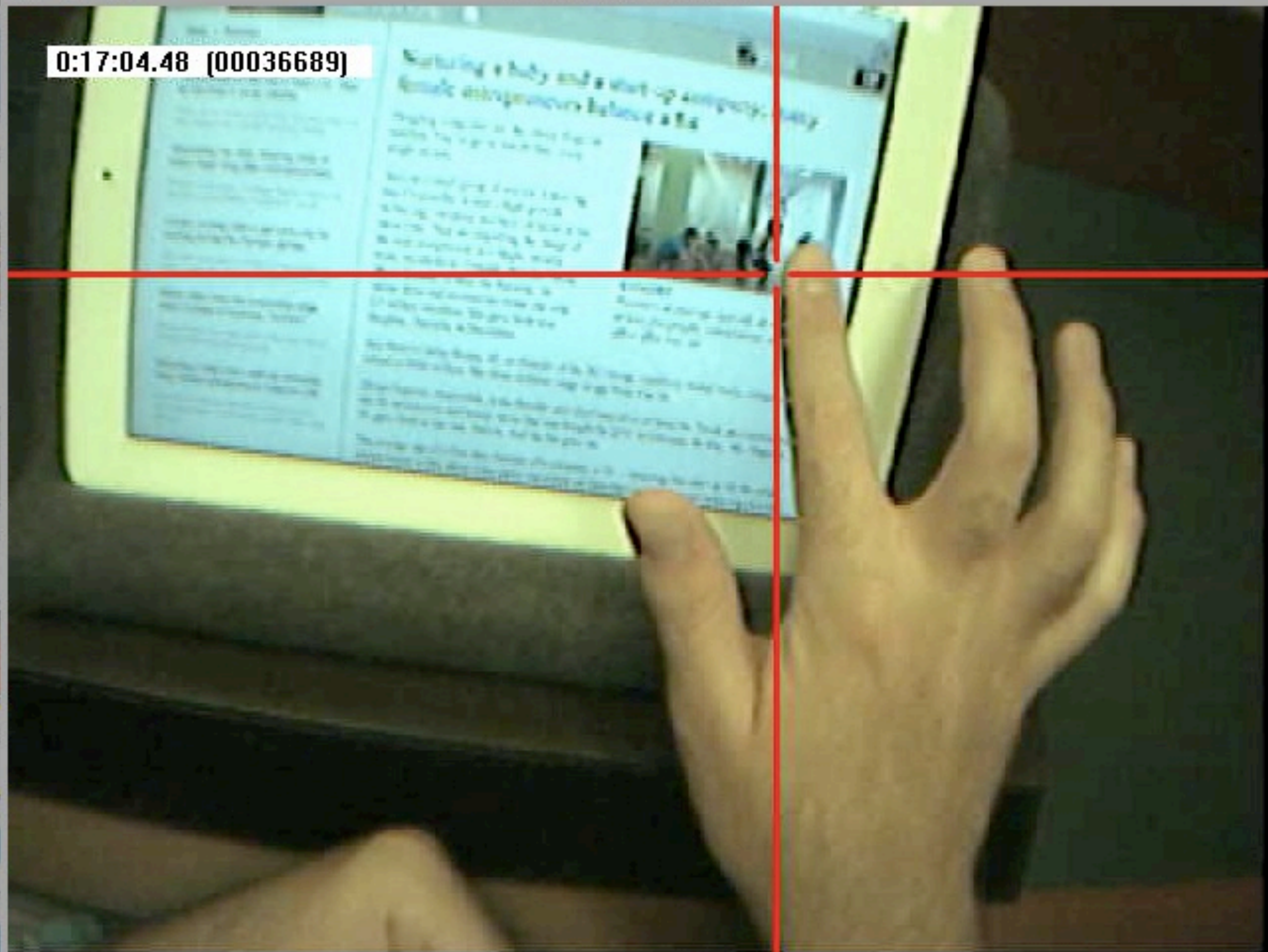
And we looked closely  
at how they interacted  
with the stories.







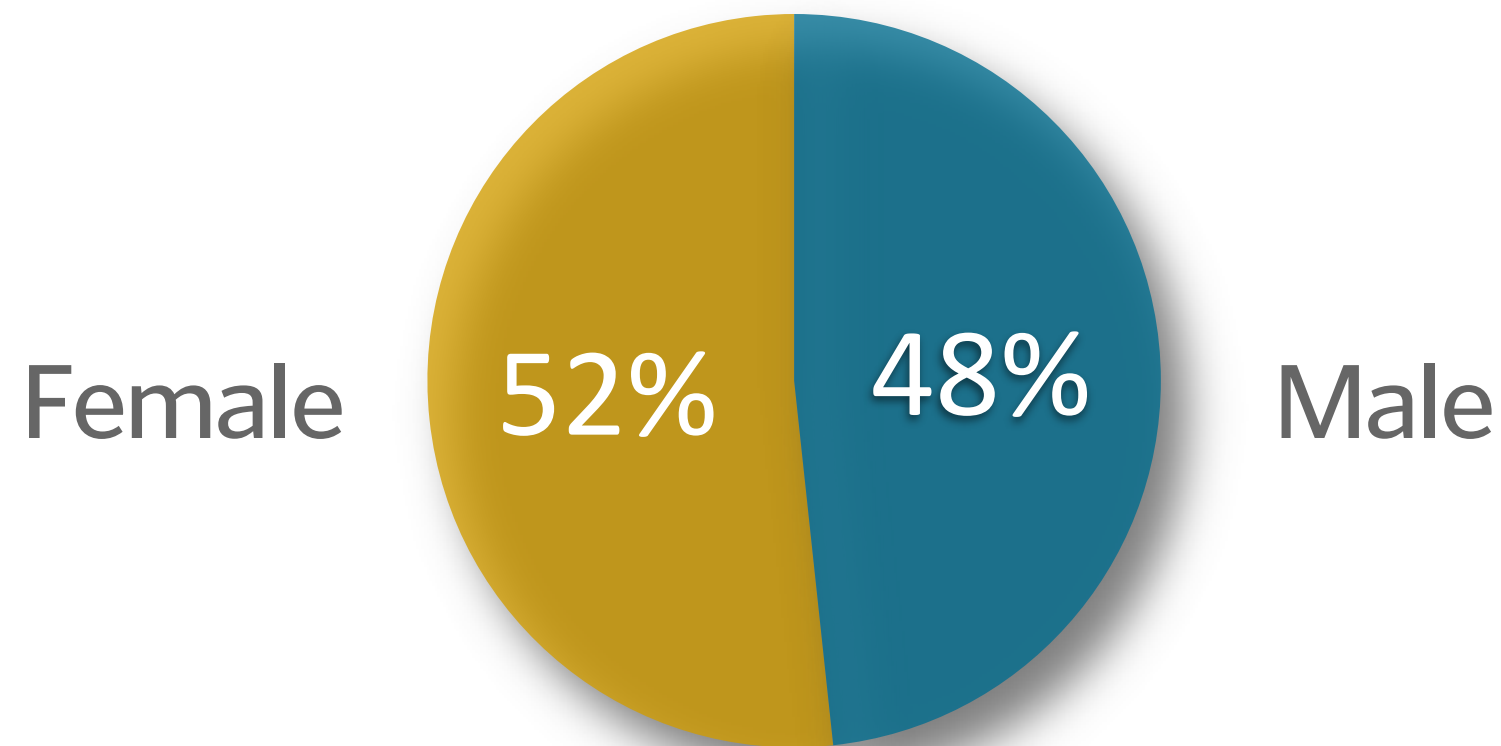
0:17:04.48 (00036689)





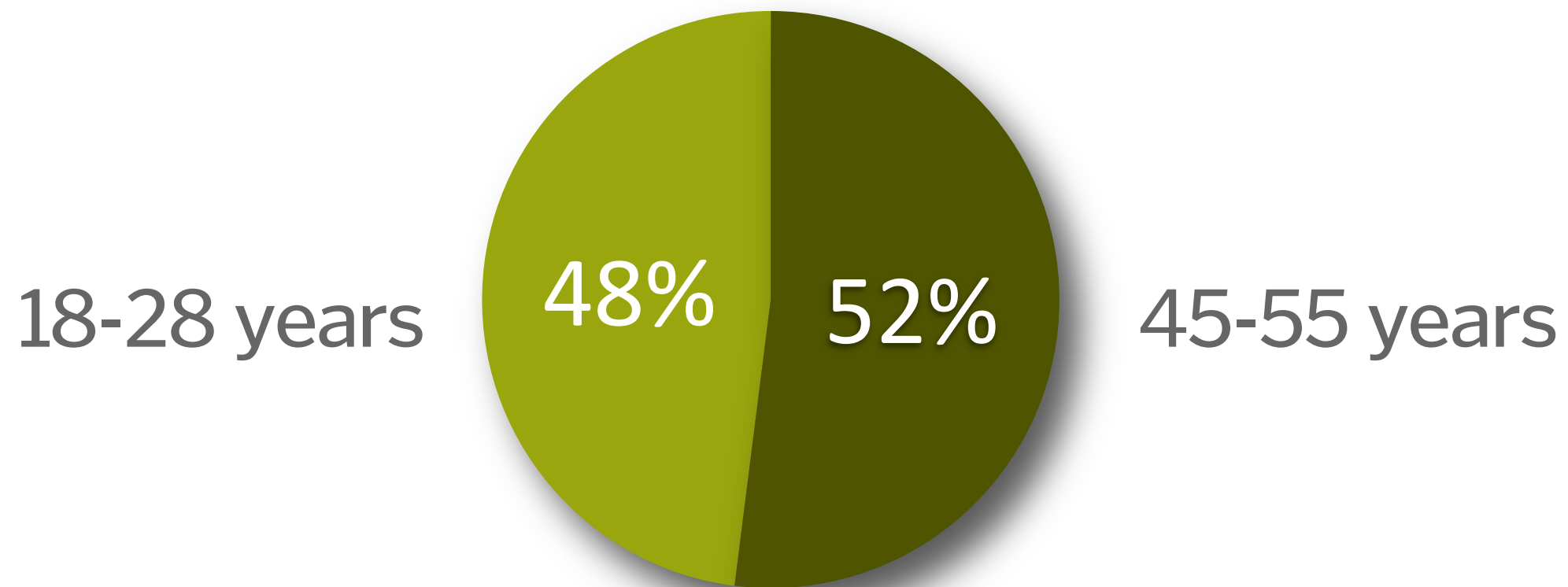
## THE PEOPLE:

We tested 36 people who had each used a tablet for at least six months.



THE PEOPLE:

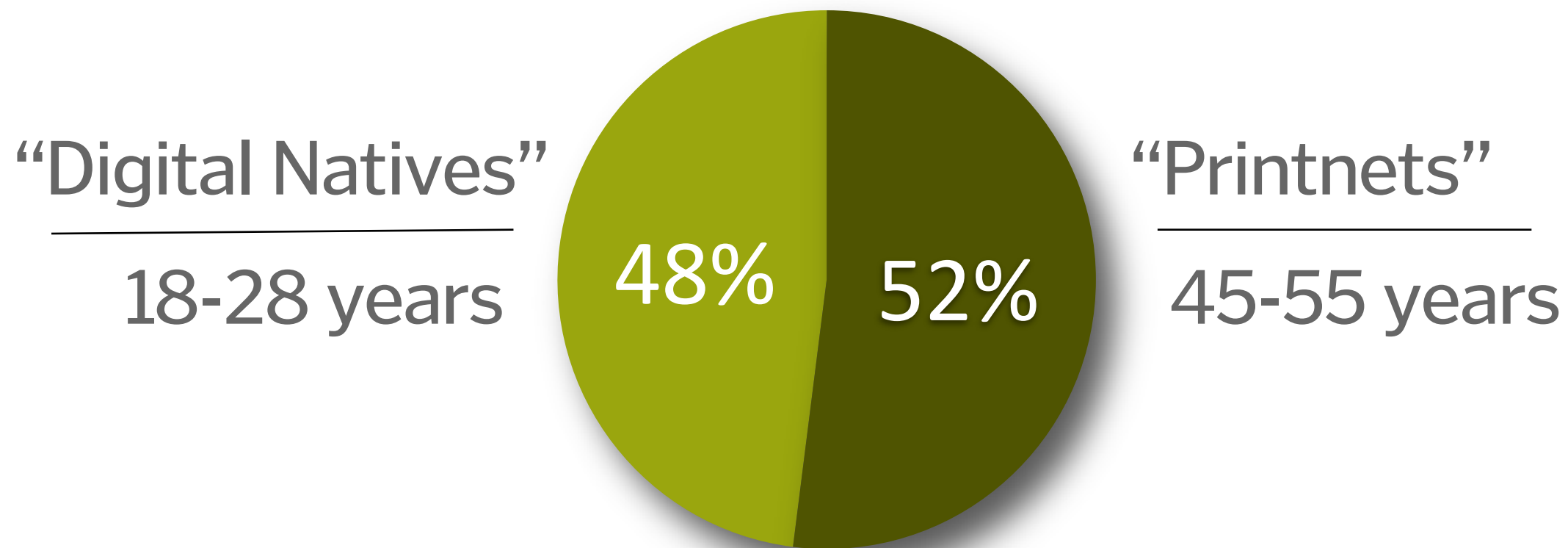
We tested two, distinct age groups.





THE PEOPLE:

We tested two, distinct age groups.



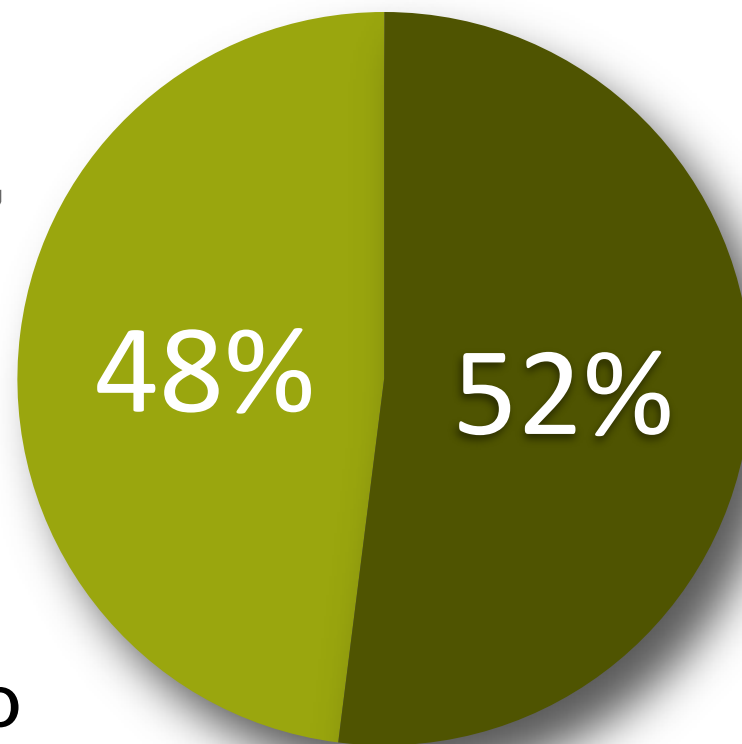
THE PEOPLE:

We tested two, distinct age groups.

“Digital Natives”

18-28 years

Among the first adults who don't have strong recollection of life before digital.



“Printnets”

45-55 years

Referring to one foot in the print world, one foot in the “Net” world.

## THE TESTING PROTOCOL:

Testing was done at Poynter last summer.

Participants were invited in for a 90 minute session.  
We did not tell participants how long they were to read.





## THE TESTING PROTOCOL:

The eyetracking glasses contained two small cameras — one that recorded eye movement and another that recorded where the reader looked.



THE TESTING PROTOCOL:

We standardized experience to limit variables.

We used one kind of tablet—a full-sized iPad—presented on a wedge-like pillow.



THE TESTING PROTOCOL:

We asked them to read one of these publications first.

3G

12:42 AM



ESPN The Mag



USA TODAY



NPR



CNN



THE TESTING PROTOCOL:

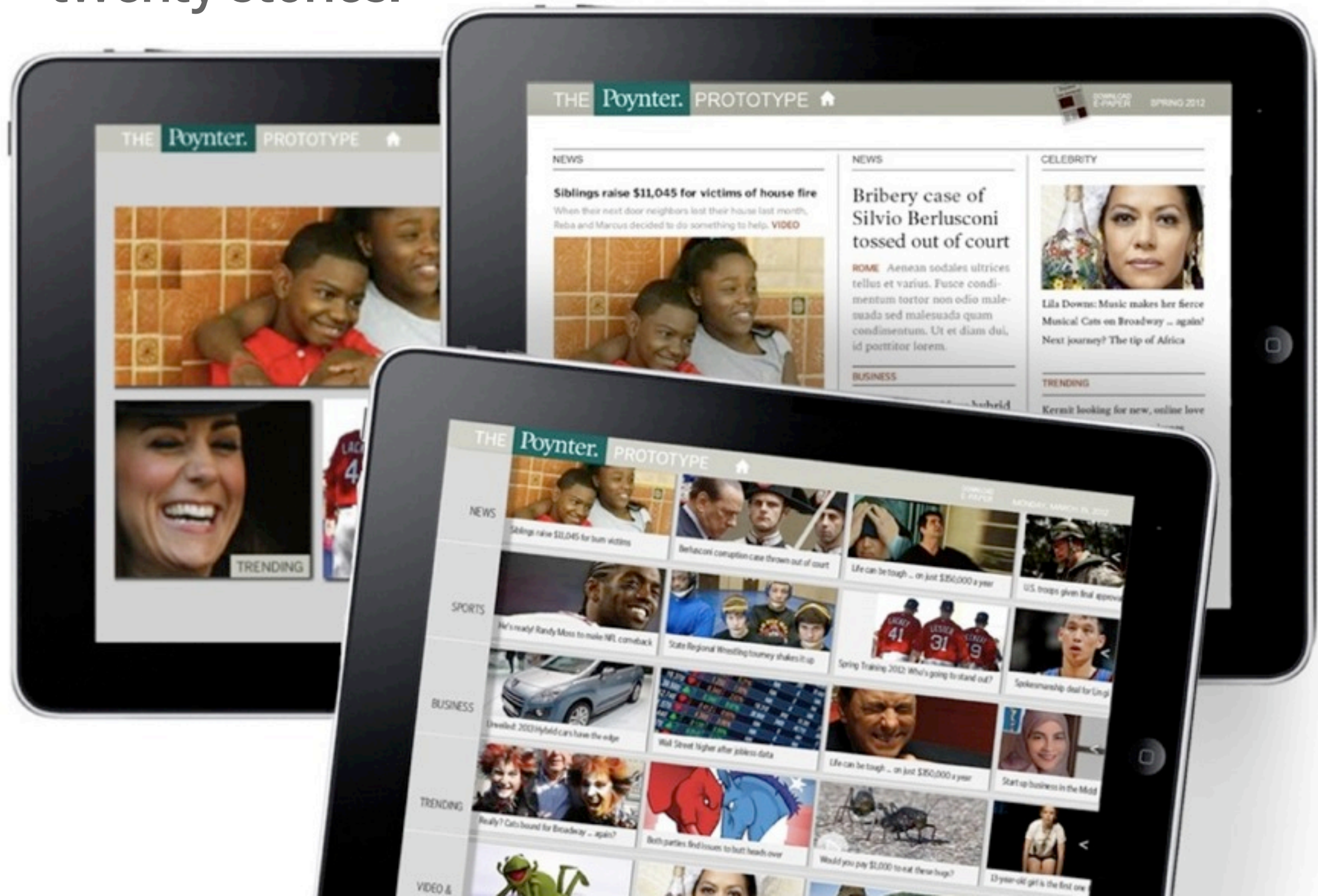
Then we gave them one of three prototype home pages.





THE TESTING PROTOCOL:

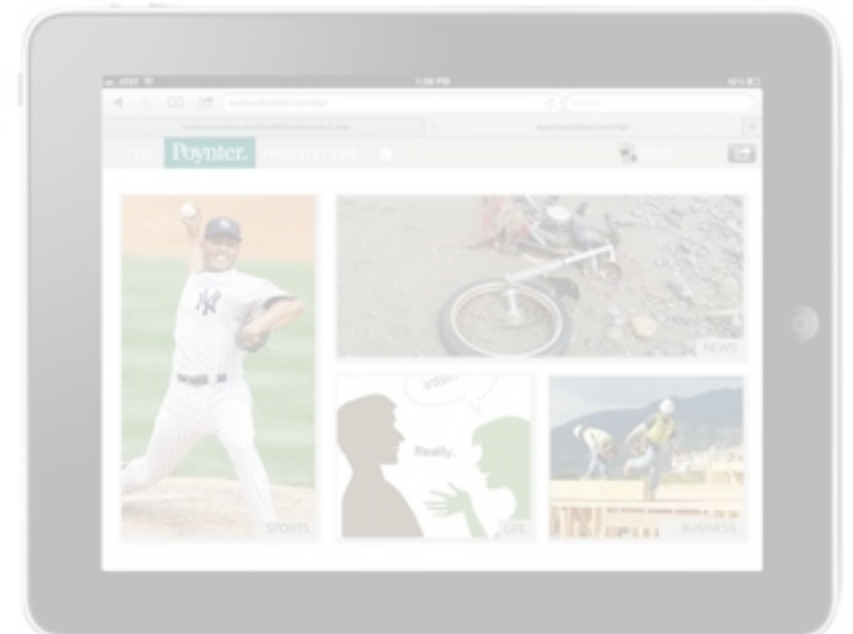
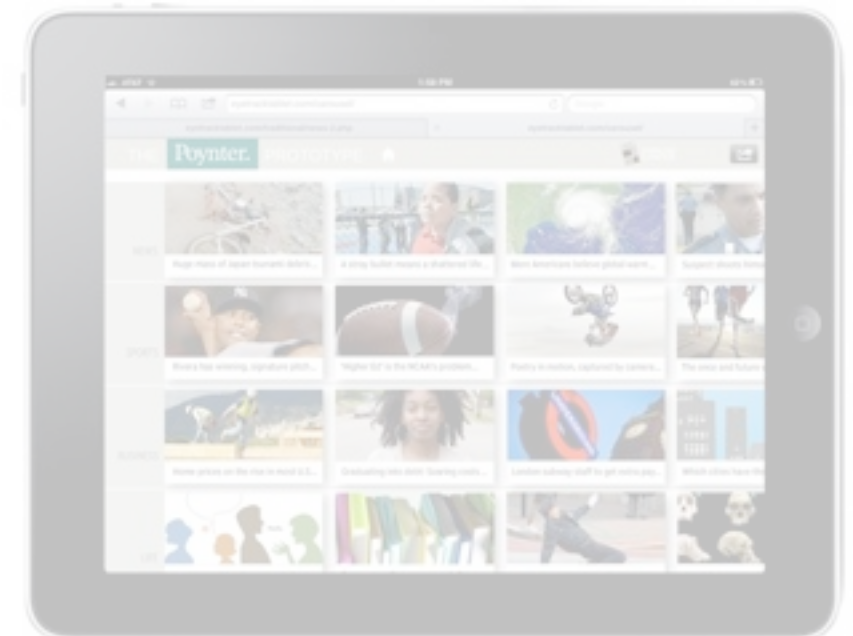
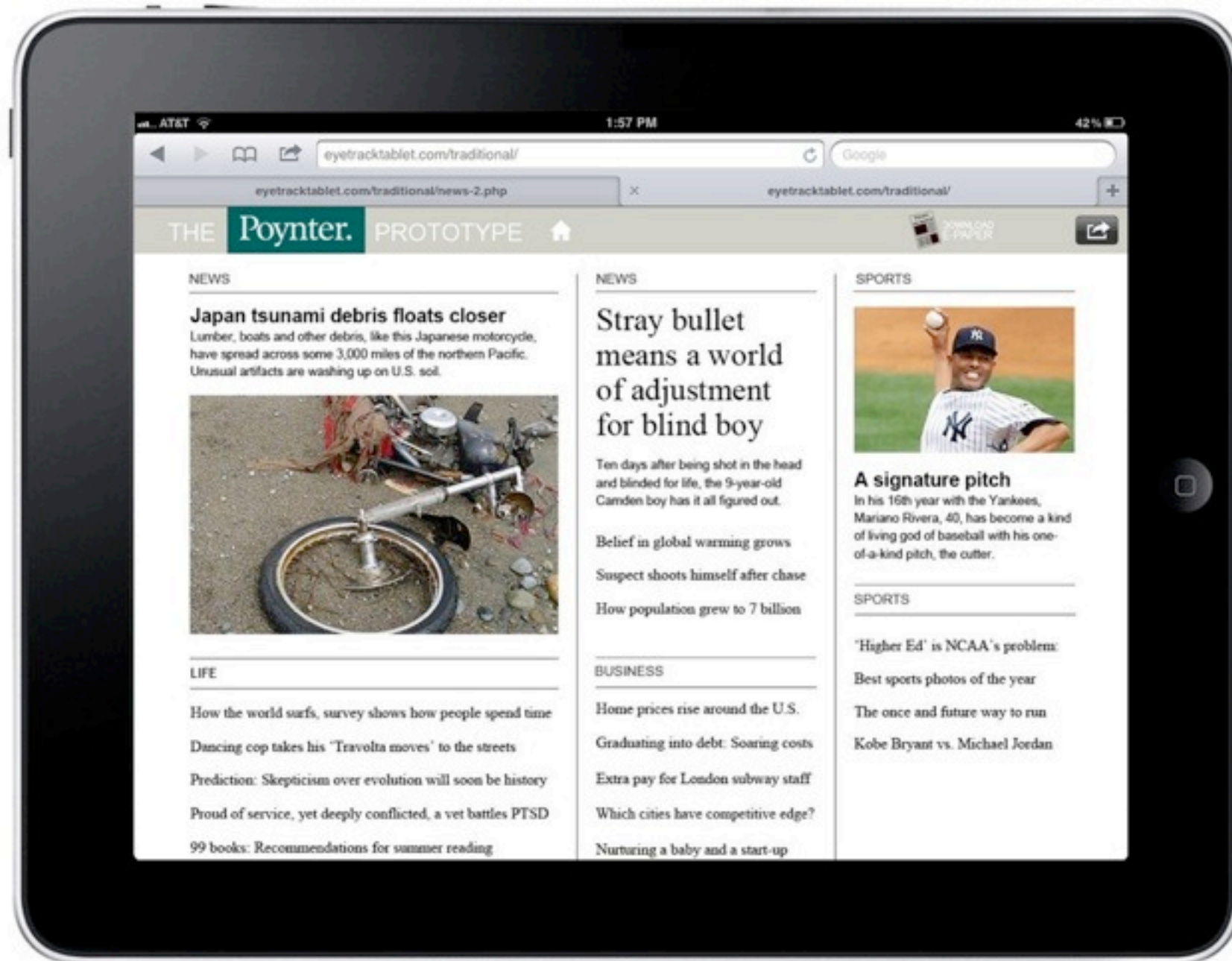
Three different entryway designs that led to the same twenty stories.



Our home page designs were inspired by common navigation styles currently in the news market.

THE PROTOTYPES:

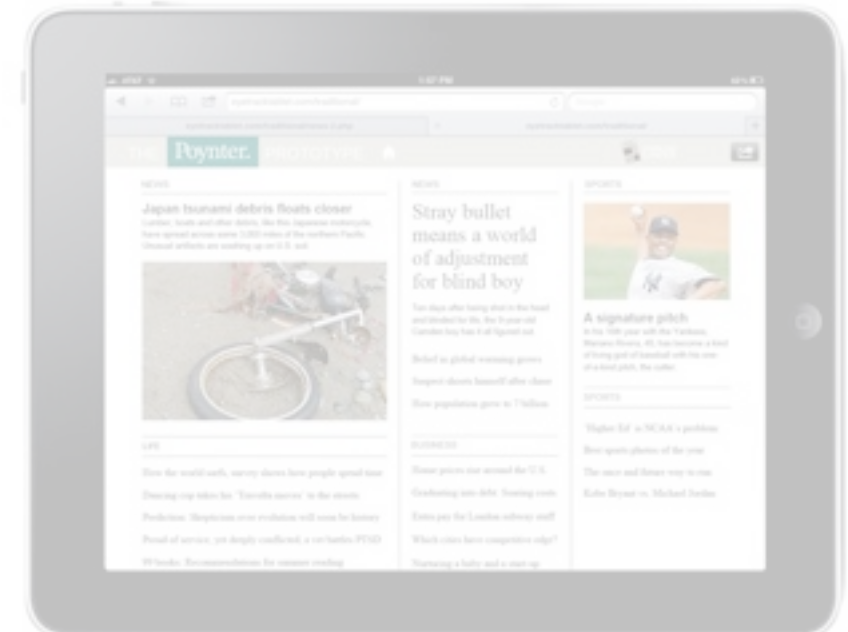
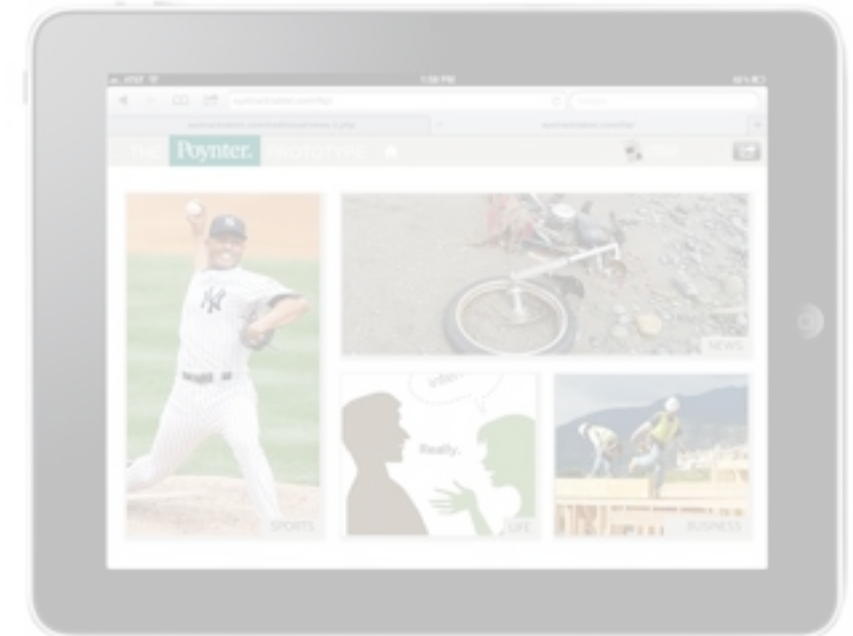
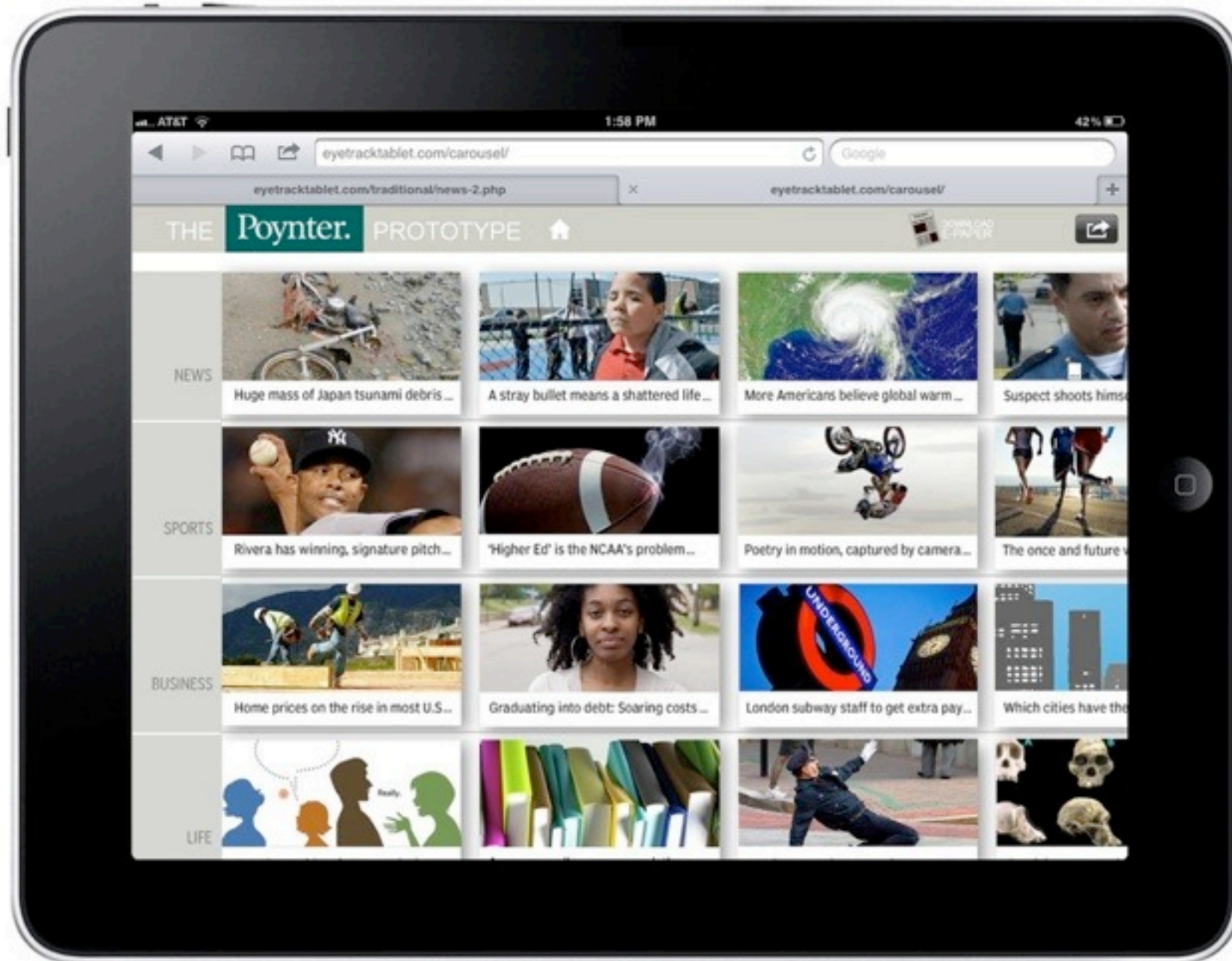
Traditional, INSPIRED BY THE BOSTON GLOBE and THE NEW YORK TIMES





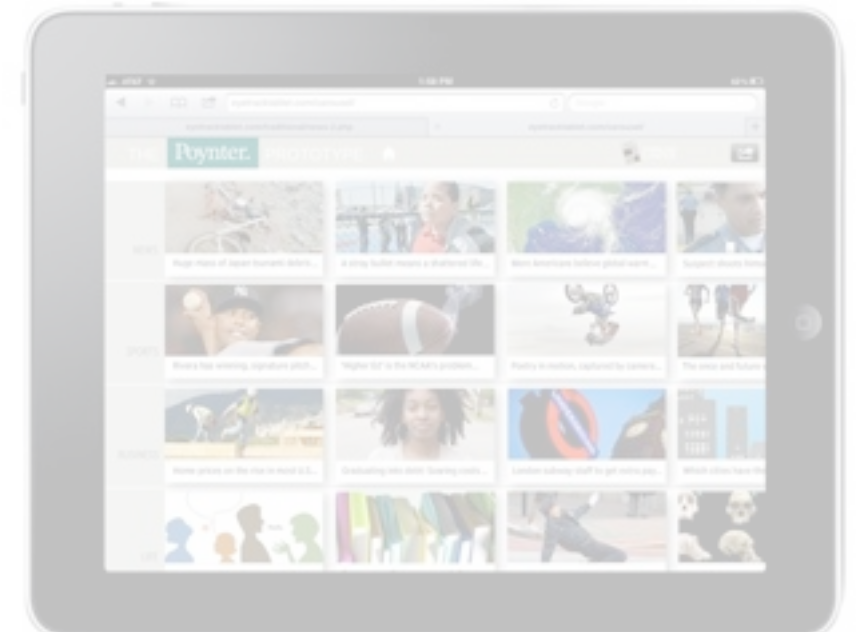
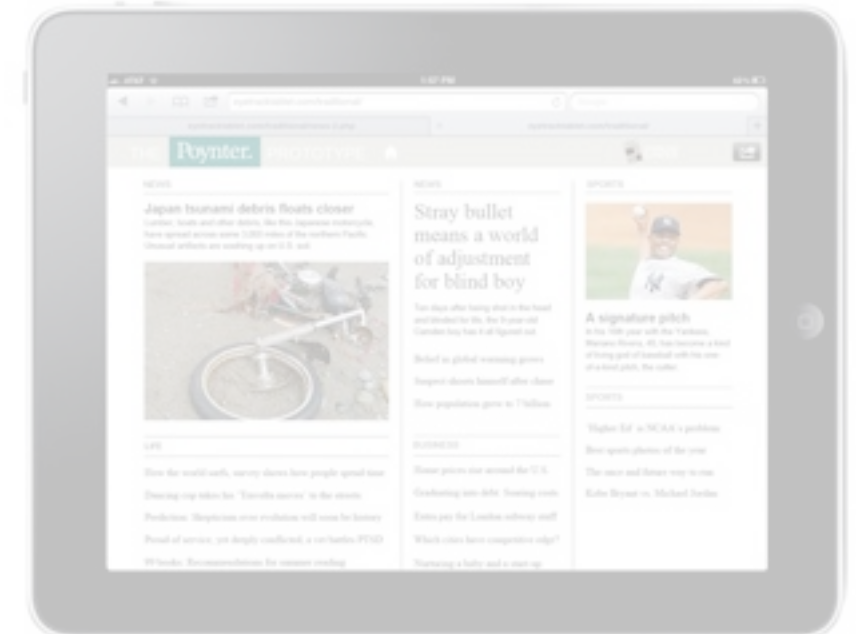
THE PROTOTYPES:

# Carousel, INSPIRED BY NPR and PULSE



## THE PROTOTYPES:

# Tile, INSPIRED BY FLIPBOARD





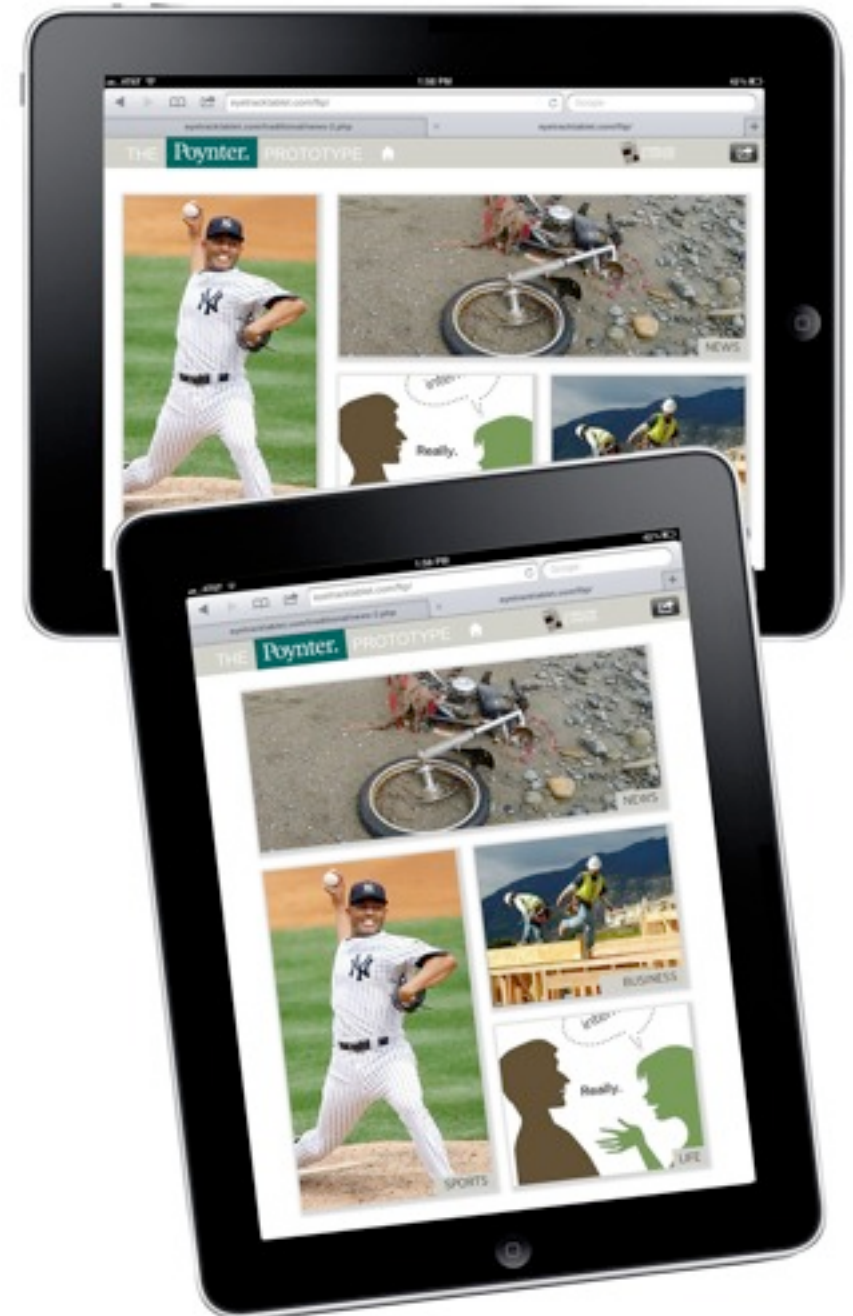
## Traditional



## Carousel



## Tile





Traditional



Carousel



Tile



# We wanted to compare how people chose a story.

Traditional



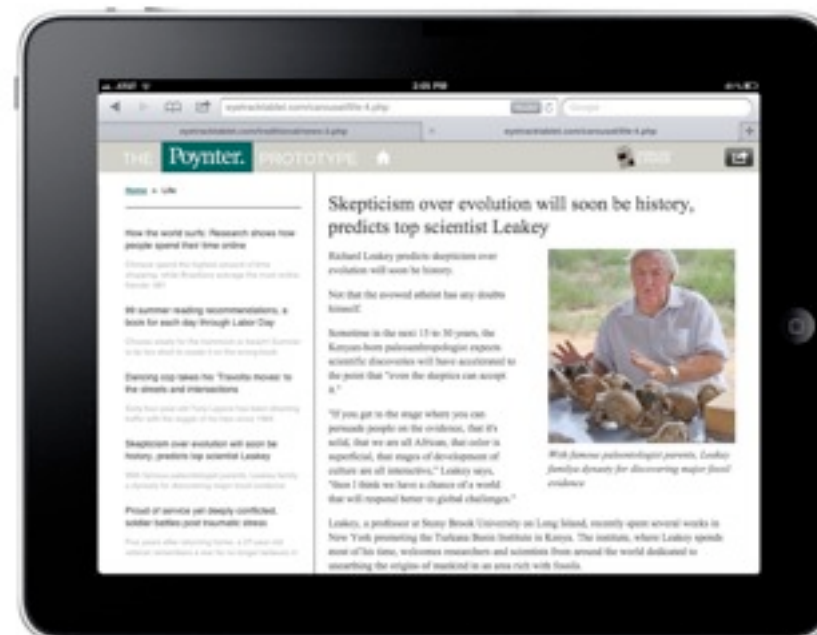
Carousel



Tile



There was one, unified design for all of the stories.





# We wanted to compare how people chose a story.

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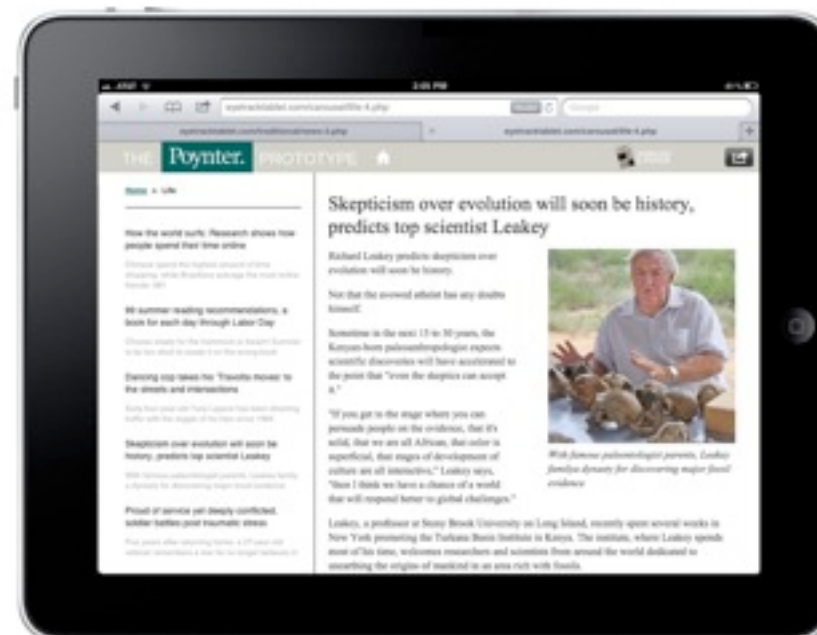
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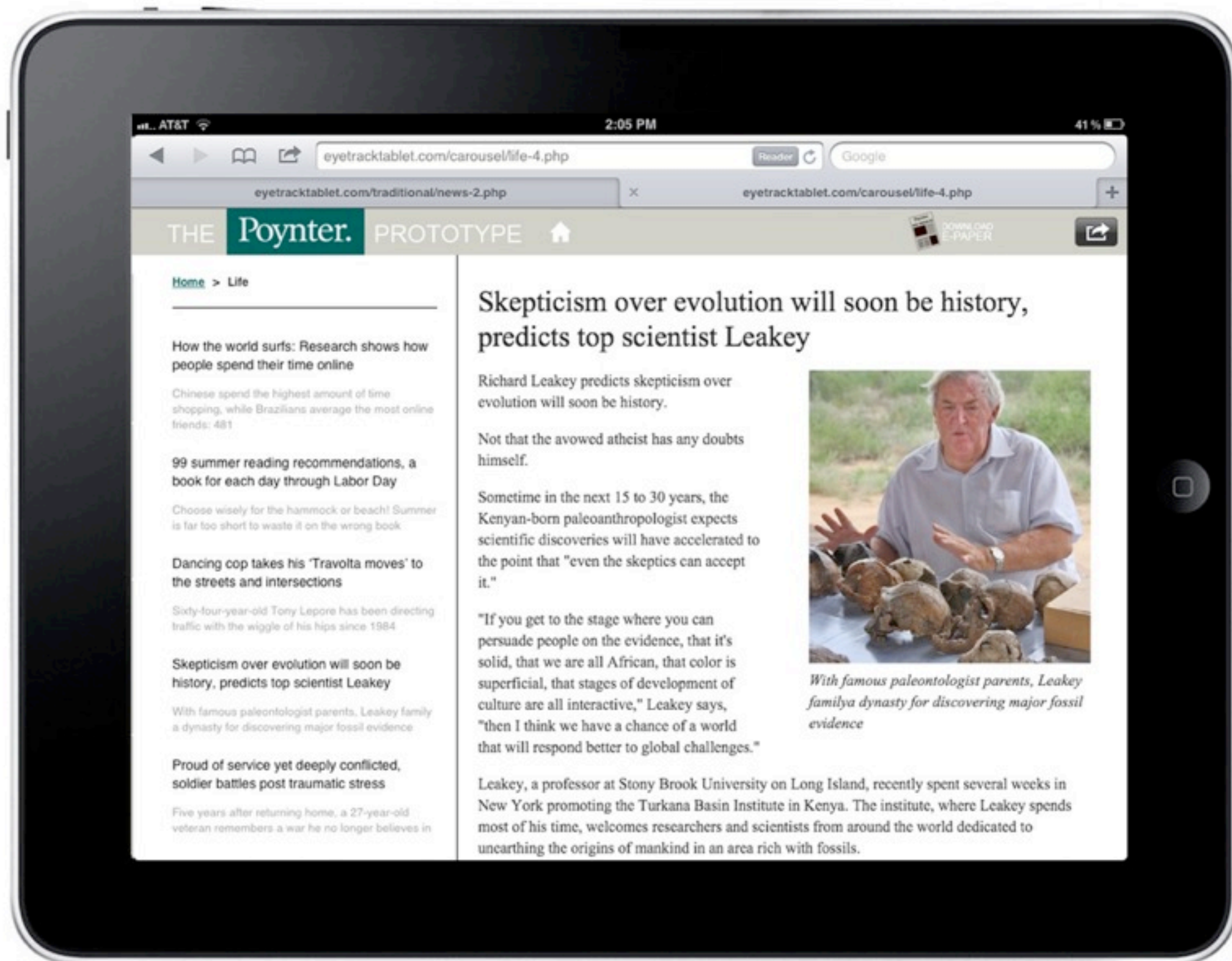
Once they made a choice, we analyzed how they read.



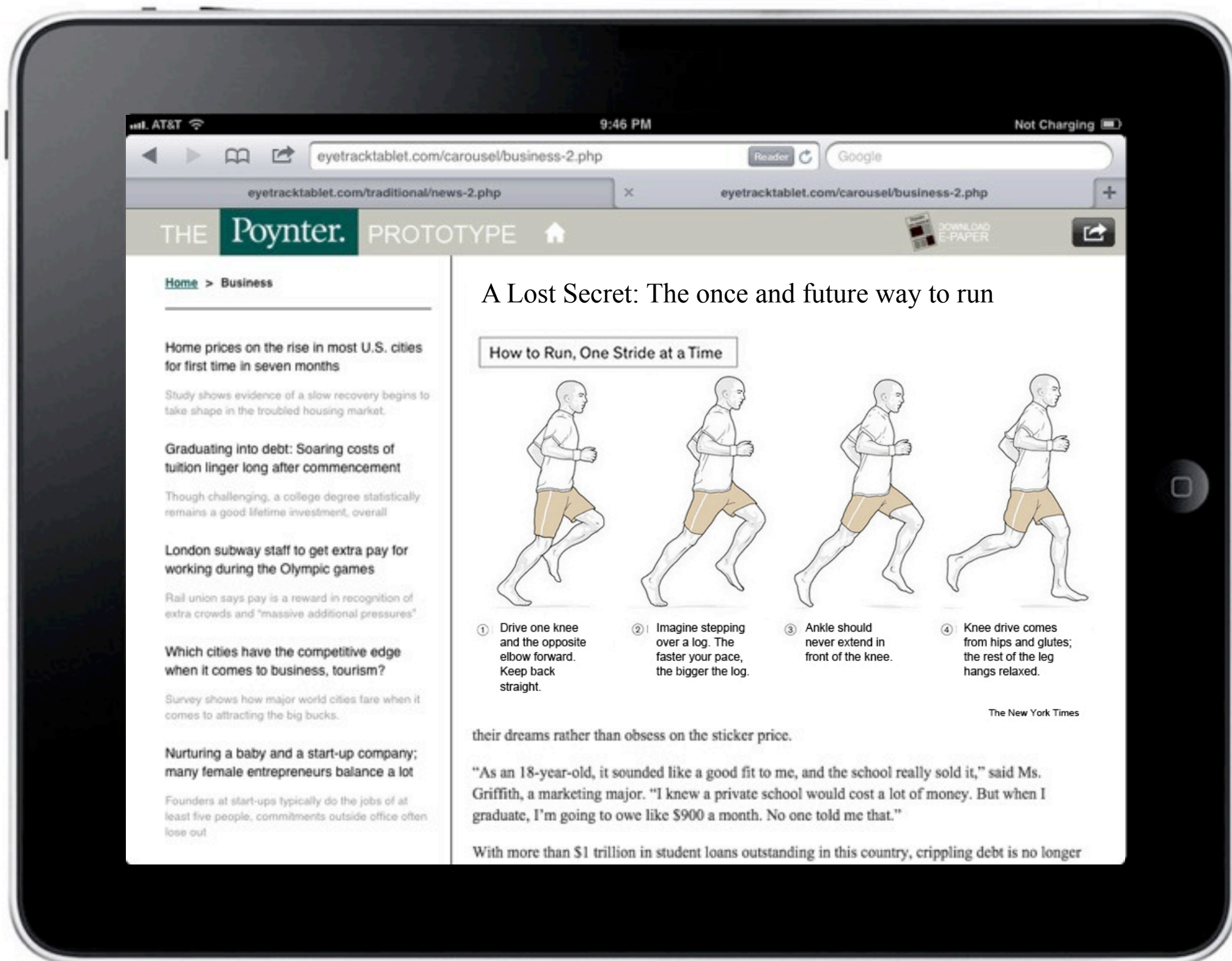
# The stories and forms

Our designs were rather simple—  
created as a baseline for research.

## TEXT WITH A STILL PHOTO

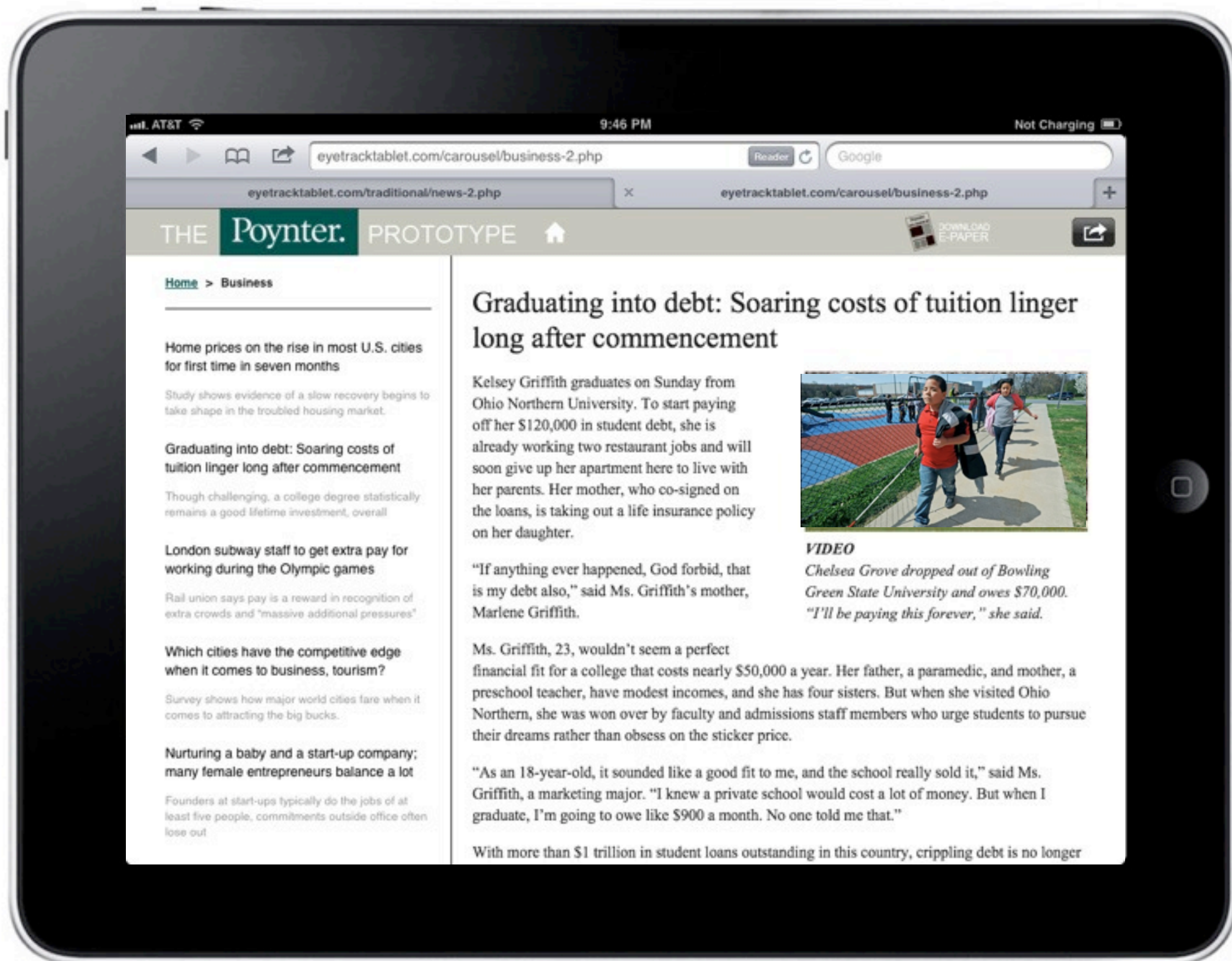


## TEXT WITH A STILL GRAPHIC

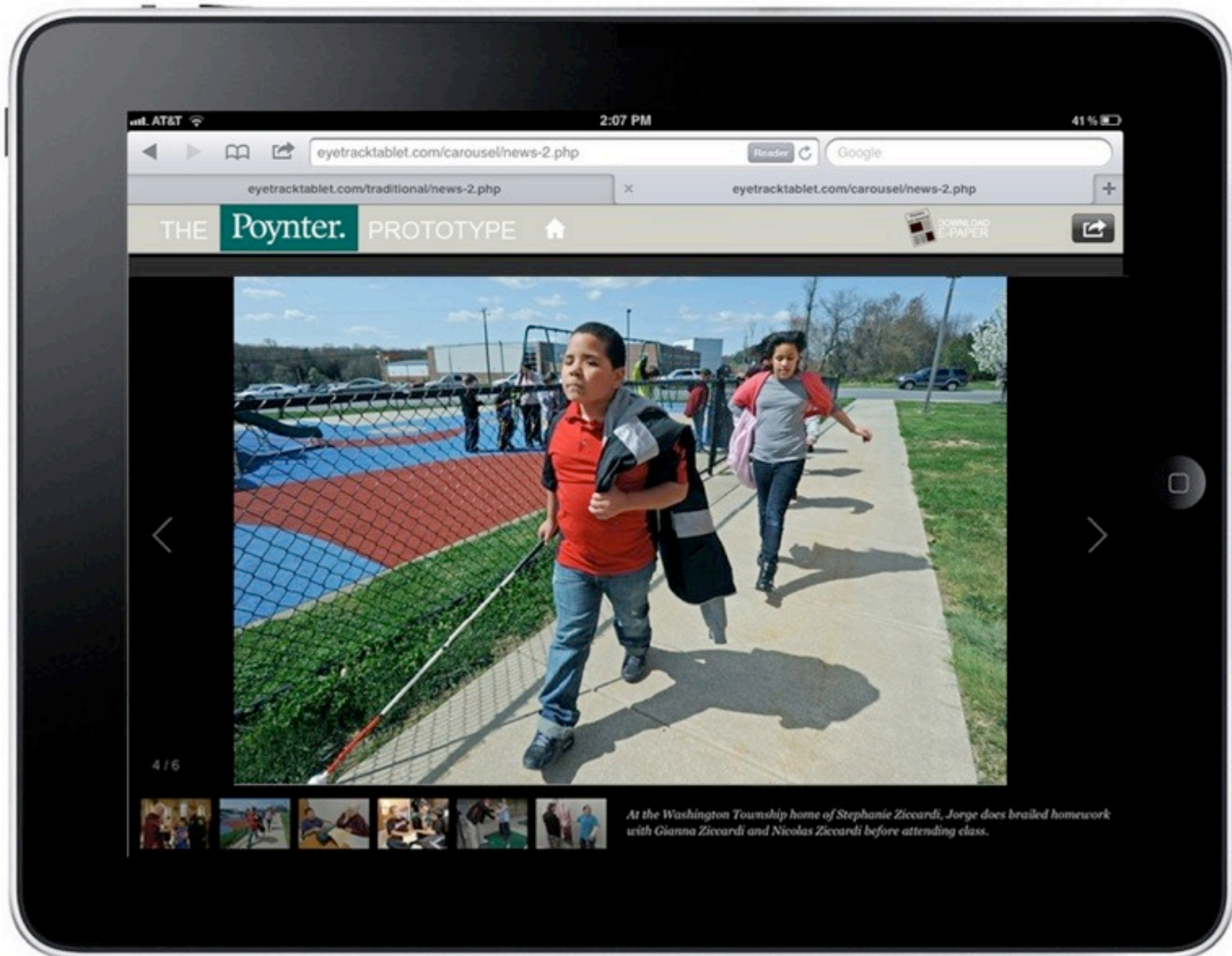




## TEXT WITH A PHOTO GALLERY



# PHOTO GALLERY



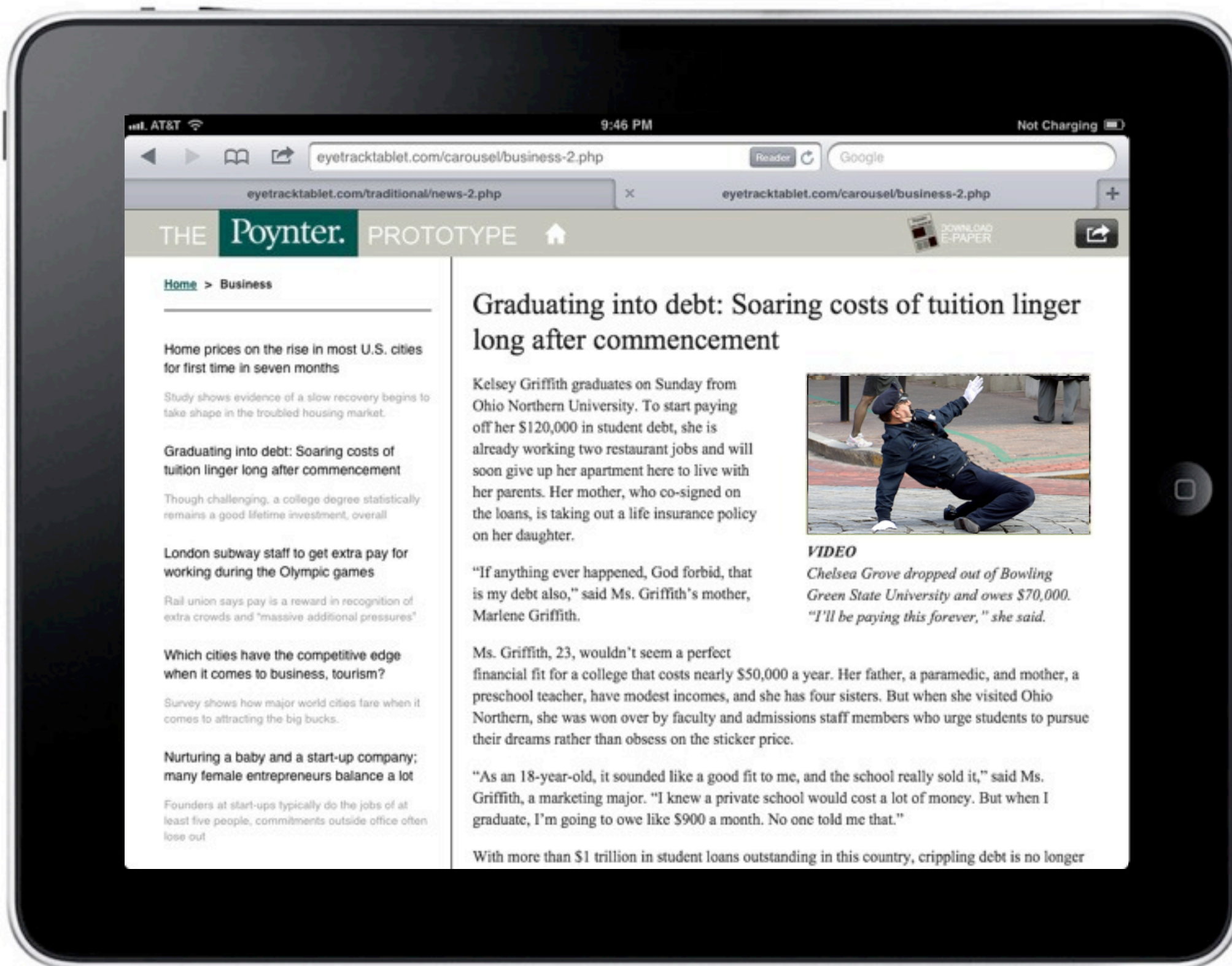


## PHOTO GALLERY





# TEXT WITH A VIDEO

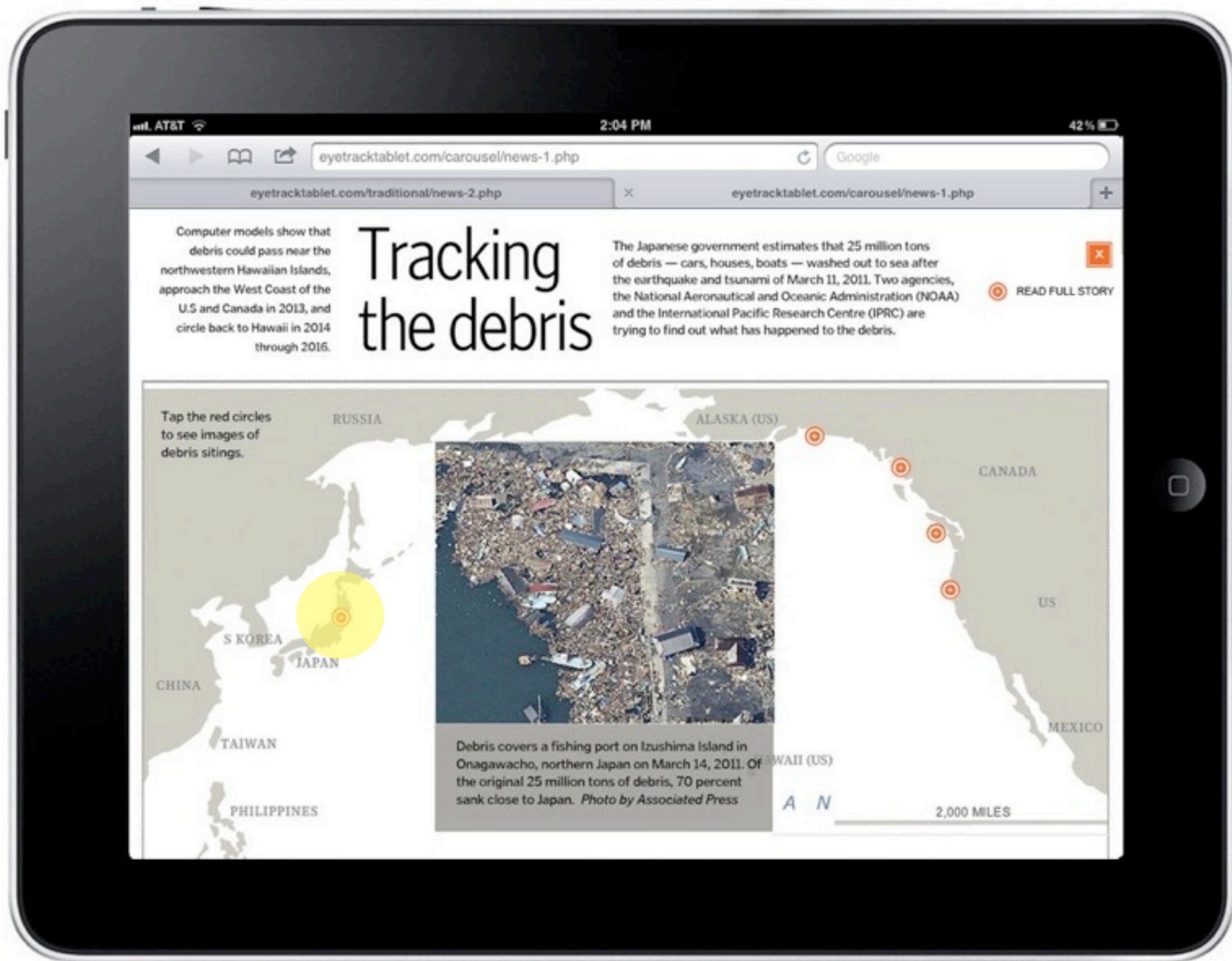


VIDEO





# POP-UP GRAPHICS





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# POP-UP GRAPHICS

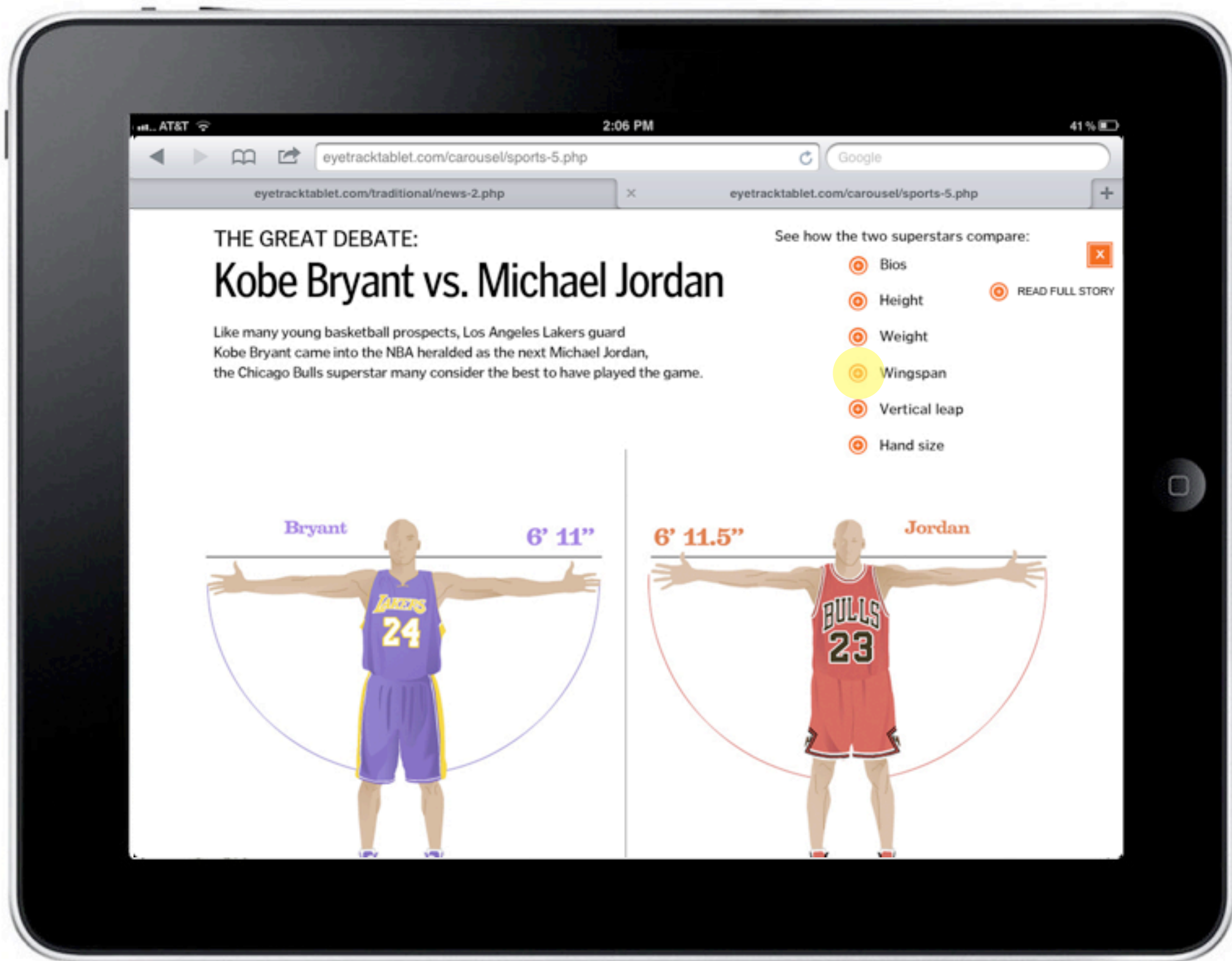




# POP-UP GRAPHICS



## POP-UP GRAPHICS

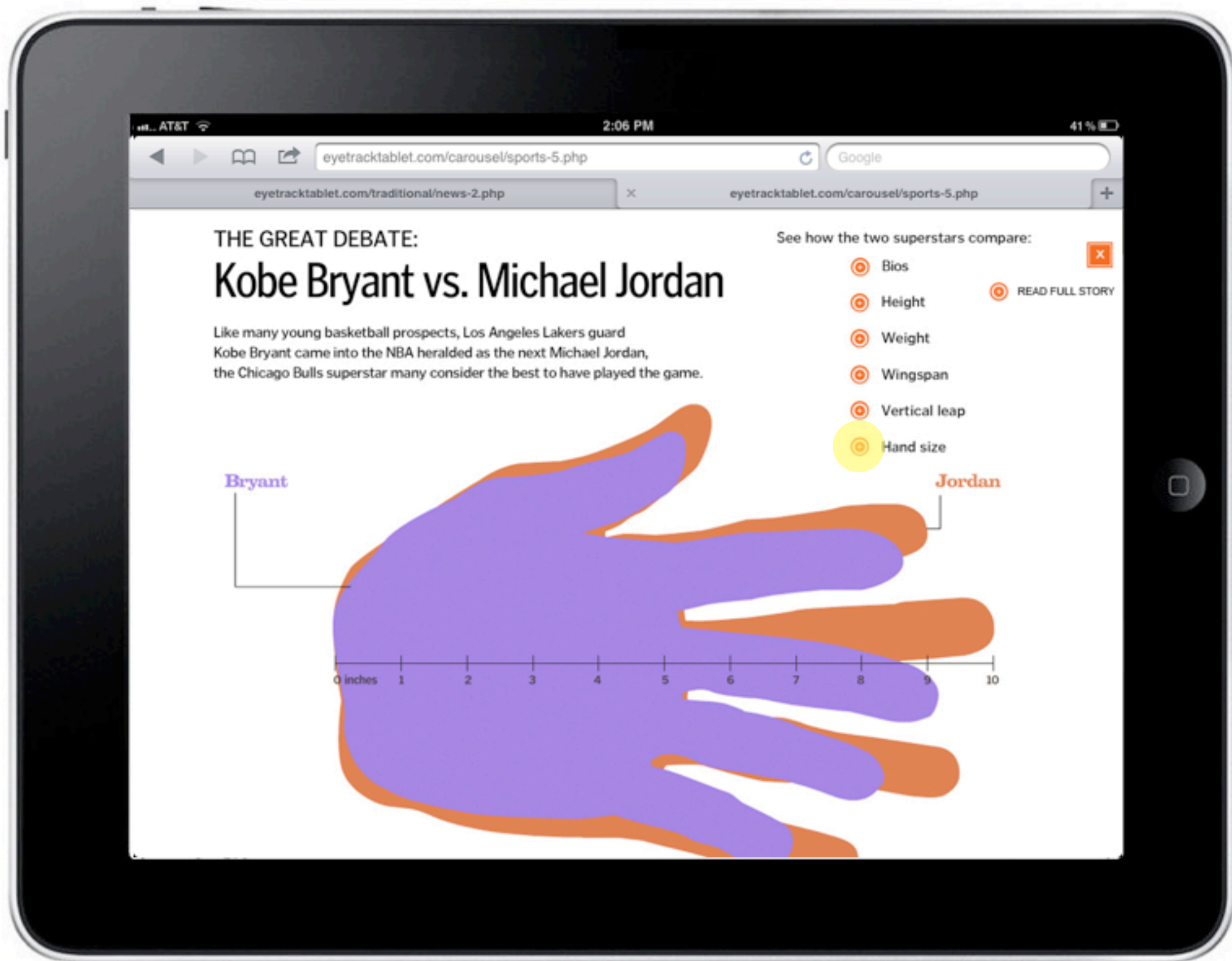


## POP-UP GRAPHICS





# POP-UP GRAPHICS



THE STORIES:

There were twenty stories. Each story included a text narrative, **plus** one of these elements:

	NEWS	BUSINESS	SPORTS	LIFE
Still photo	Suspect shoots himself after chase	Extra Olympics pay for London subway staff	“Higher Ed” is the a big problem for the NCAA	Leakey: Skepticism over evolution will soon be history
Still graphic	Belief in global warming grows	Home prices rise around the U.S.	The once and future way to run	Recommendations for summer reading
Photo gallery	A stray bullet, a world of adjustment for blind boy	Nurturing a baby and a start-up	Best sports photos of the year	Proud of service, a vet battles PTSD
Video	How population grew to 7 billion	Graduating into debt: soaring costs	Mariano Rivera’s one-of-a-kind, signature pitch	Dancing cop takes “Travolta Moves” to the streets
Pop-up	Japan tsunami debris floats closer	Which cities have the competitive edge?	Kobe Bryant vs. Michael Jordan	Survey shows how the world surfs the internet

THE STORIES:

# There were five still photos.

	NEWS	BUSINESS	SPORTS	LIFE
Still photo	Suspect shoots himself after chase	Extra Olympics pay for London subway staff	“Higher Ed” is the a big problem for the NCAA	Leakey: Skepticism over evolution will soon be history
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THE STORIES:

There were five still graphics.

	NEWS	BUSINESS	SPORTS	LIFE
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THE STORIES:

There were five photo galleries.

	NEWS	BUSINESS	SPORTS	LIFE
Still photo	Suspect shoots himself after chase	Extra Olympics pay for London subway staff	“Higher Ed” is the a big problem for the NCAA	Leakey: Skepticism over evolution will soon be history
Still graphic	Belief in global warming grows	Home prices rise around the U.S.	The once and future way to run	Recommendations for summer reading
Photo gallery	A stray bullet, a world of adjustment for blind boy	Nurturing a baby and a start-up	Best sports photos of the year	Proud of service, a vet battles PTSD
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THE STORIES:

There were five videos.

	NEWS	BUSINESS	SPORTS	LIFE
Still photo	Suspect shoots himself after chase	Extra Olympics pay for London subway staff	“Higher Ed” is the a big problem for the NCAA	Leakey: Skepticism over evolution will soon be history
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THE STORIES:

There were five pop-up graphics.

	NEWS	BUSINESS	SPORTS	LIFE
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Each home page designs featured the same twenty stories.



FINDINGS

This is how people chose.

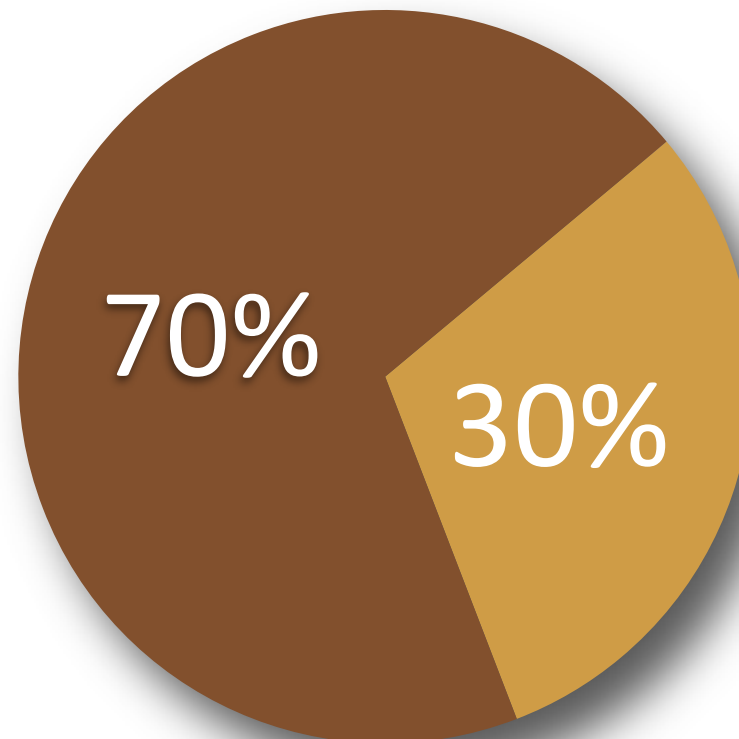




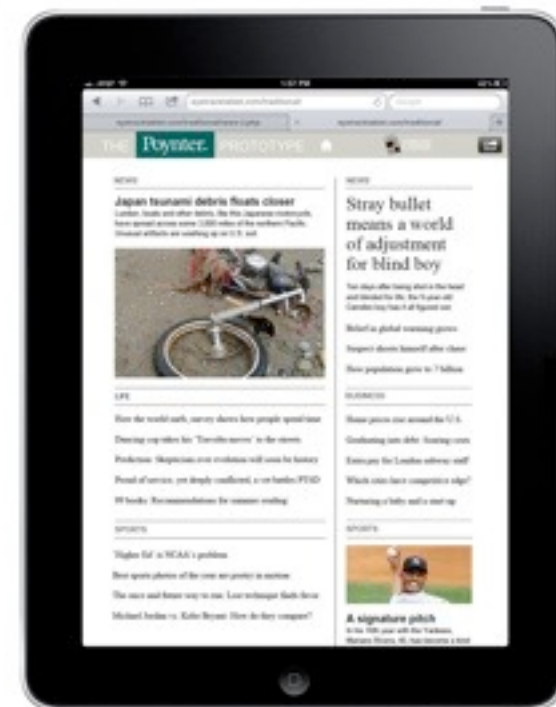
## THE PEOPLE:

More people expressed a preference for using a tablet in a horizontal or landscape orientation.

Landscape



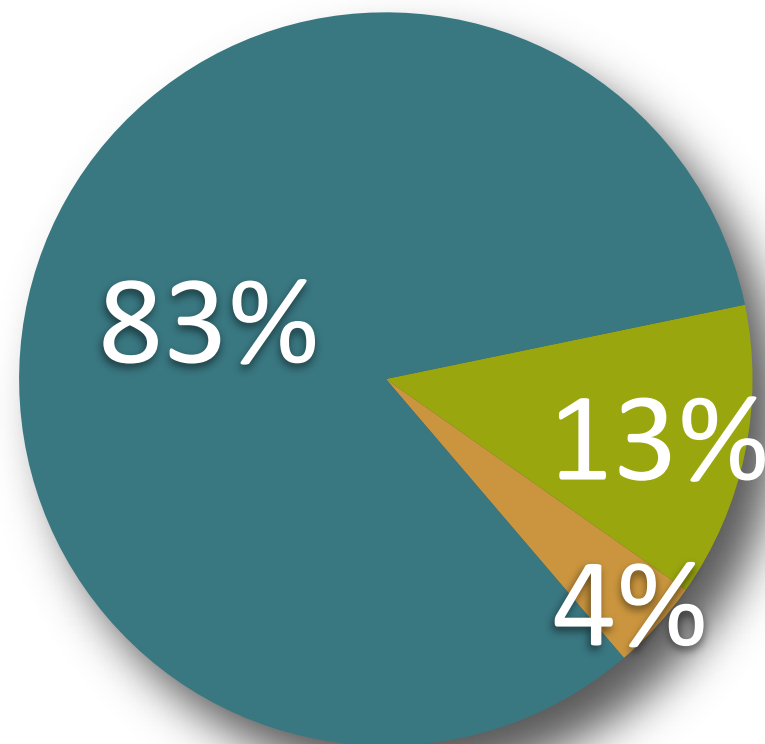
Portrait



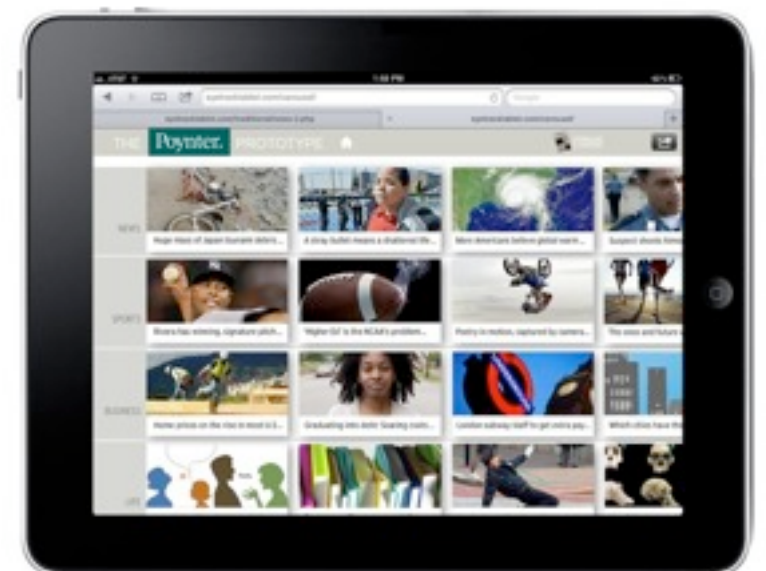
## THE PROTOTYPES:

83 percent said the traditional prototype was  
**most similar to what they regularly use.**

Traditional



Carousel



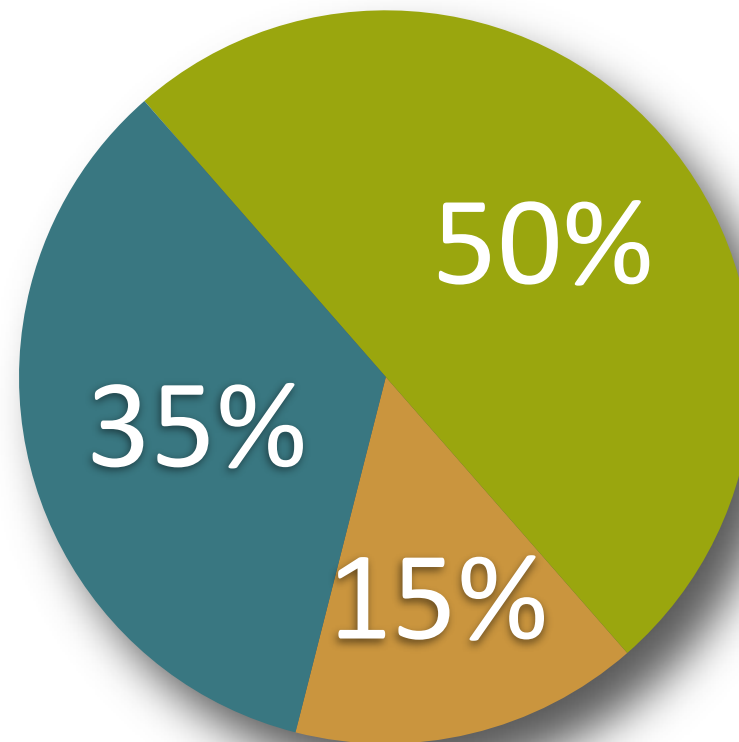
Tile



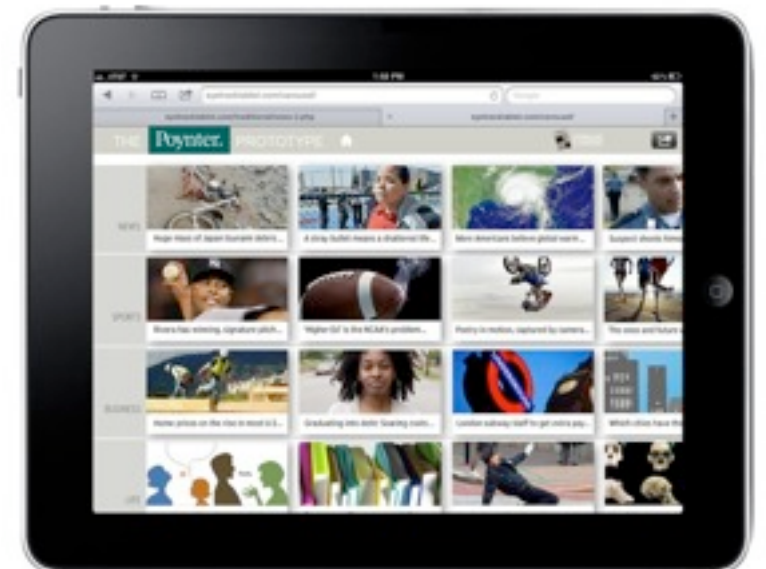
## THE PROTOTYPES:

50 percent said they would choose the carousel design.

Traditional



Carousel



Tile





THE PROTOTYPES:

Comments about the **tile design**:



THE PROTOTYPES:

## Comments about the **tile design**:

“It’s tidier. I can get through it to save time.”



THE PROTOTYPES:

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BUT OTHERS SAID ...

“It makes me work too hard.”





THE PROTOTYPES:

## Comments about the **tile design**:

“It’s tidier. I can get through it to save time.”

BUT OTHERS SAID ...

“It makes me work too hard.”

“Makes me do another click.”



THE PROTOTYPES:

## Comments about the **tile design**:

“It’s tidier. I can get through it to save time.”

BUT OTHERS SAID ...

“It makes me work too hard.”

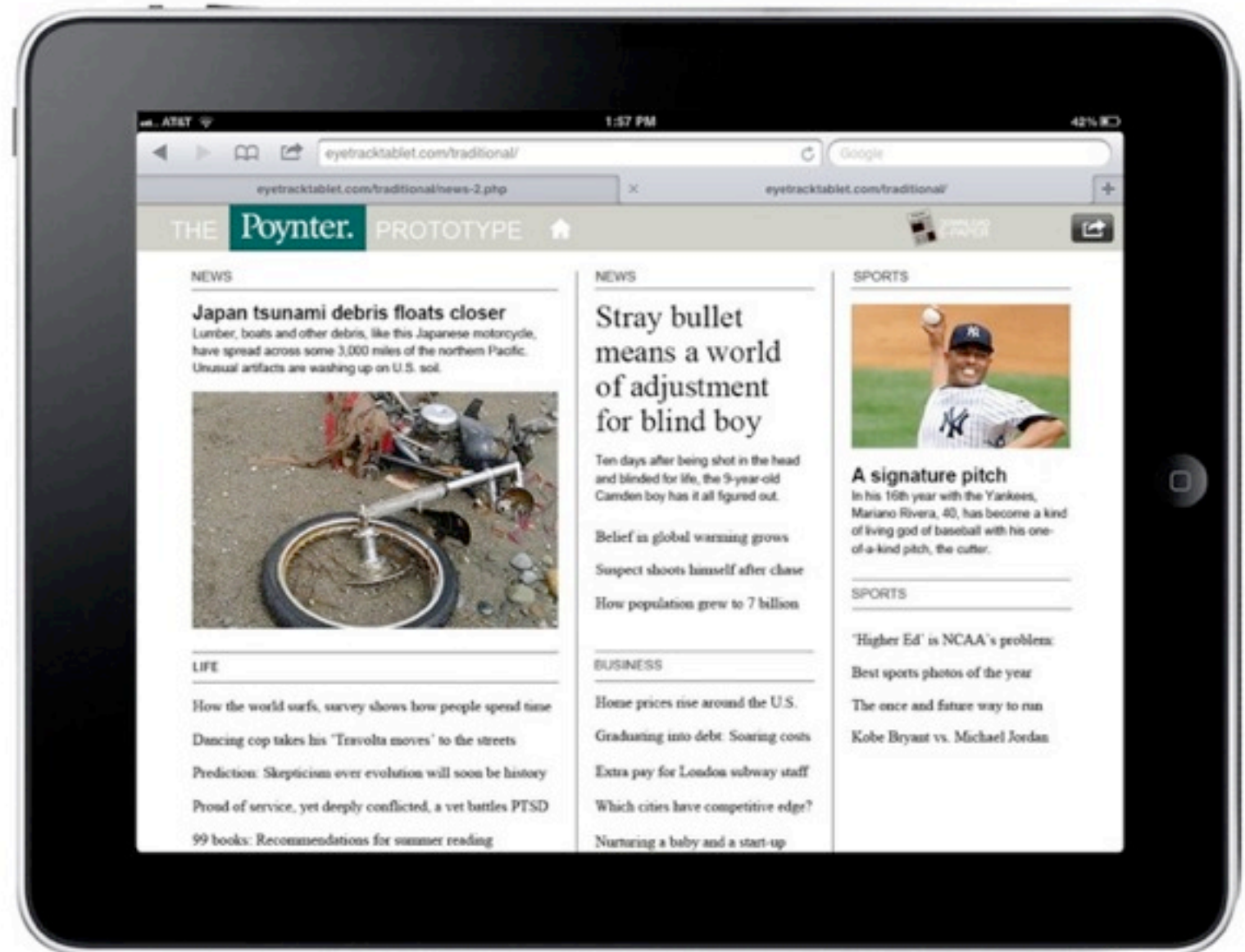
“Makes me do another click.”

“I definitely don’t like the ‘mystery meat’ of having to guess what’s behind an image.”



THE PROTOTYPES:

Comments about the traditional design:

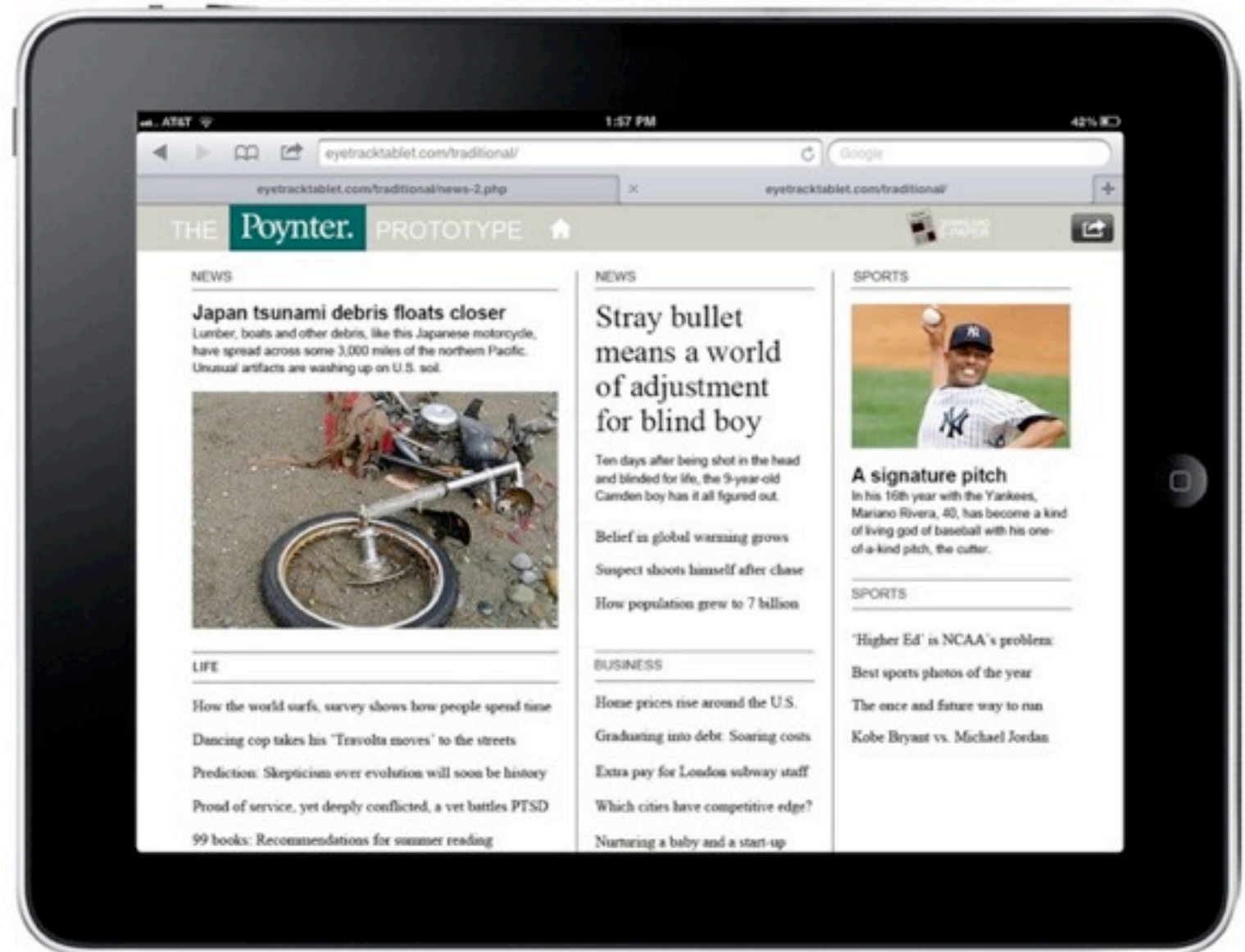




THE PROTOTYPES:

# Comments about the traditional design:

“I like hierarchy.”

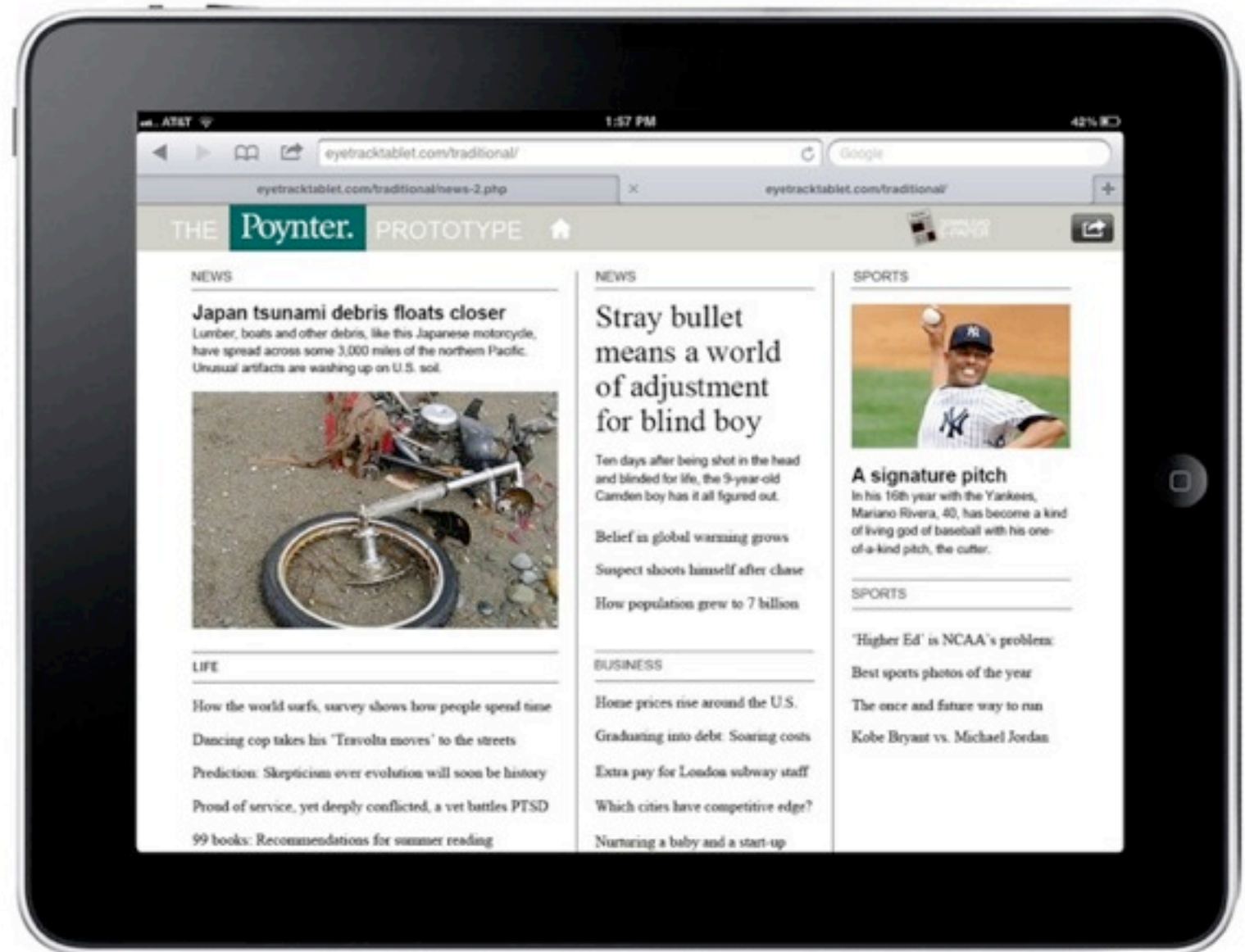


THE PROTOTYPES:

## Comments about the traditional design:

“I like hierarchy.”

“I am big on written context. That’s just me. The more description I can get, the more I like it.”



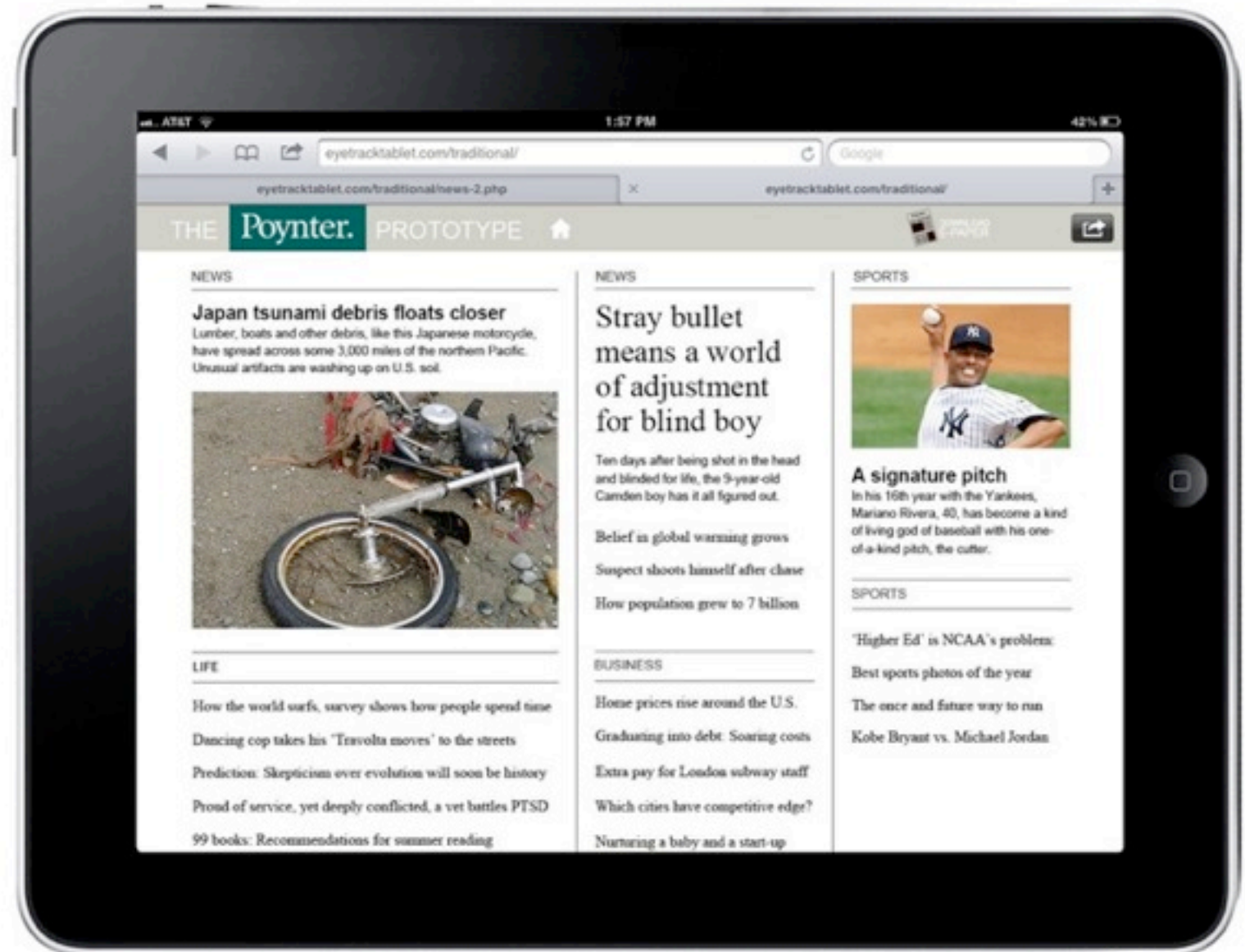
THE PROTOTYPES:

## Comments about the traditional design:

“I like hierarchy.”

“I am big on written context. That’s just me. The more description I can get, the more I like it.”

“I don’t want to see a democratized judgment. I like to see that some editor has made a judgment for me about what is important.”

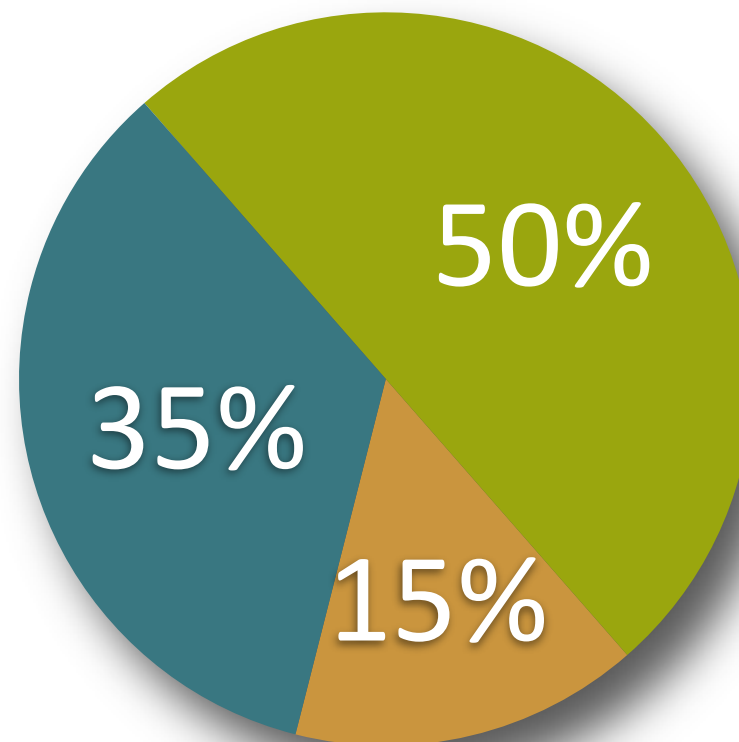




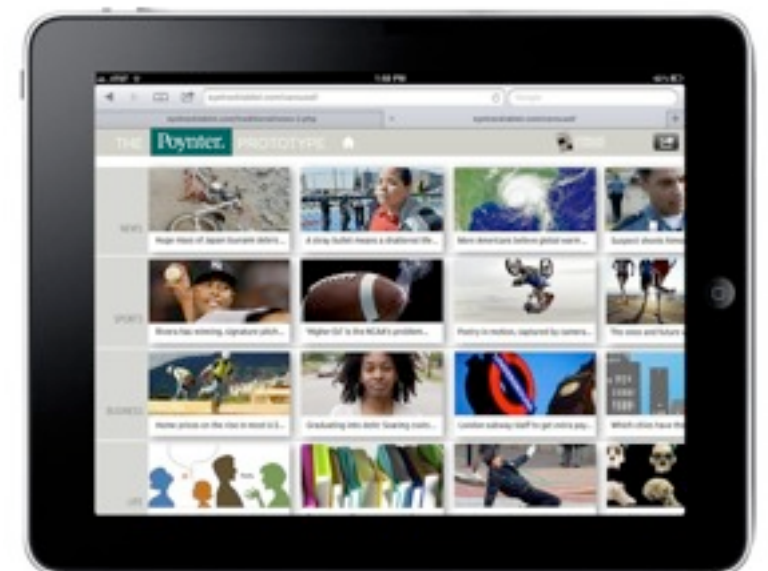
## THE PROTOTYPES:

The carousel was the favorite, but it also drew the most intense reactions, both pro and con.

Traditional



Carousel

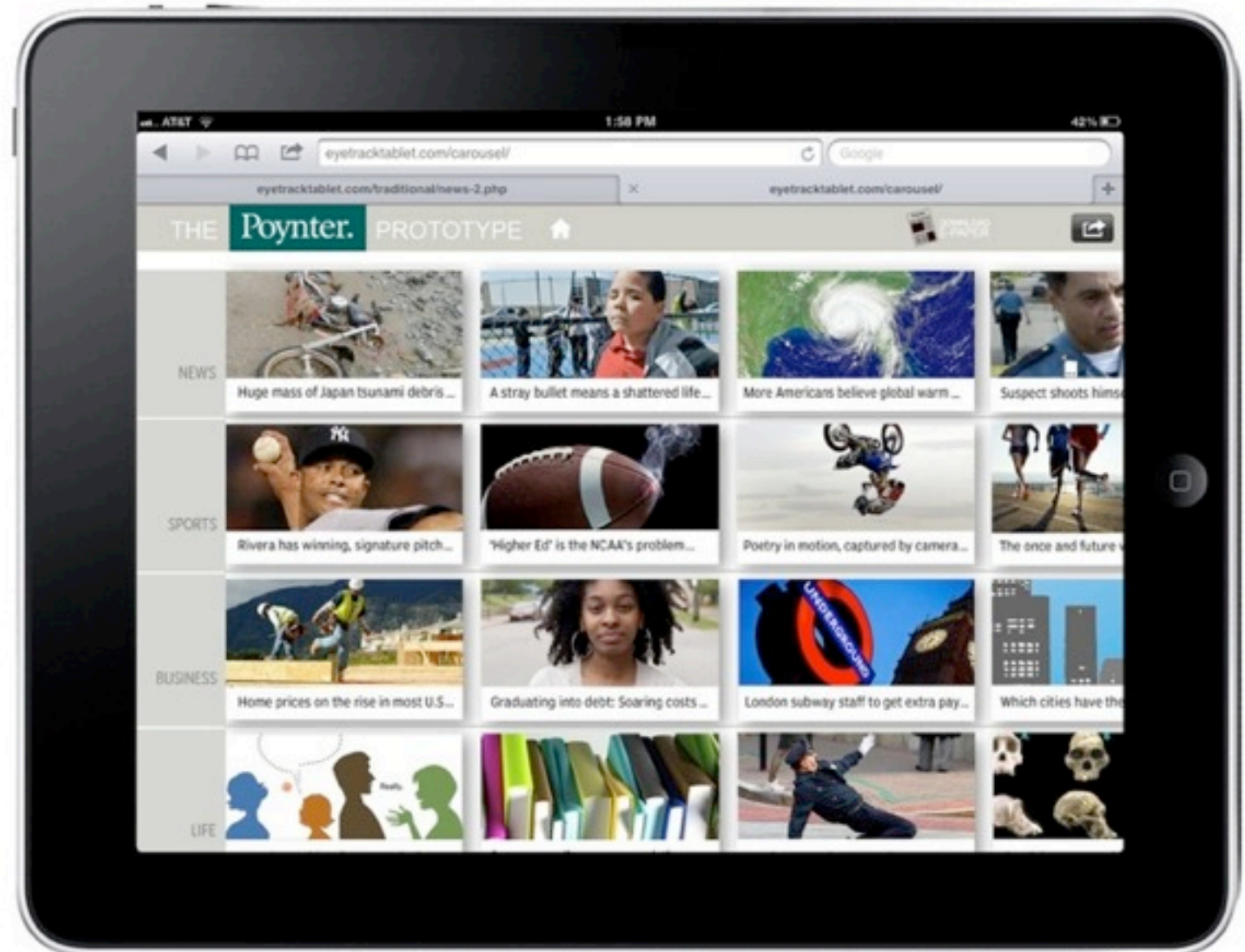


Tile



THE PROTOTYPES:

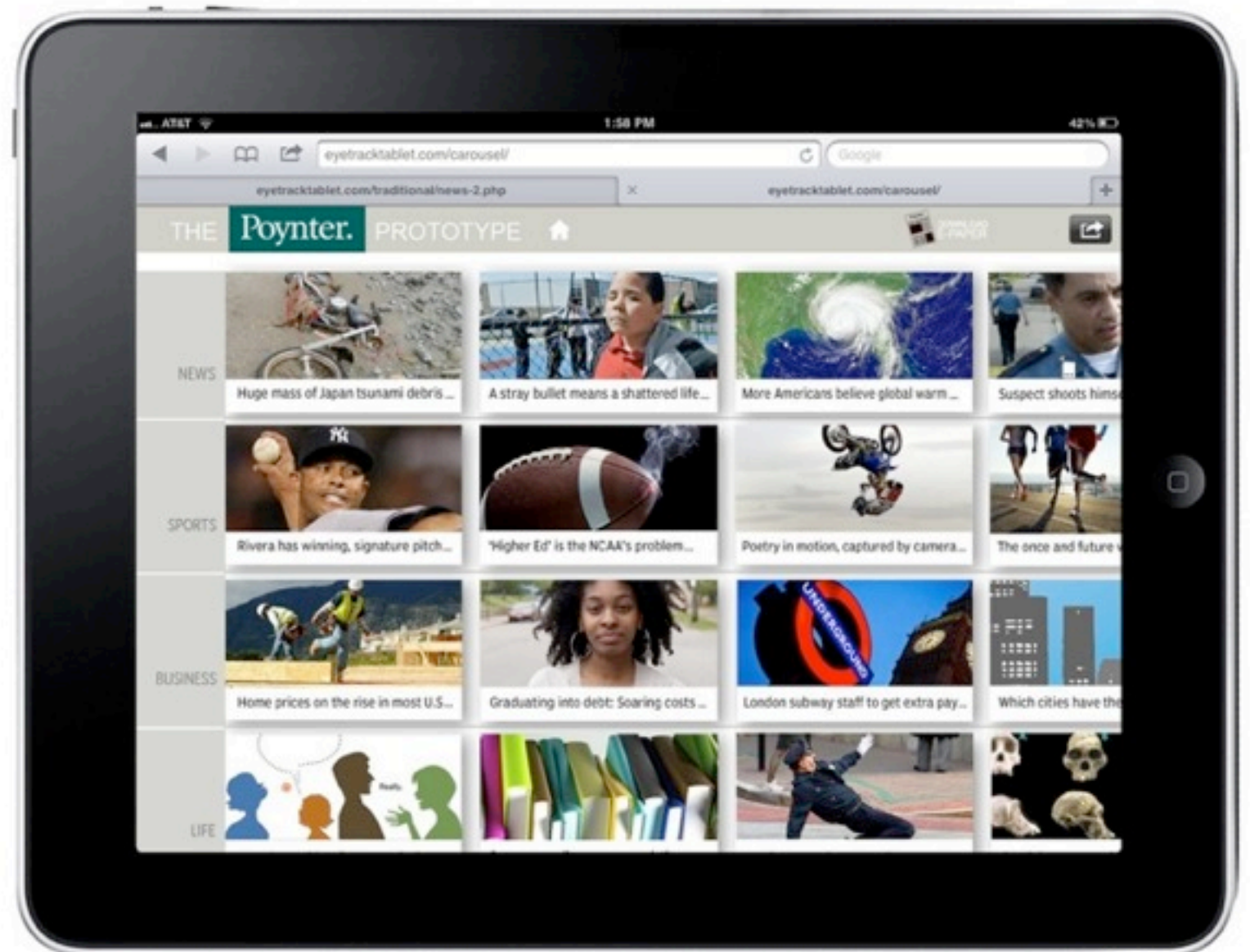
People who liked the carousel design said:



THE PROTOTYPES:

People who liked the carousel design said:

“It’s like a food buffet—you know what looks appetizing.”



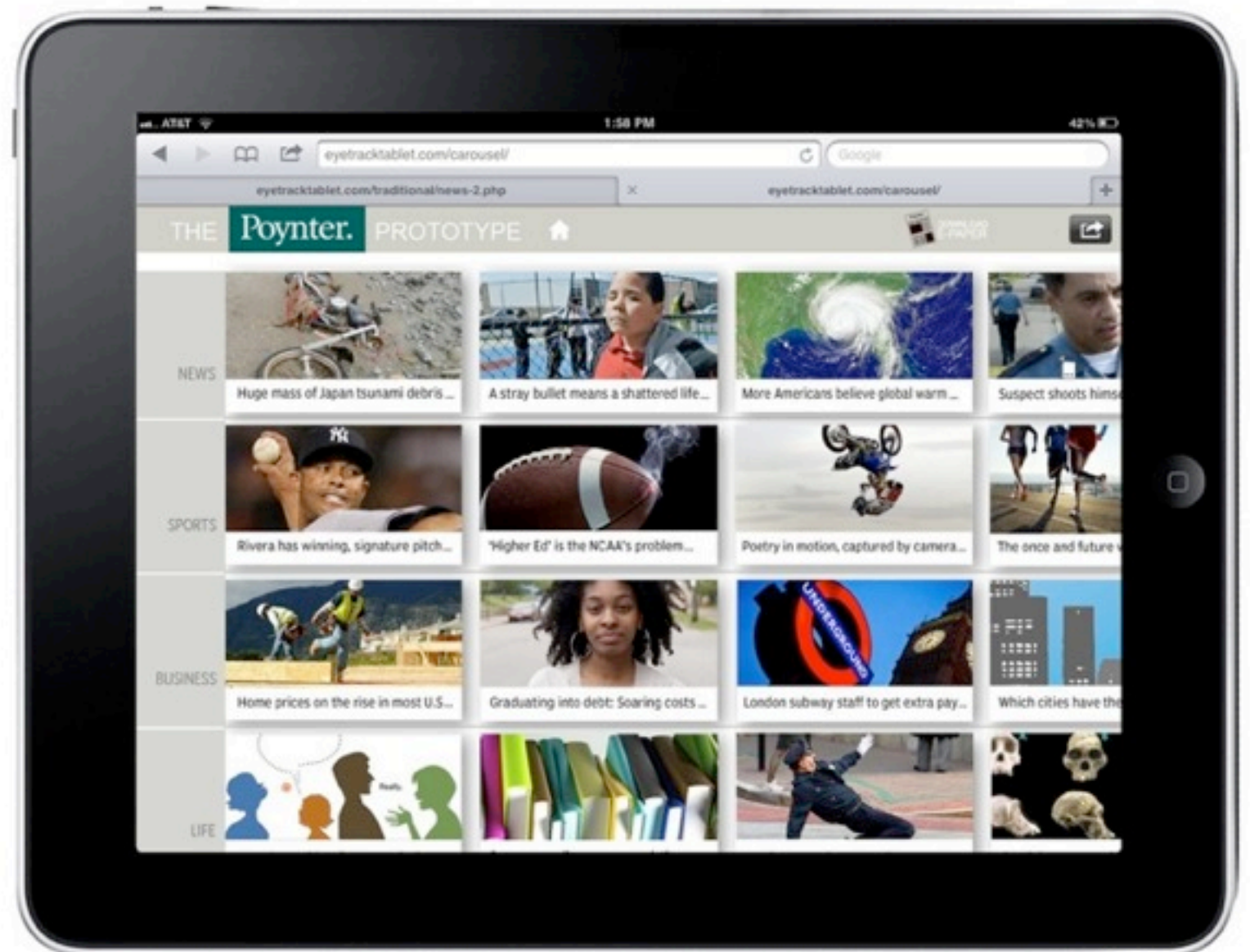


THE PROTOTYPES:

People who liked the carousel design said:

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“The carousel gives me a quicker idea of what’s there to read.”



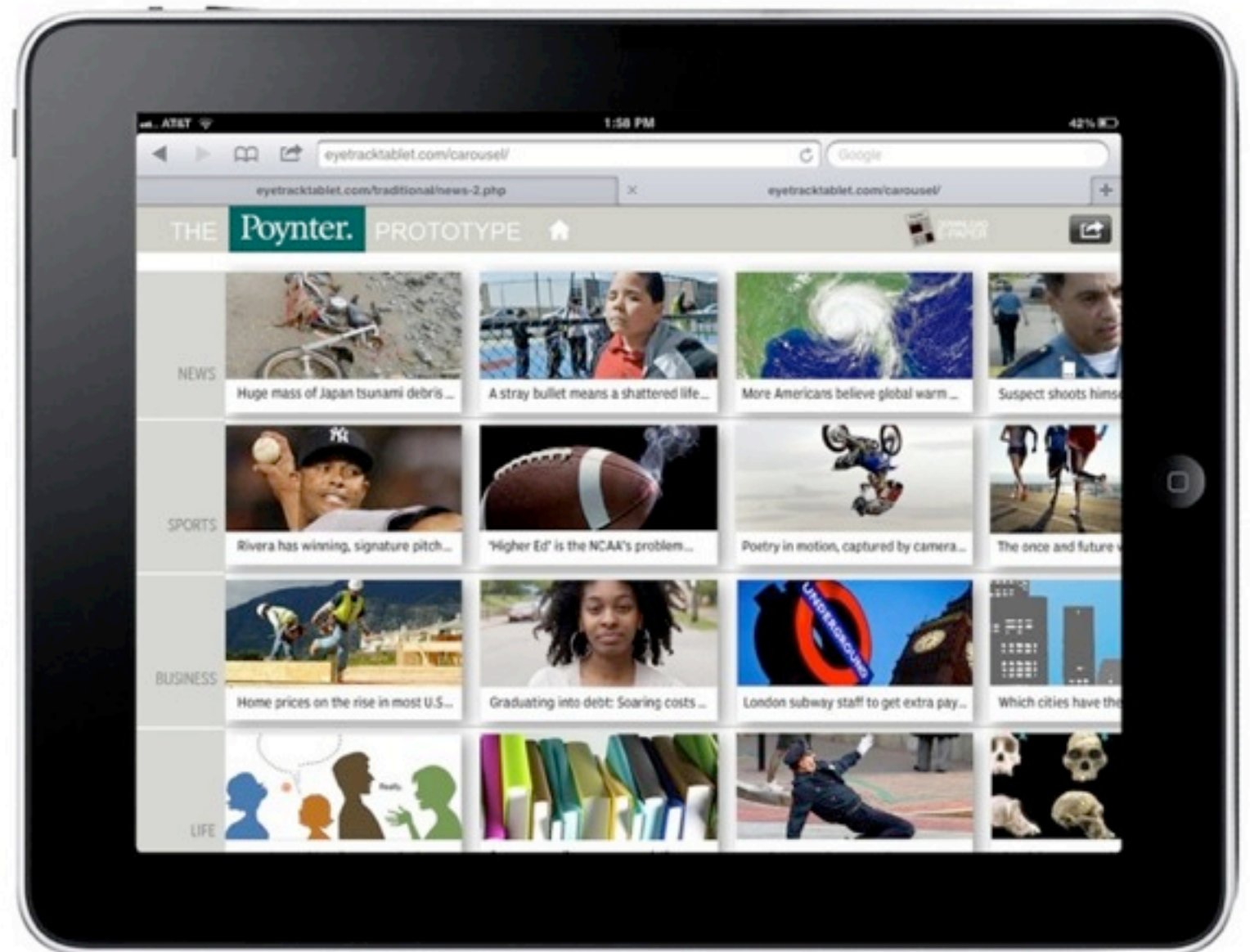
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People who liked the carousel design said:

“It’s like a food buffet—you know what looks appetizing.”

“The carousel gives me a quicker idea of what’s there to read.”

“I am always drawn to photos first. The carousel seems to give me more choices than other designs.”





THE PROTOTYPES:

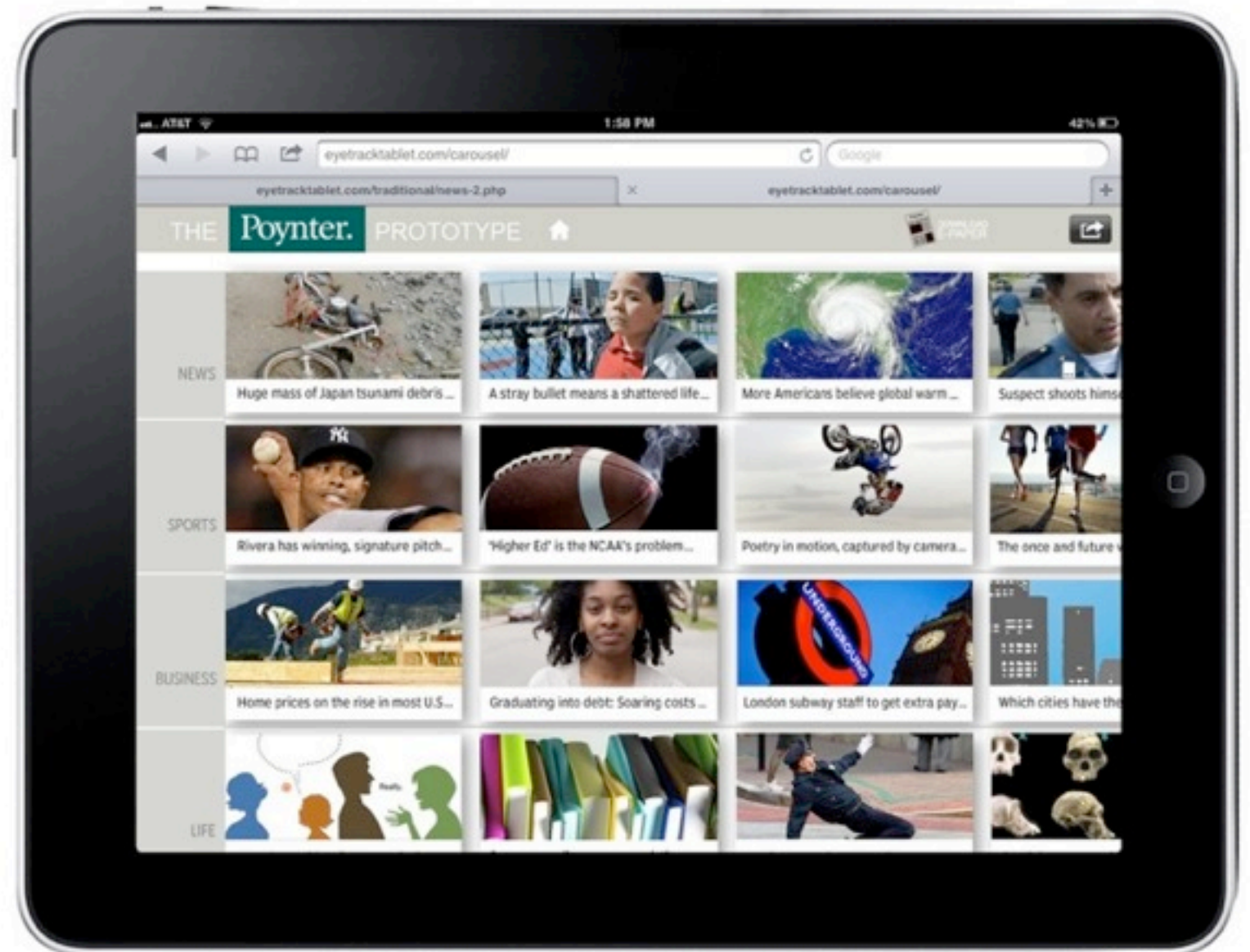
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“The carousel gives me a quicker idea of what’s there to read.”

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“Pictures can say a lot.”





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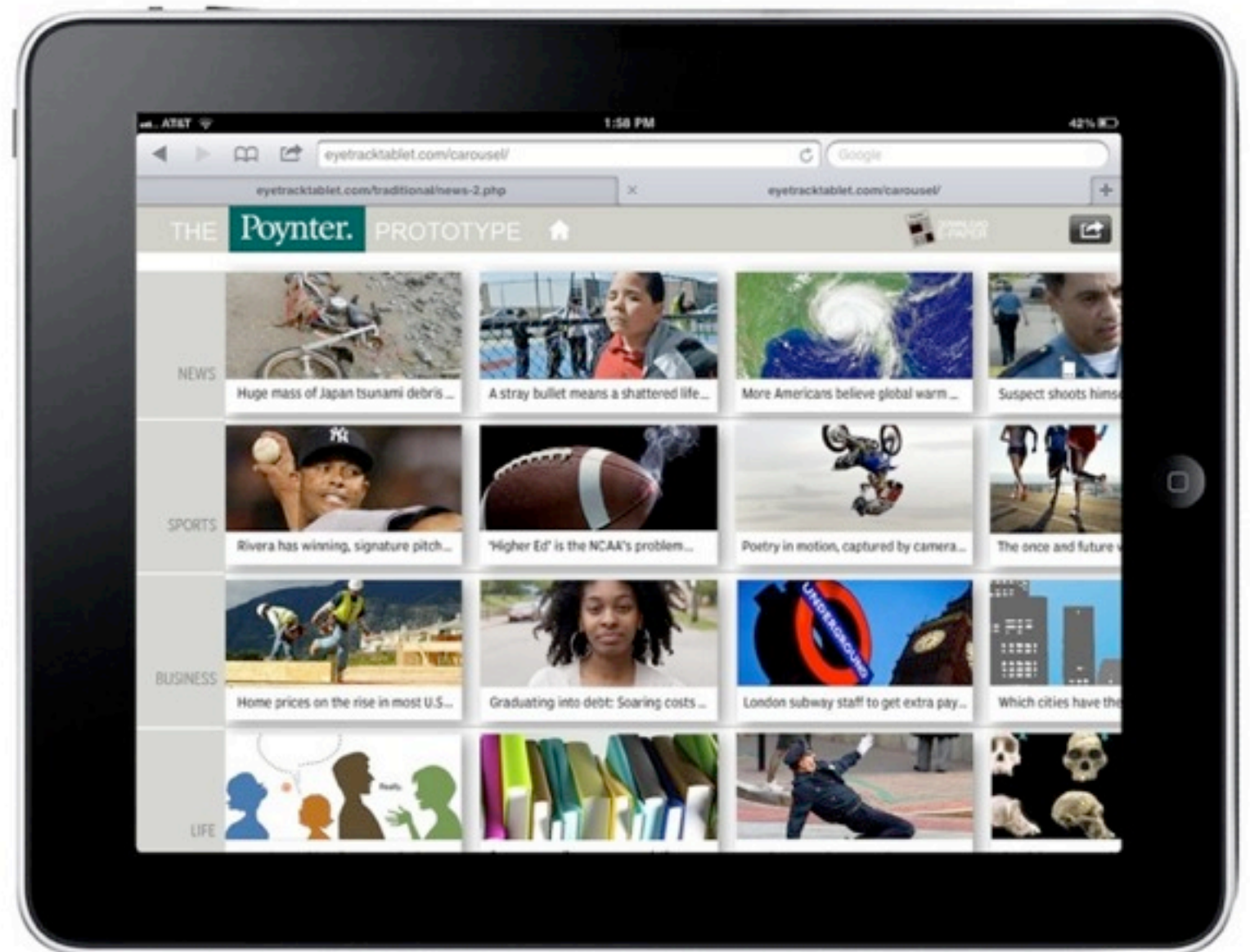
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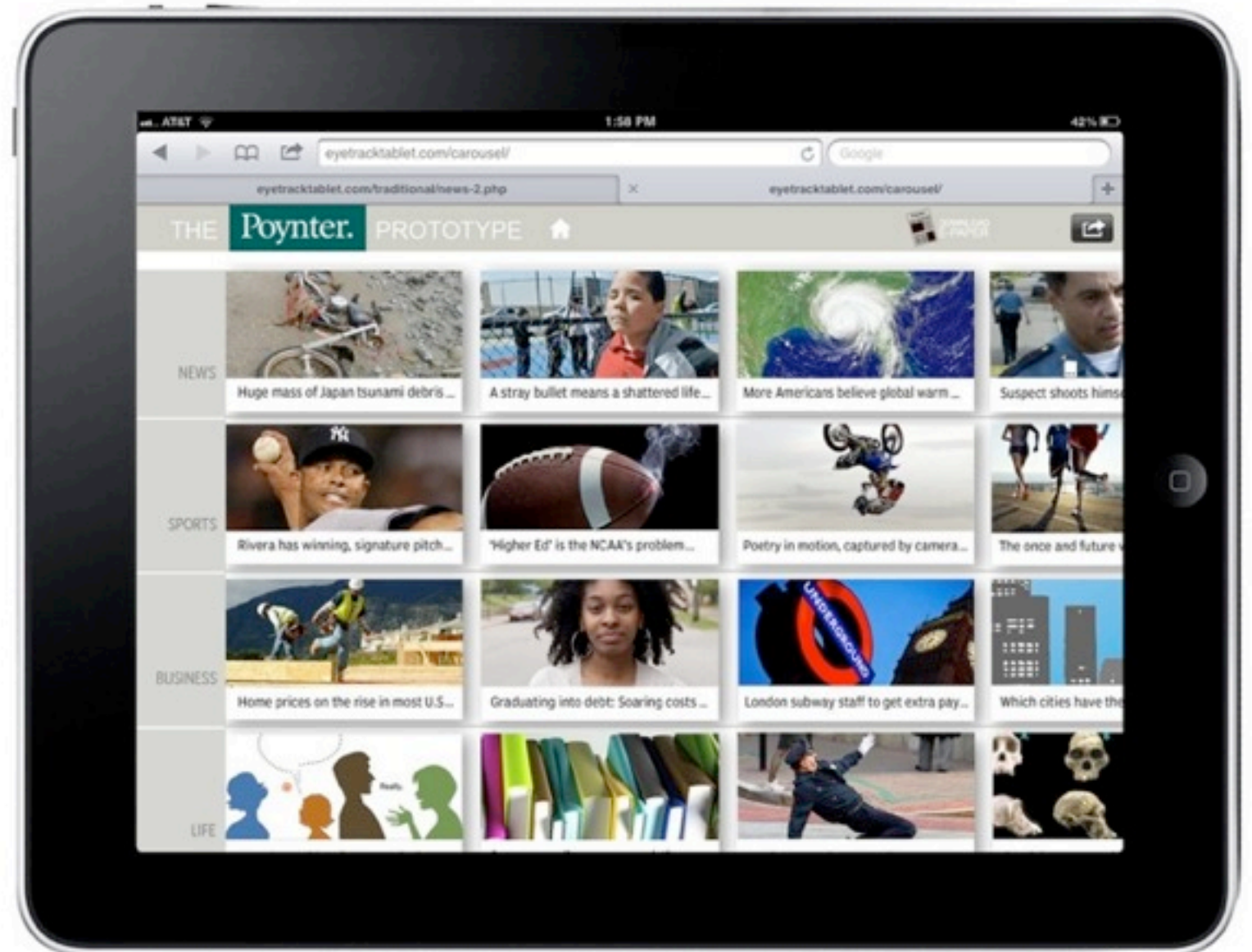
“Pictures can say a lot.”

“It helps me to make a decision quickly.”



THE PROTOTYPES:

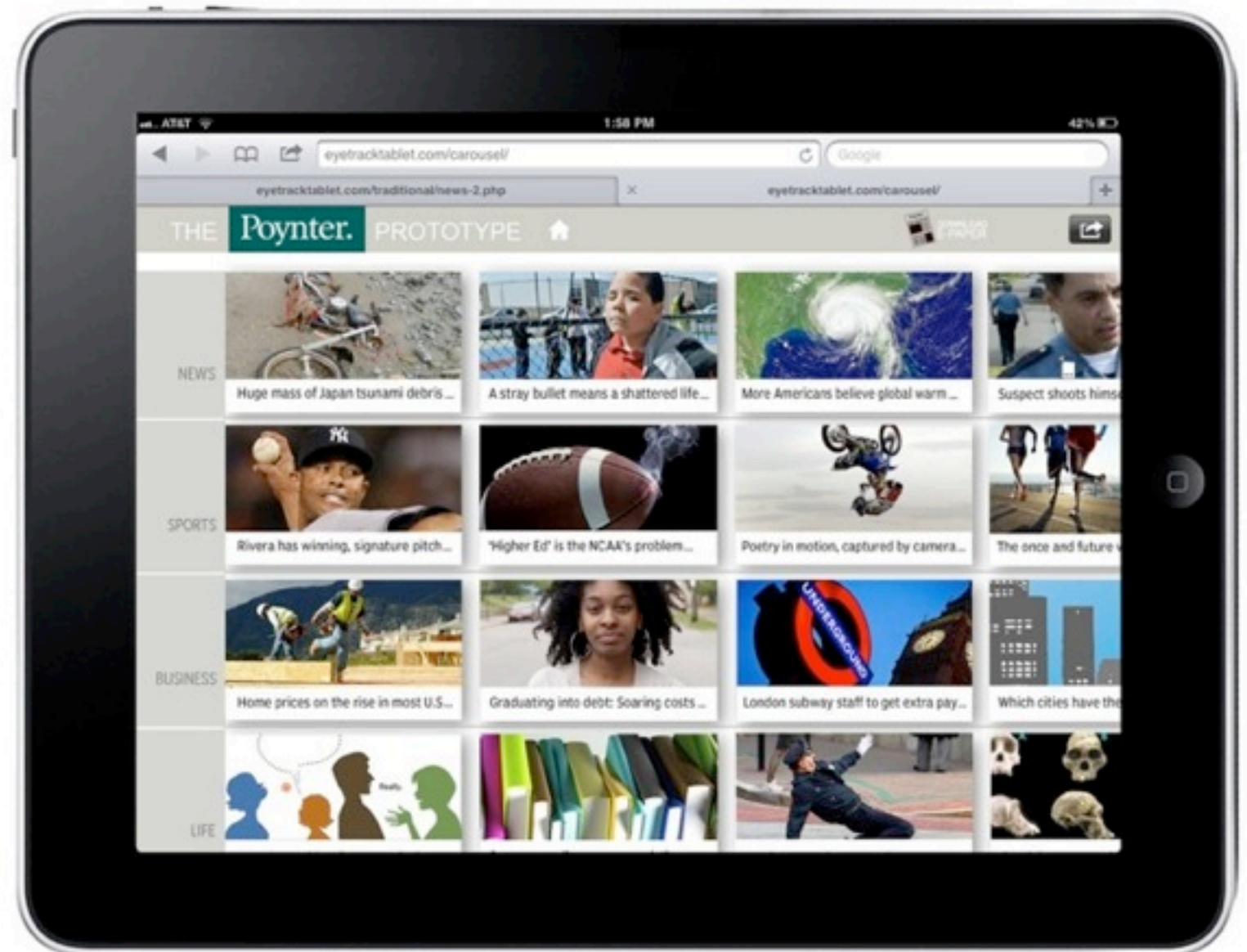
People who **didn't** like the carousel design said:



THE PROTOTYPES:

People who **didn't** like the carousel design said:

“The carousel might be overwhelming.”



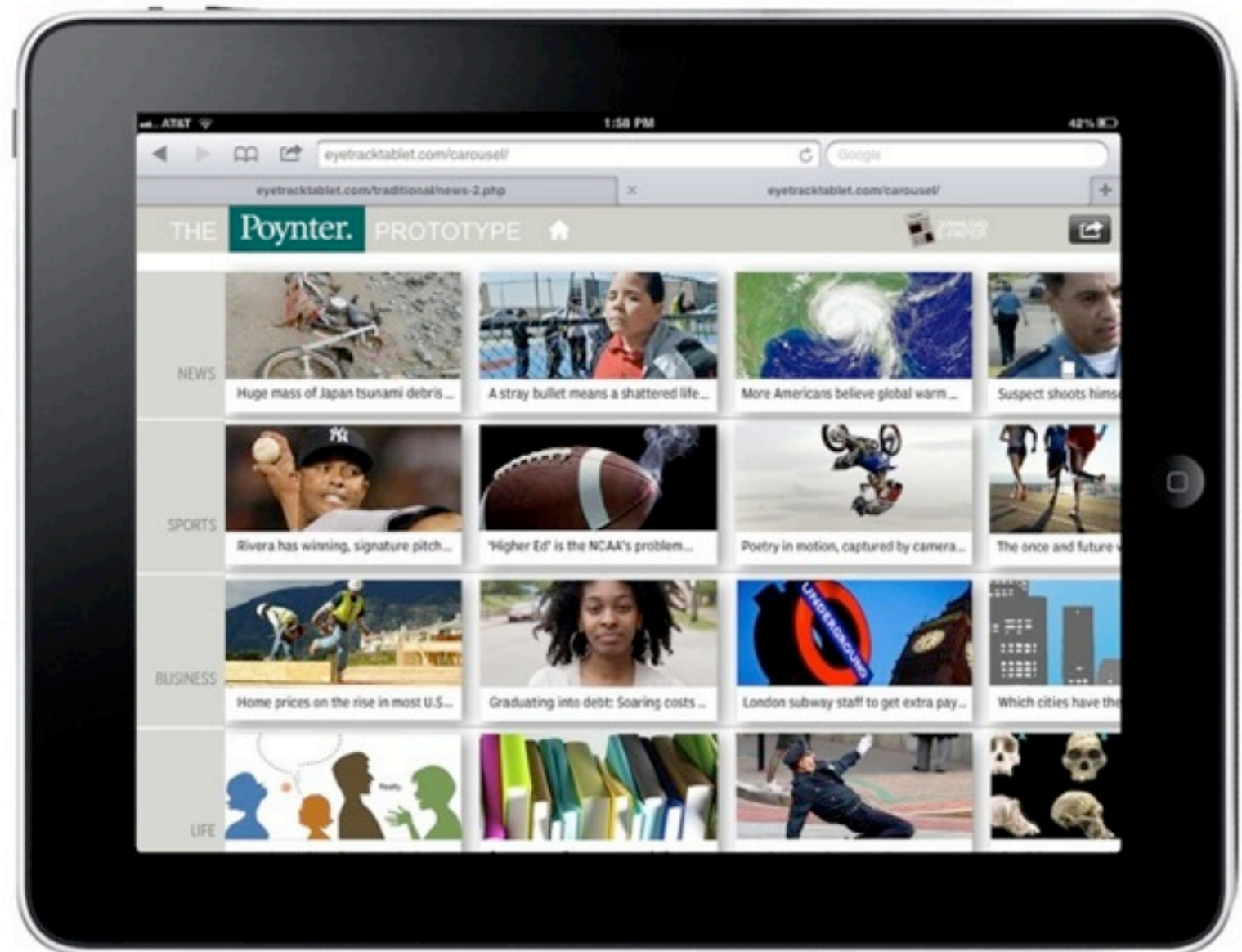


THE PROTOTYPES:

People who **didn't** like the carousel design said:

“The carousel might be overwhelming.

“The carousel is too busy. I don't know which to look at first.”



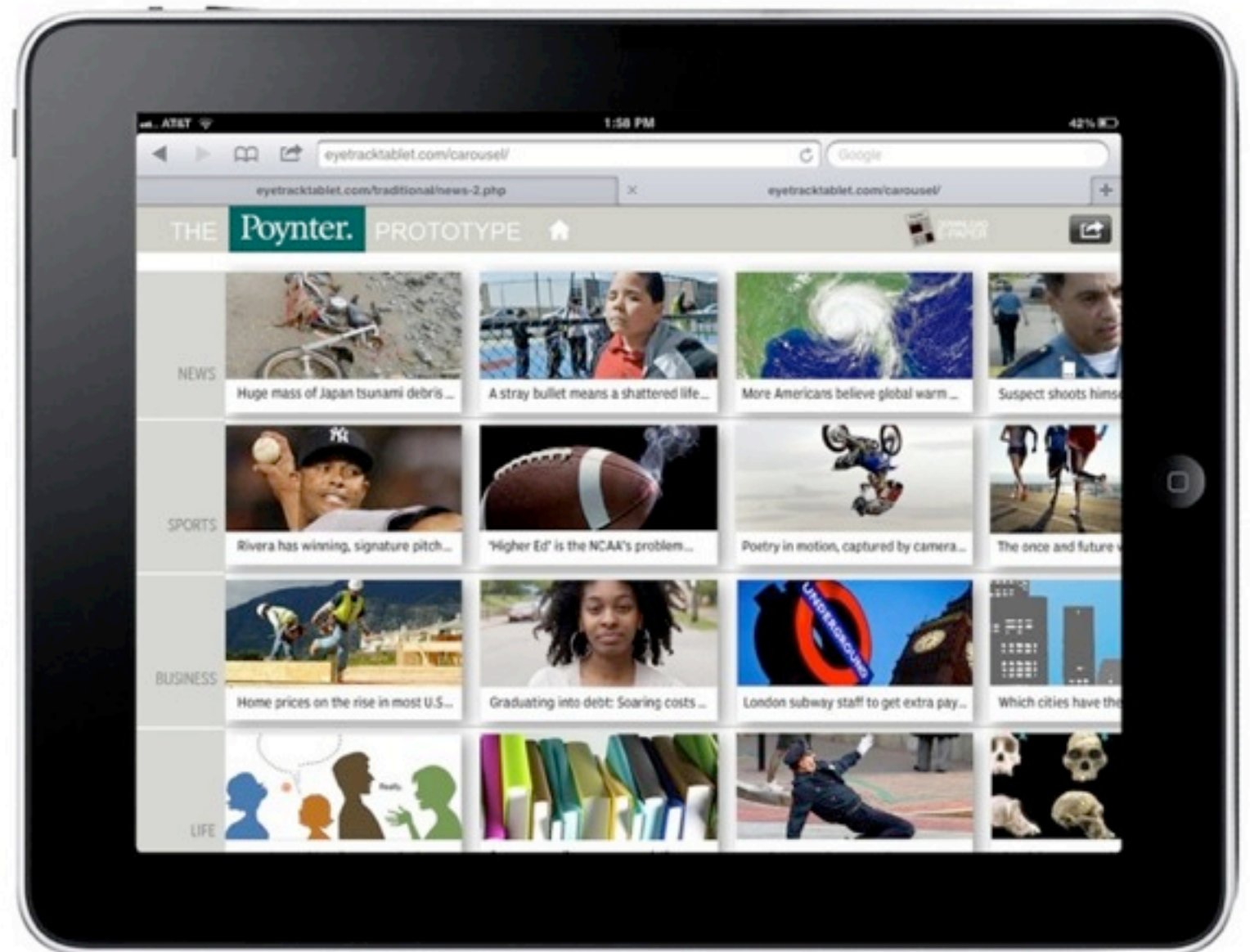
## THE PROTOTYPES:

People who **didn't** like the carousel design said:

“The carousel might be overwhelming.

“The carousel is too busy. I don't know which to look at first.”

“I don't like carousels. I (end up looking at) stupid stuff because I look at the photos, instead of headlines. **I'd never want to read about the Broadway show, 'Cats,' but I am drawn to the photo!**”

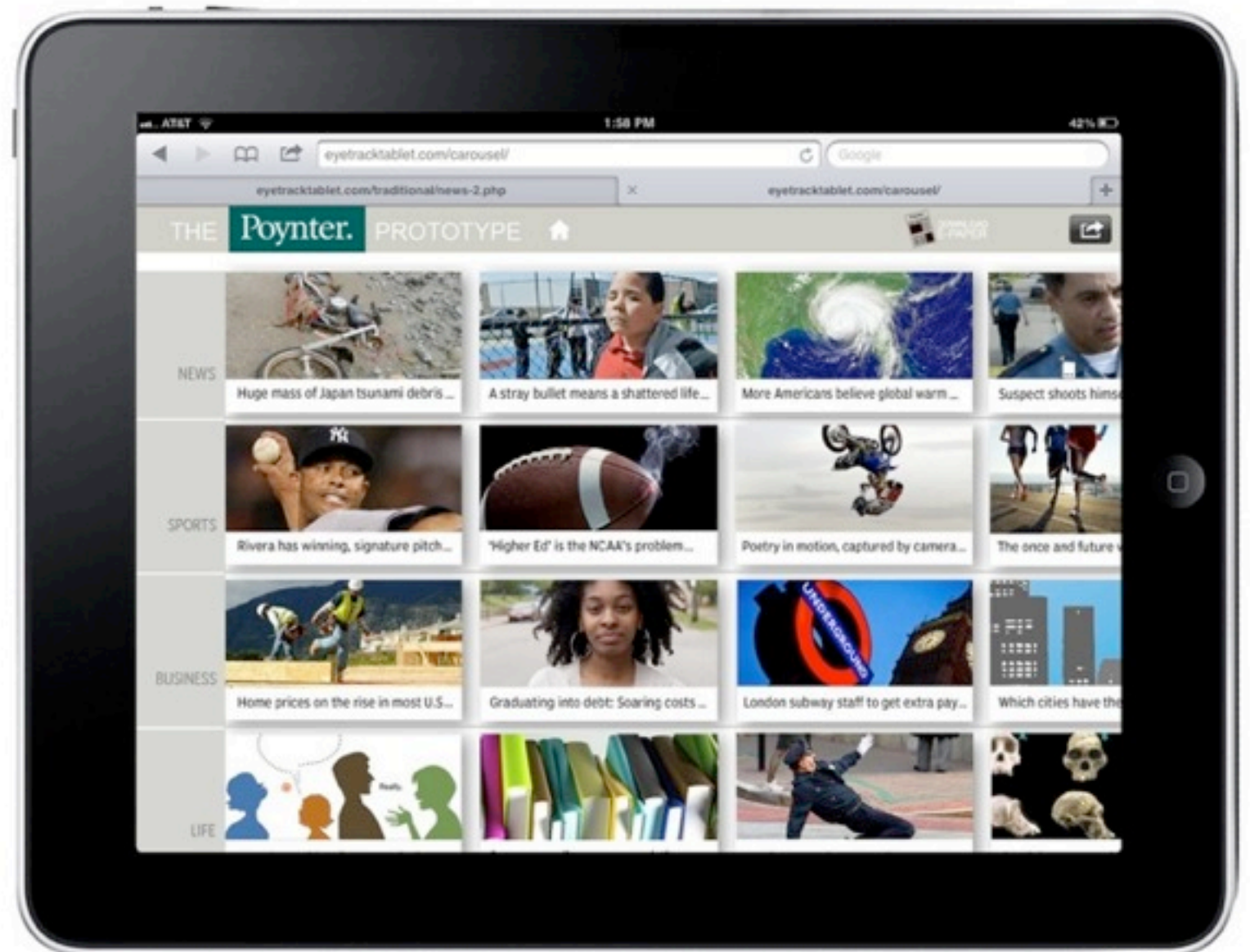




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“I don't like carousels.  
I (end up looking at)  
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**I'd never want to read  
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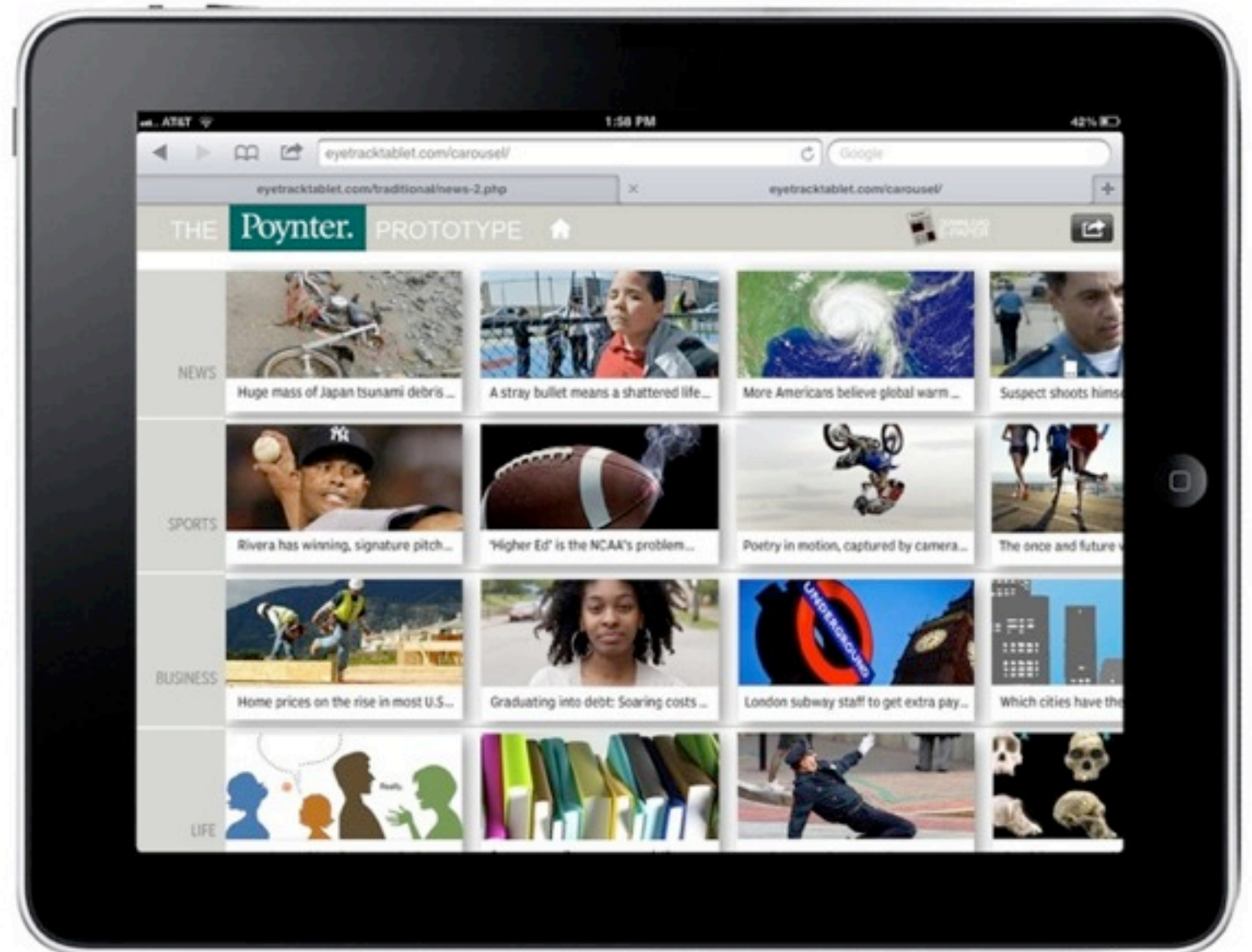




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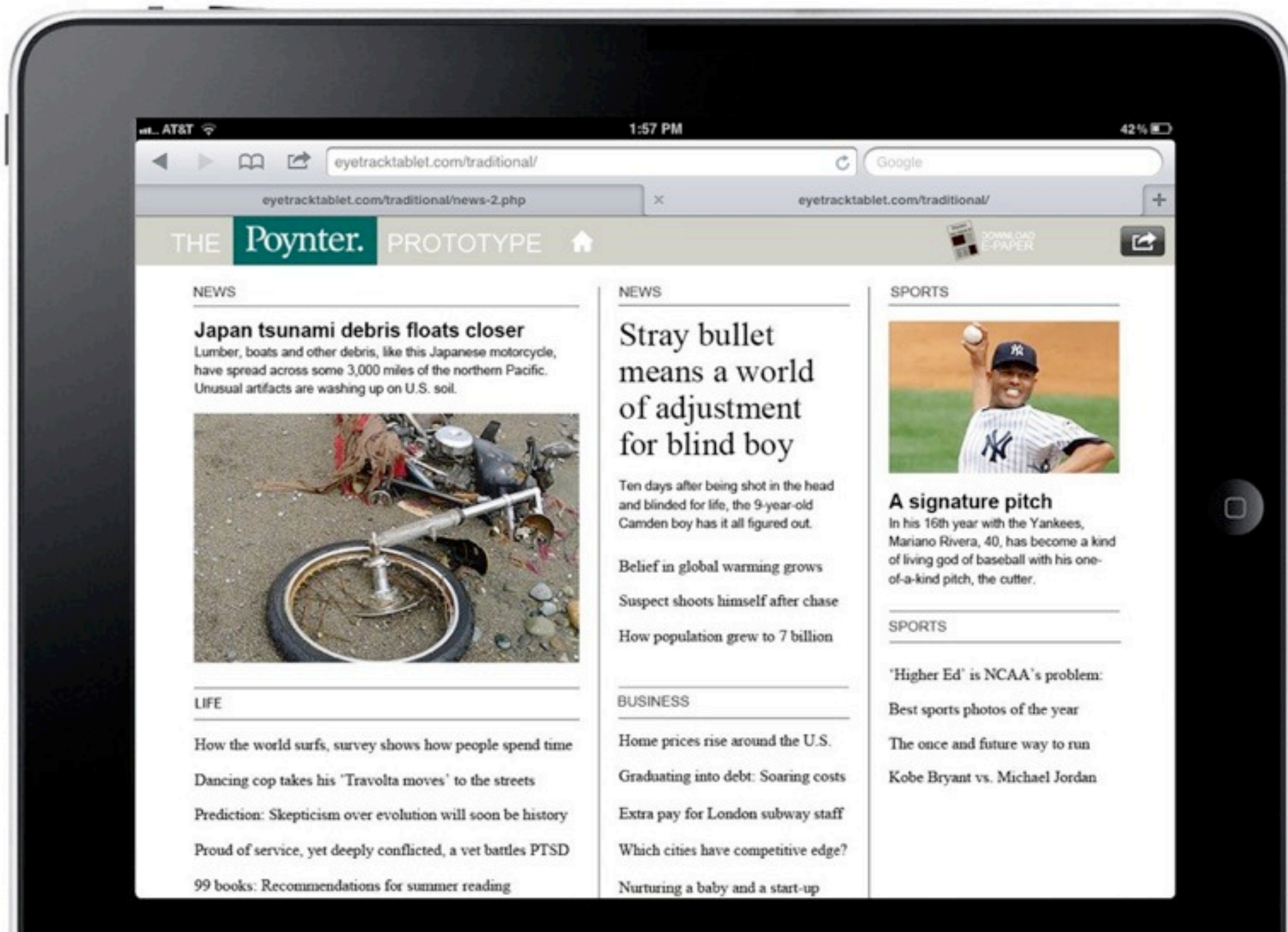


FINDINGS

# The behaviors

THE BEHAVIORS:

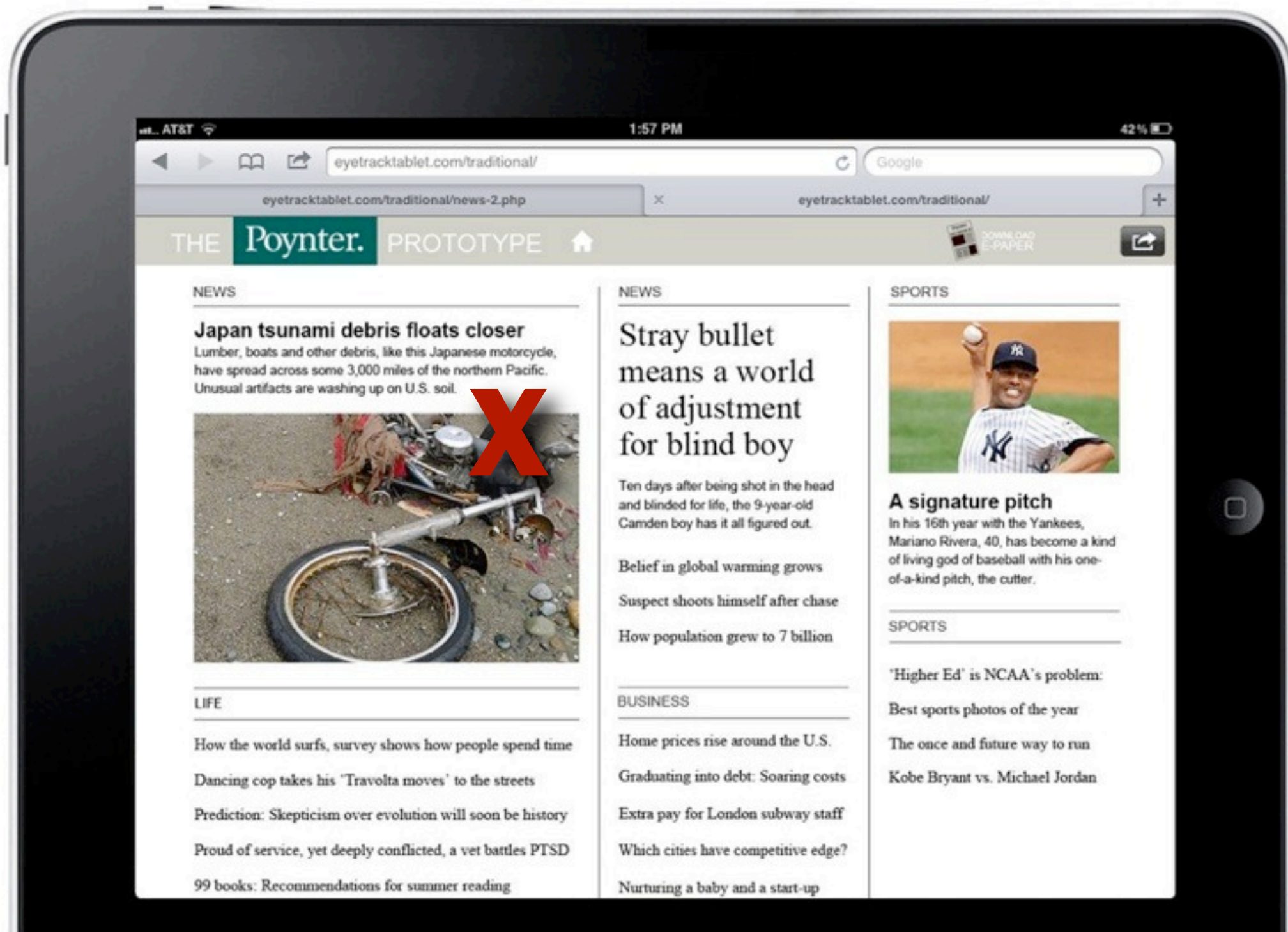
People tended to enter through a dominant element.





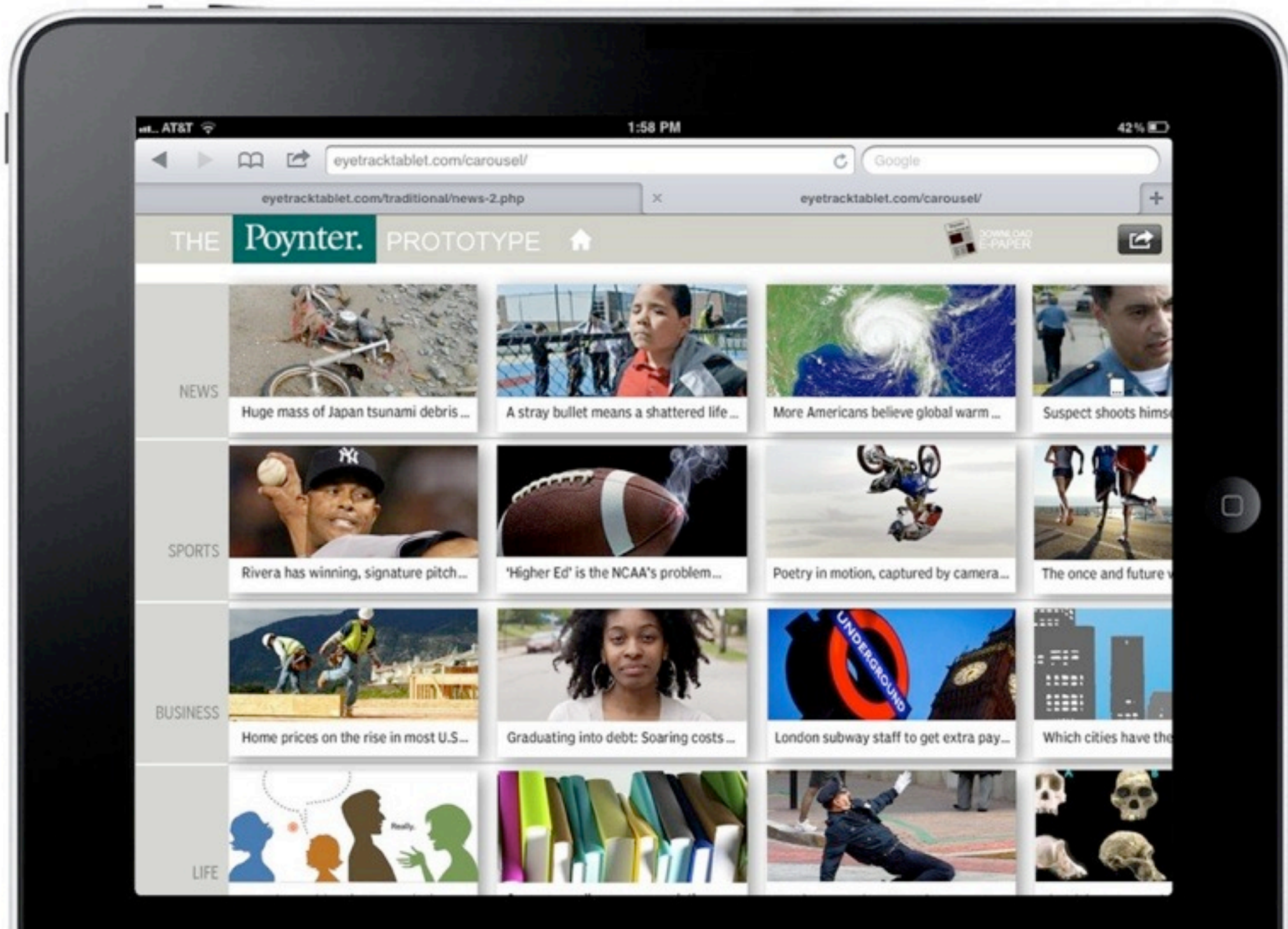
THE BEHAVIORS:

This echoes earlier EyeTrack findings  
(and principles of Gestalt).



THE BEHAVIORS:

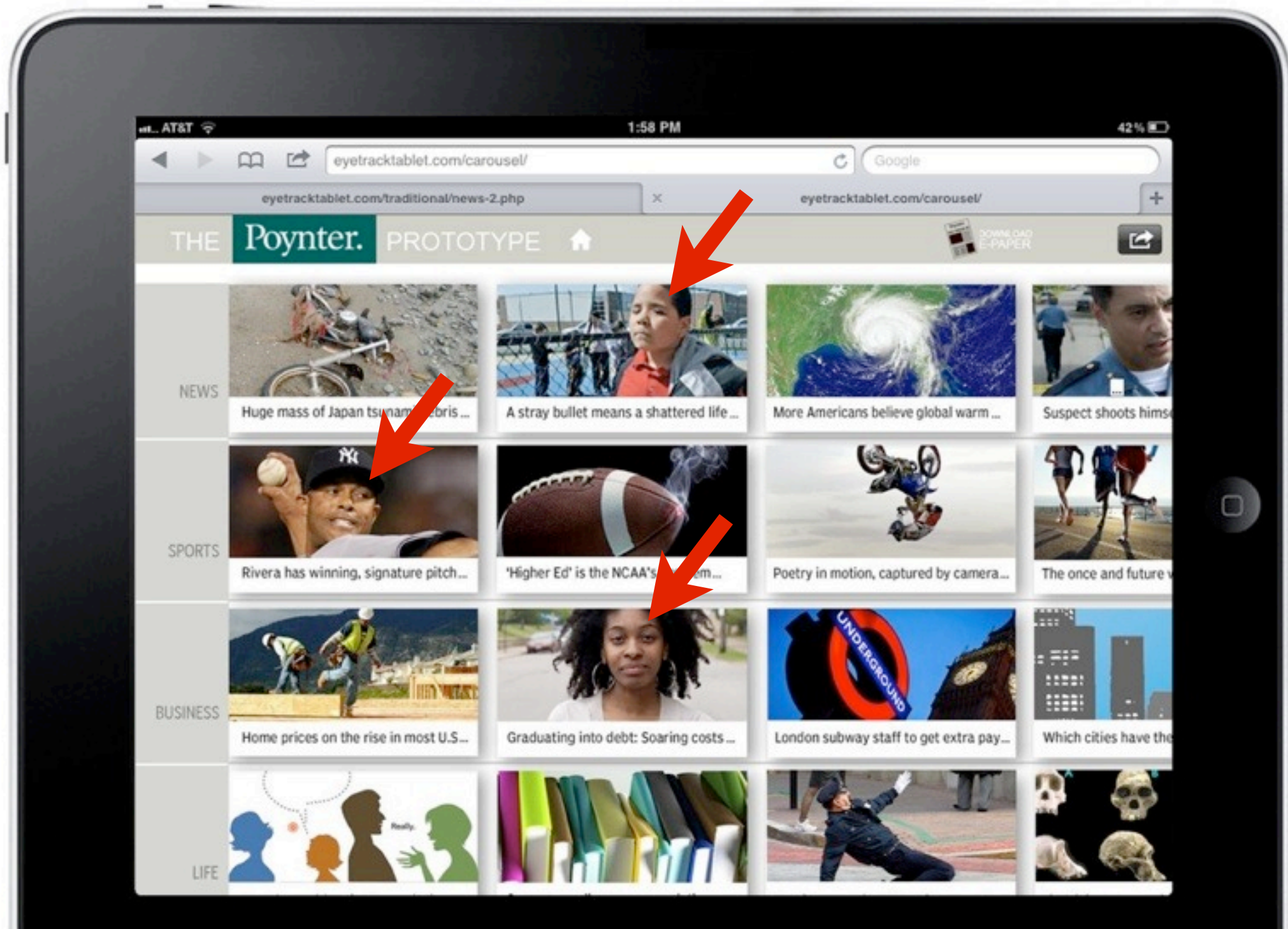
In lieu of a clear dominant element, faces also drew a lot of attention.





## THE BEHAVIORS:

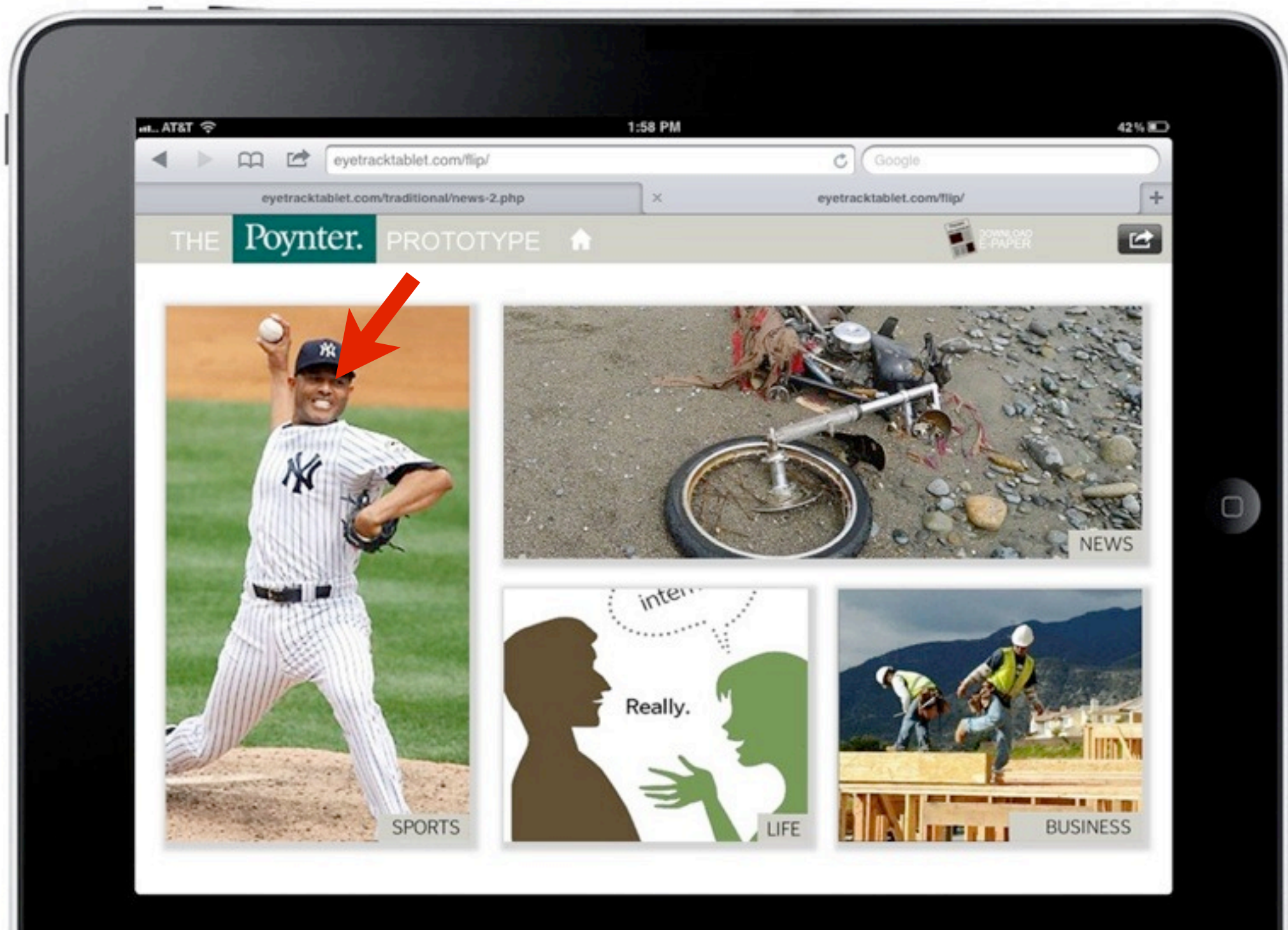
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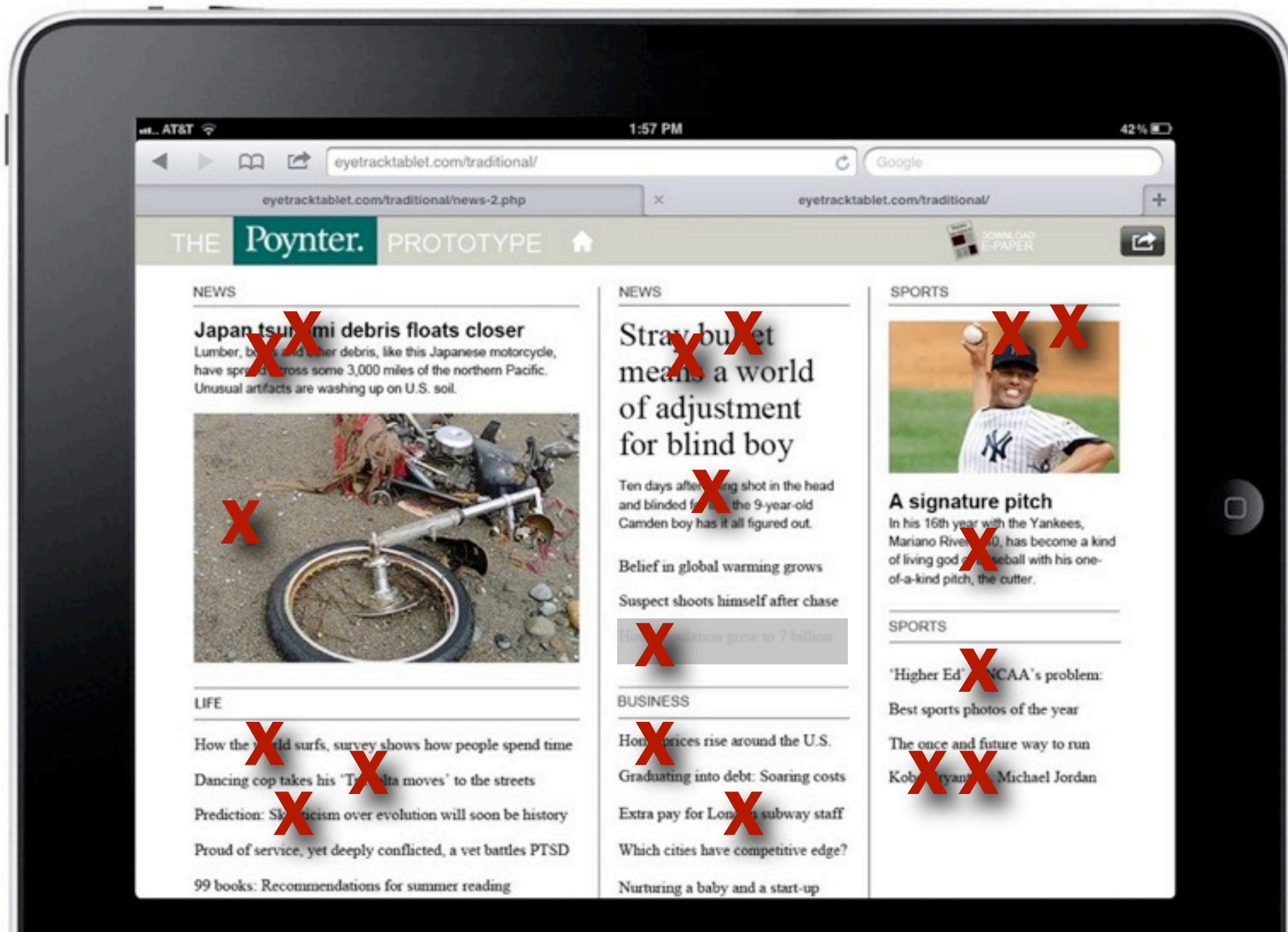
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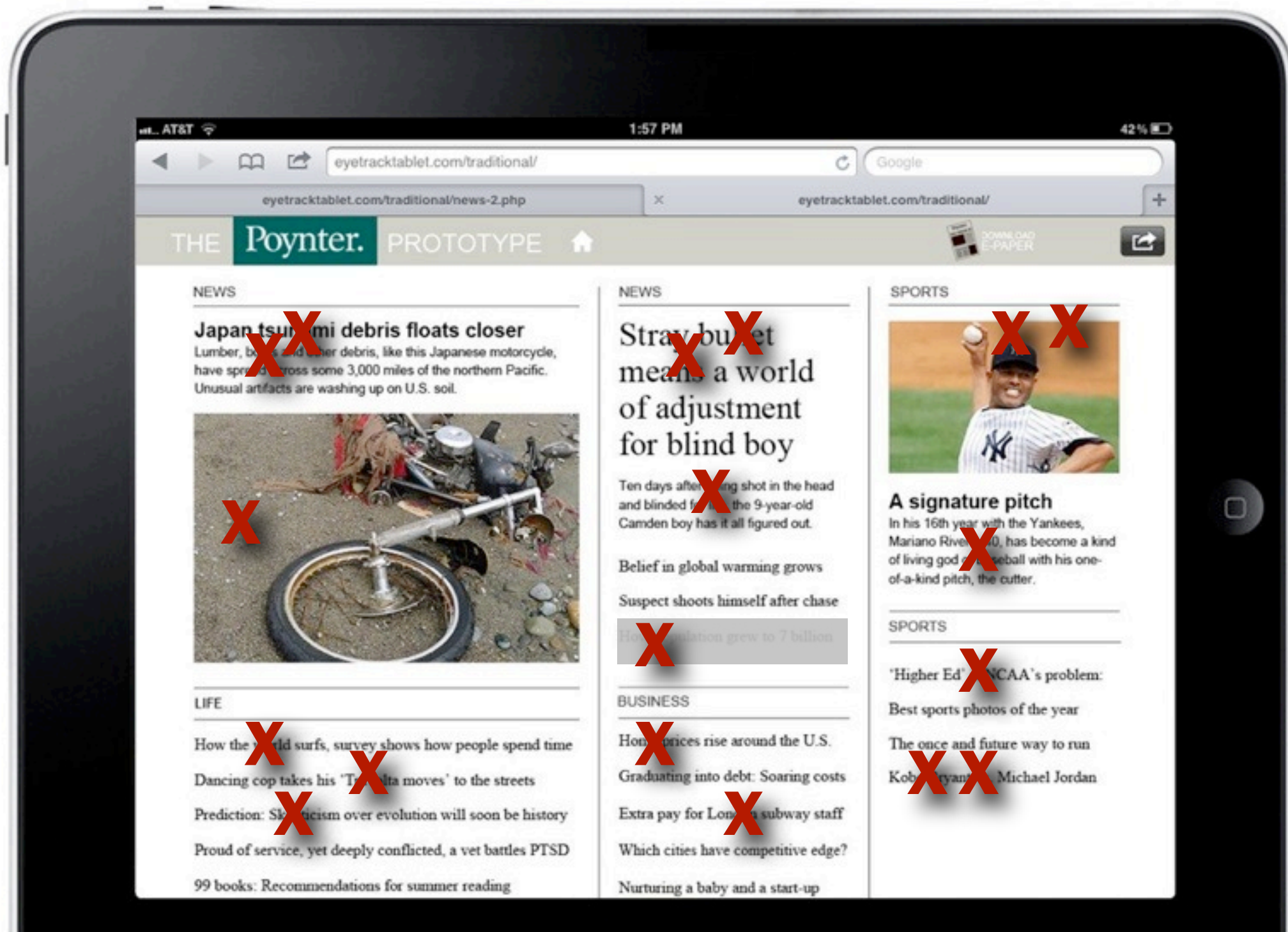
People fixated an average of 18 times before choosing their first story.





THE BEHAVIORS:

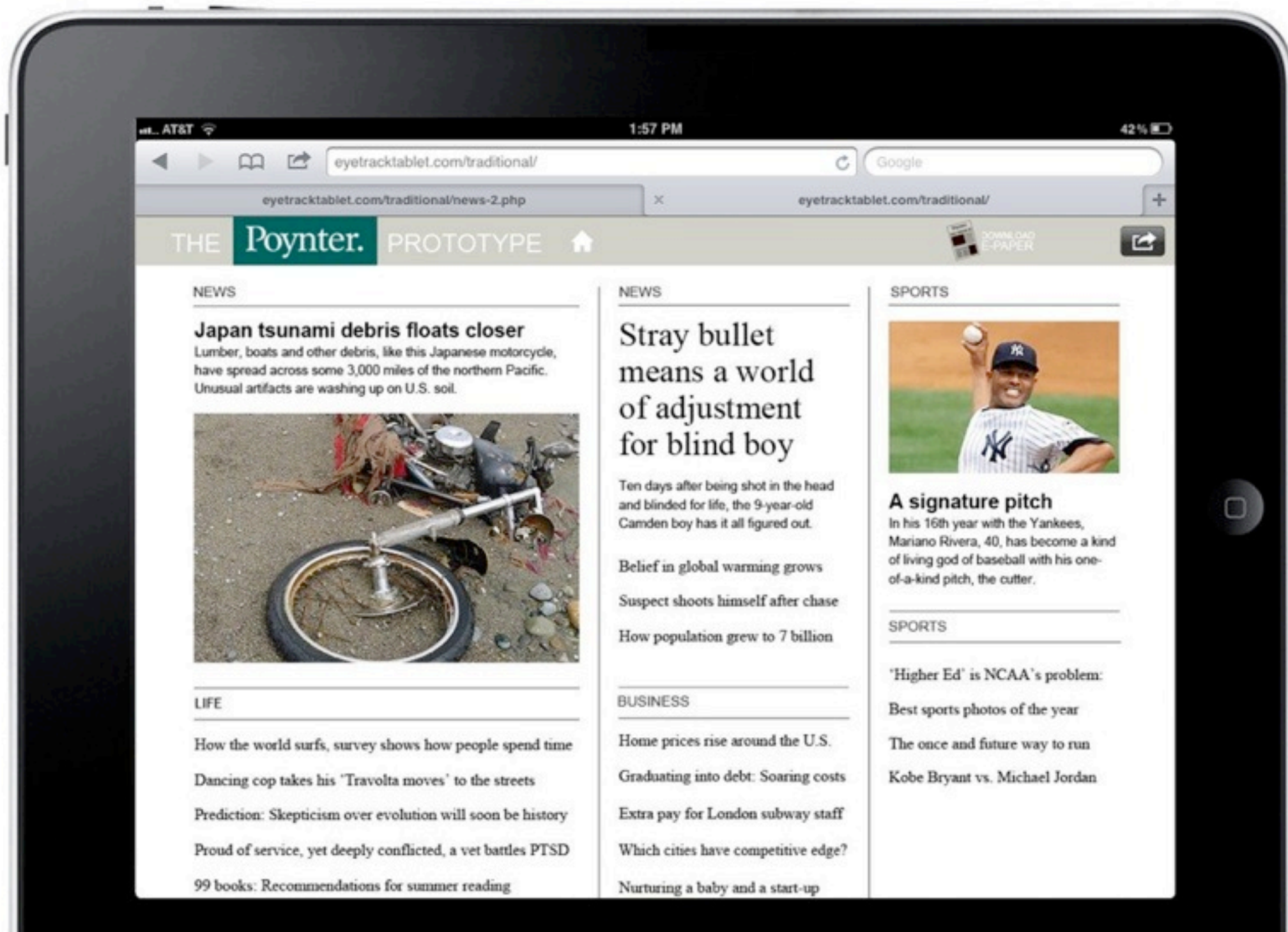
This was likely a way for them to narrow down their story choice.





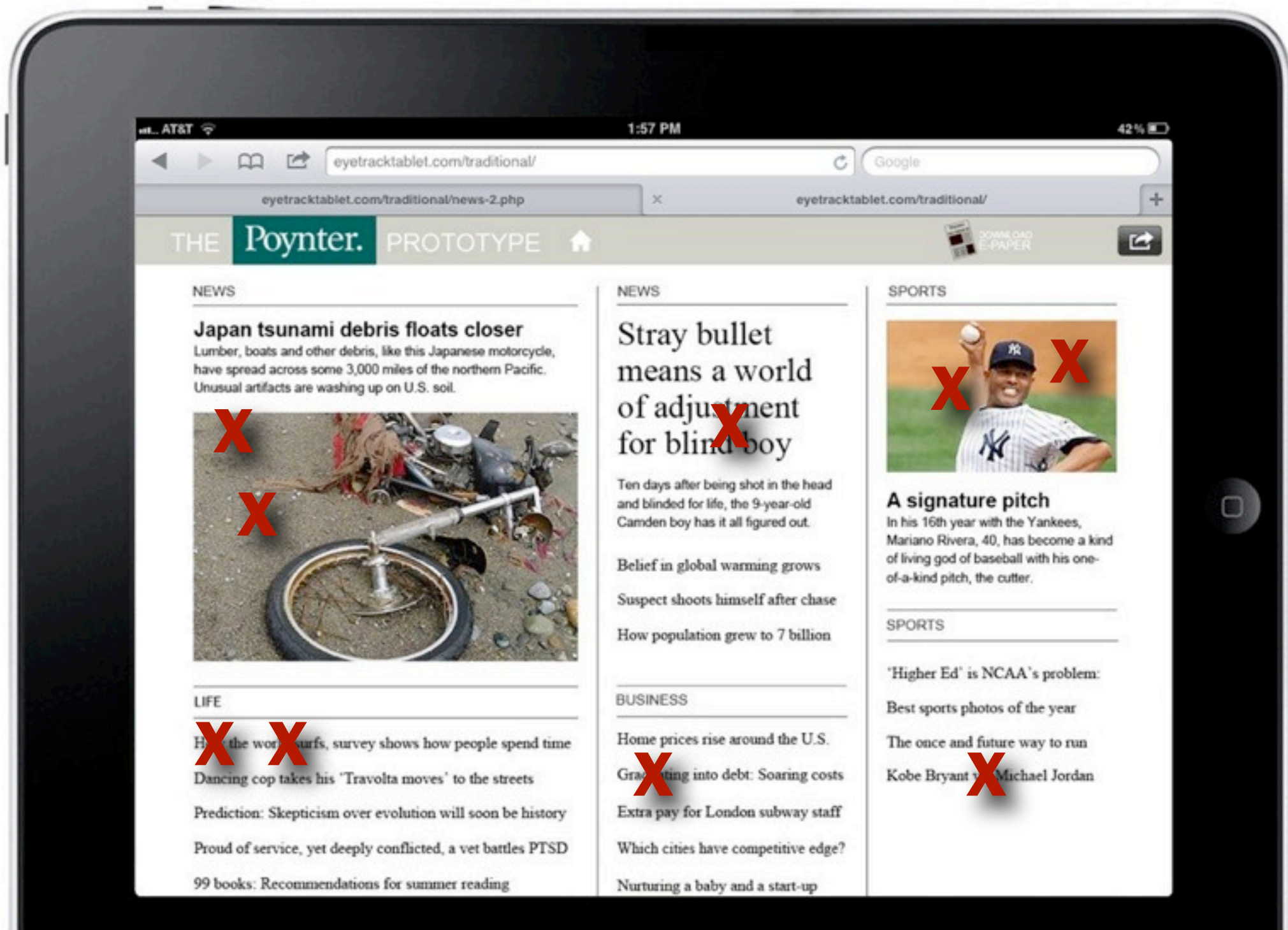
THE BEHAVIORS:

And ...



## THE BEHAVIORS:

... People who **did not finish reading their first story** fixated only nine times before choosing.



## THE BEHAVIORS:

An overall average of a minute and a half (98.3 seconds) was spent on the first story a person selected to read.



## THE BEHAVIORS:

An overall average of a minute and a half (98.3 seconds) was spent on the first story a person selected to read.

Of the people who **did not** finish reading a story, they read for an average of 78.3 seconds before leaving the story entirely.

## THE BEHAVIORS:

An overall average of a minute and a half (98.3 seconds) was spent on the first story a person selected to read.

Of the people who **did not** finish reading a story, they read for an average of 78.3 seconds before leaving the story entirely.

**We've been calling this the “bail out point.”**

## THE BEHAVIORS:

And it might be a good benchmark for establishing a “gold coin” to keep the reader engaged about halfway through a long story.





THE BEHAVIORS:

This could be a simple pullout quote from someone who has yet to appear in the story.



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Or, an informative visual element that keeps the reader interested.



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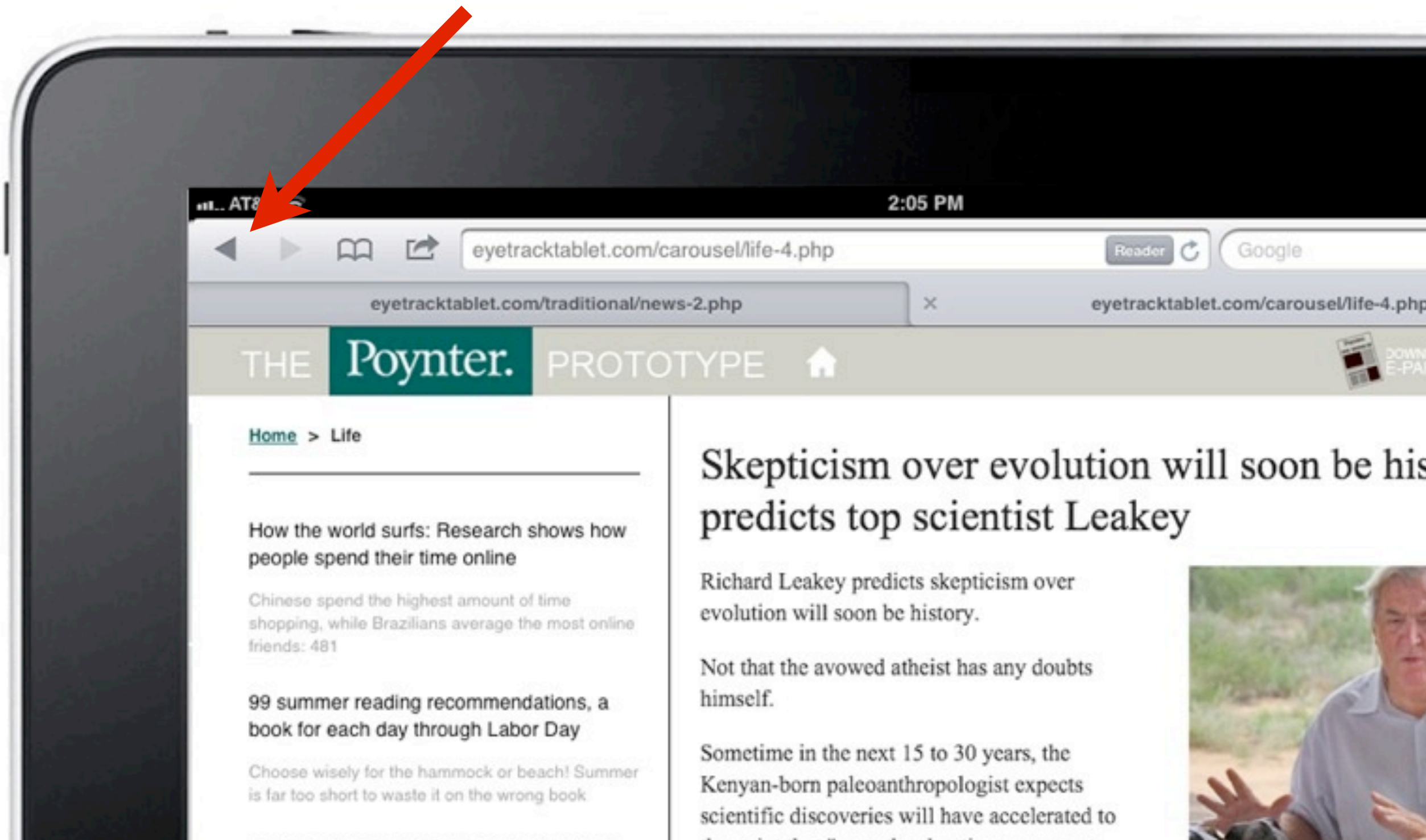
Or a quick summary of key points to help the reader feel satisfied with what they've learned.





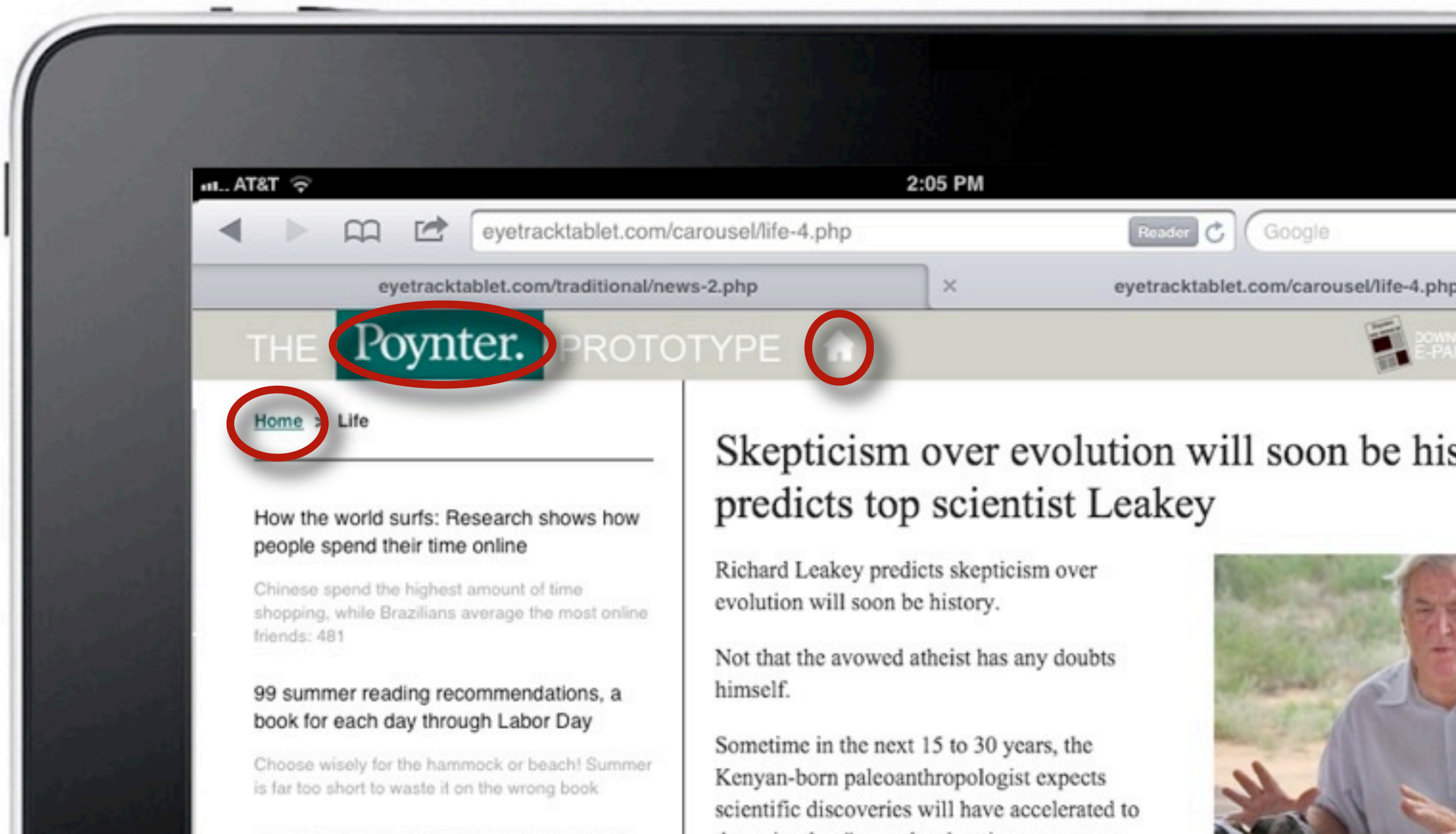
THE BEHAVIORS:

67 percent used native controls  
like the back button to get to their second story.



THE BEHAVIORS:

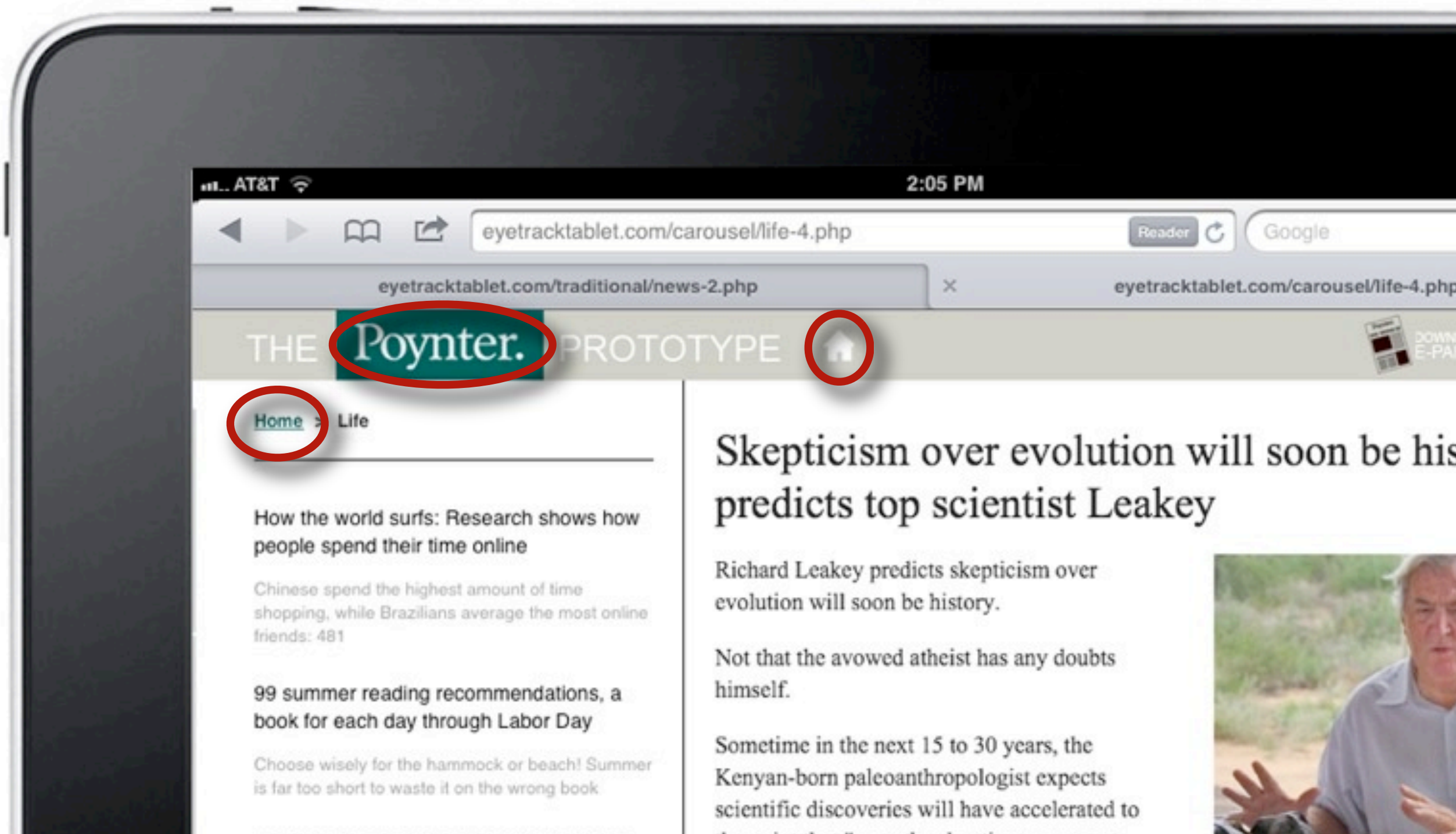
... even though nav tools were built in.



THE BEHAVIORS:

... even though nav tools were built in.

People will default to what they know, if it's available.





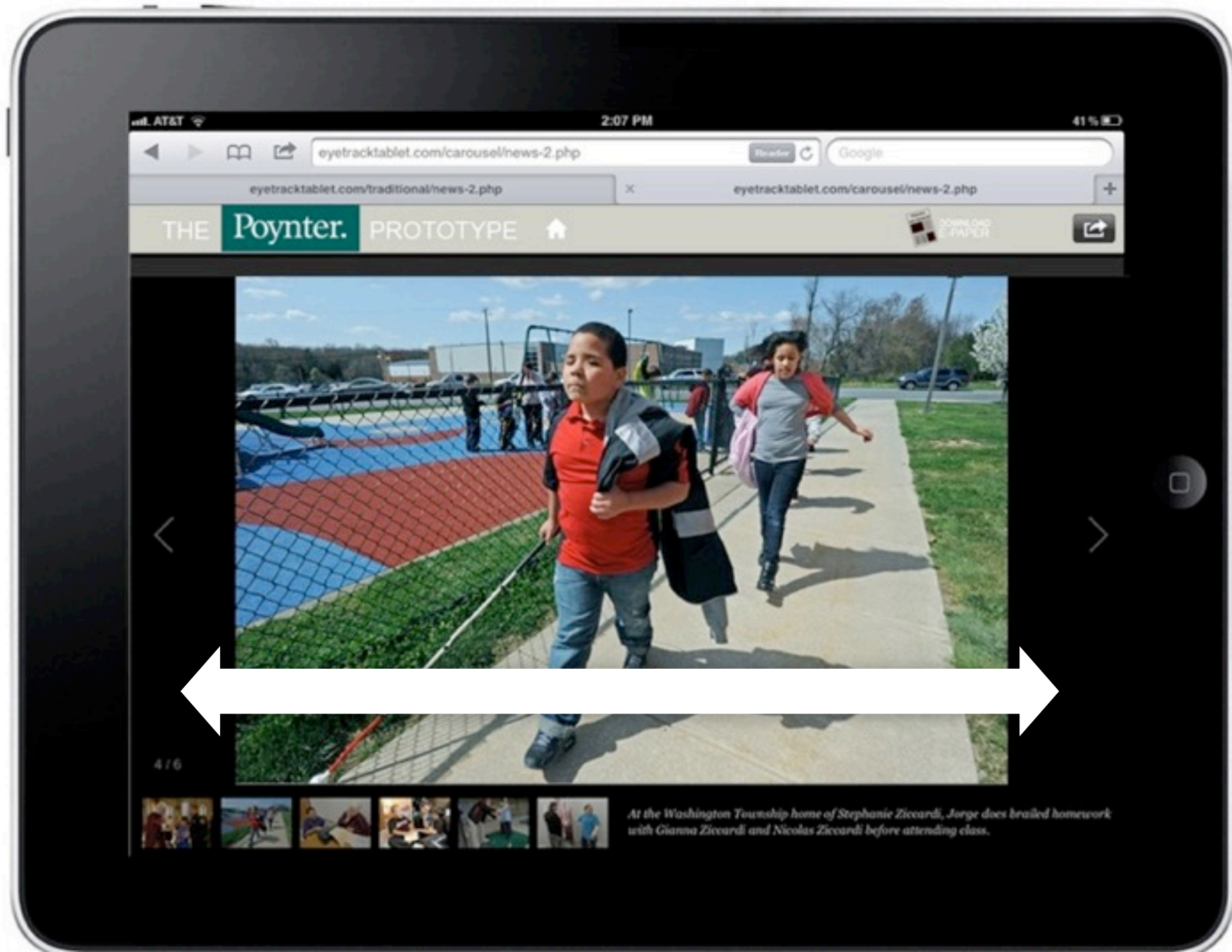
## THE BEHAVIORS:

Few people used thumbnails to progress through the gallery. **The majority used advance buttons.**



THE BEHAVIORS:

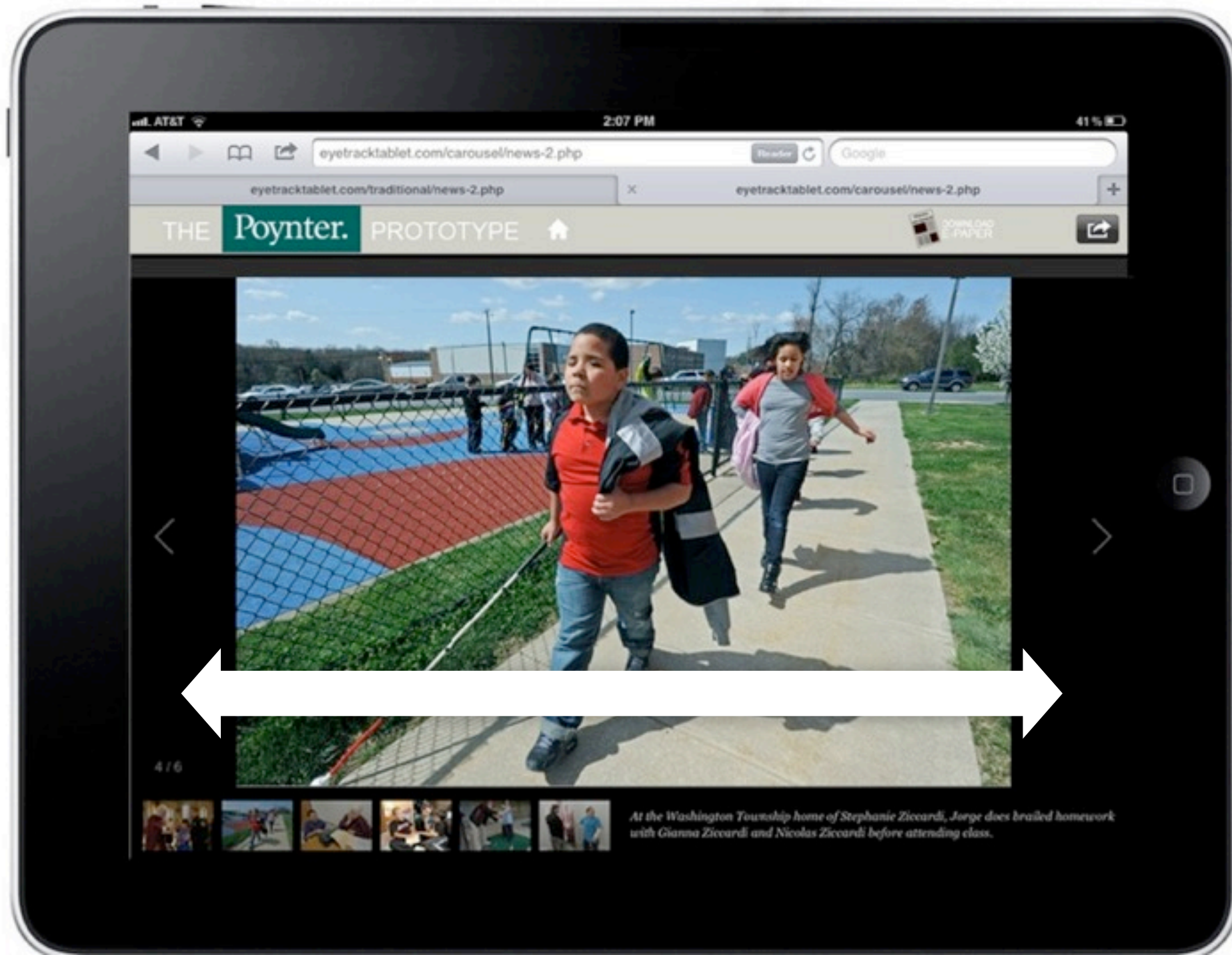
We found that readers instinctively swipe horizontally first through a photo gallery ...





THE BEHAVIORS:

... regardless of the orientation of the tablet.





THE BEHAVIORS:

Many magazines are set up for readers to swipe horizontally from one story to another ...



THE BEHAVIORS:

And vertical scrolls are often used to go deeper into the same story topic ...



FINDINGS

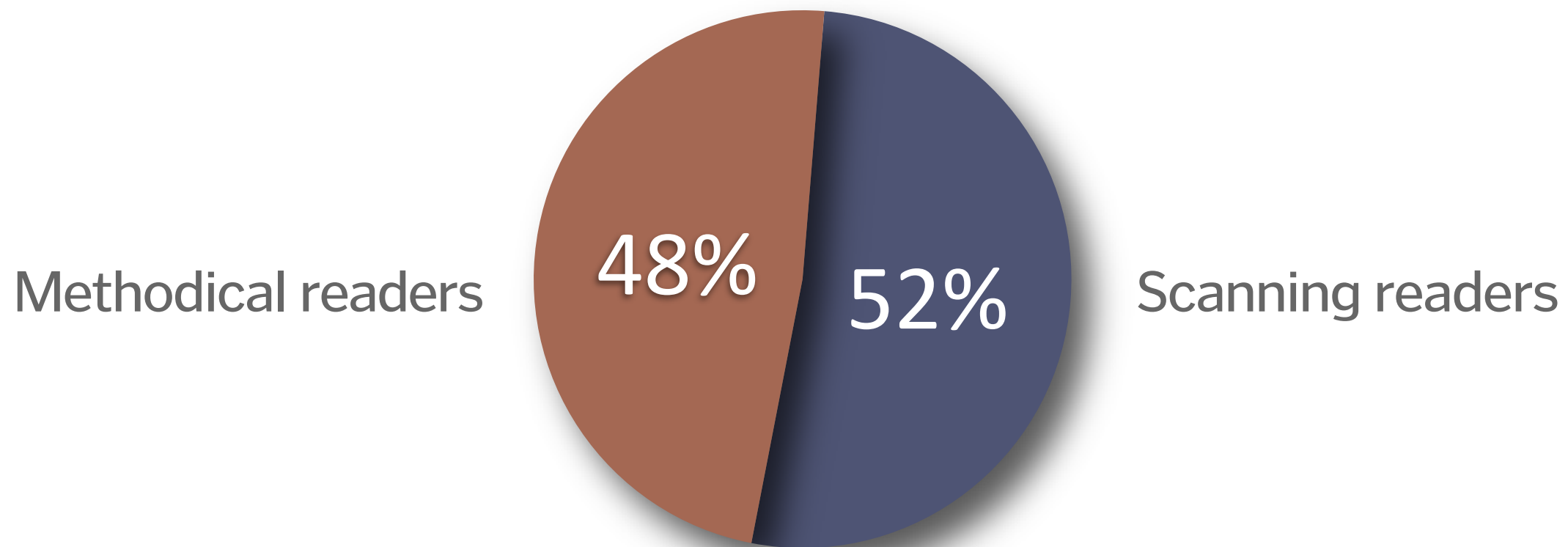
# This is how people read.





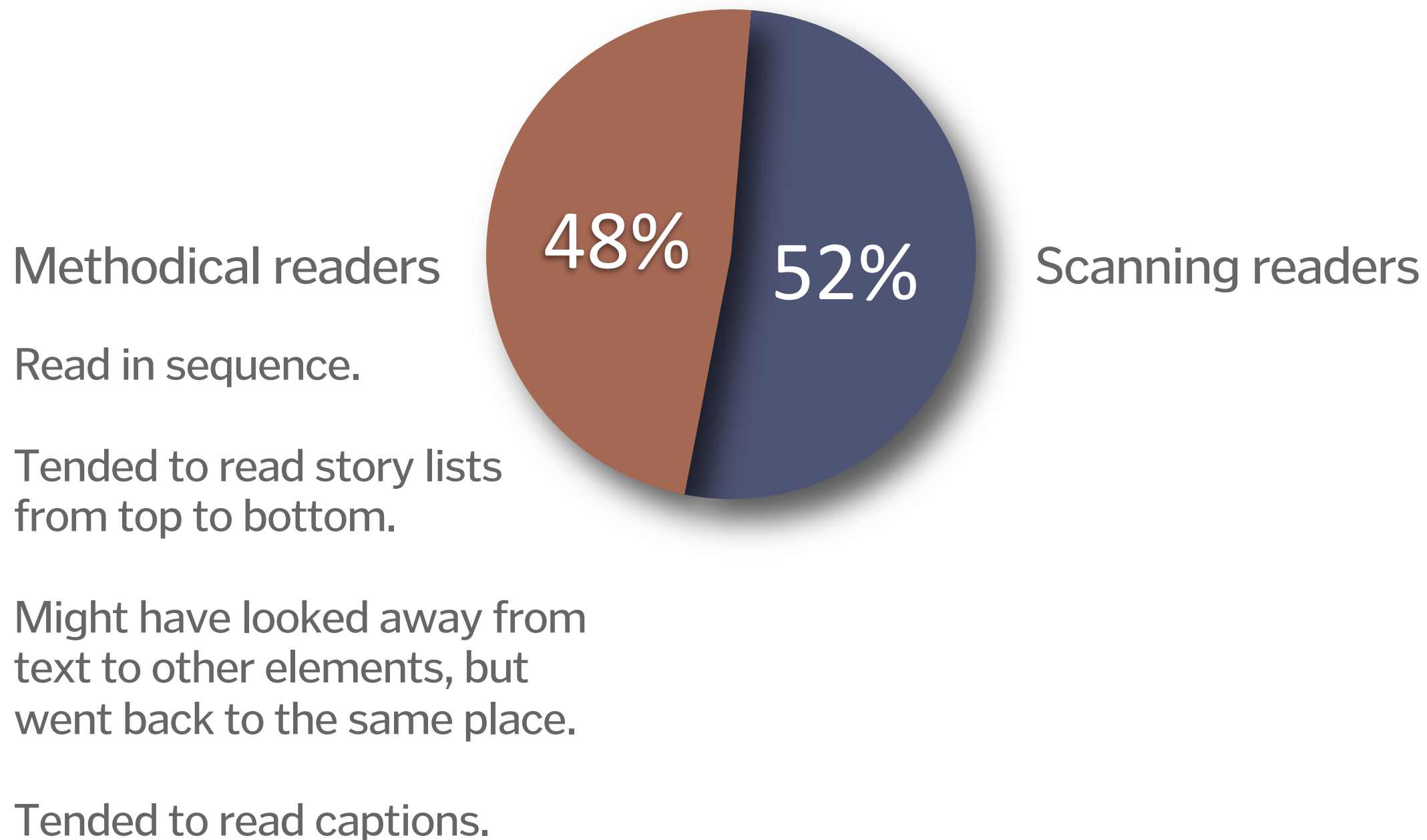
## THE BEHAVIORS:

About half of the people tested read methodically, while half read in a scanning manner.



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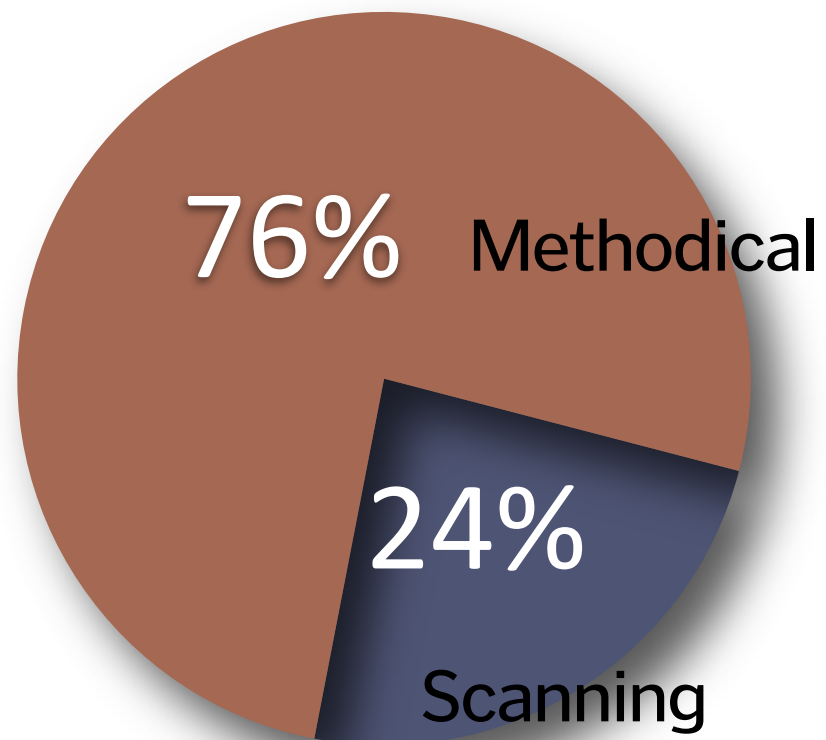




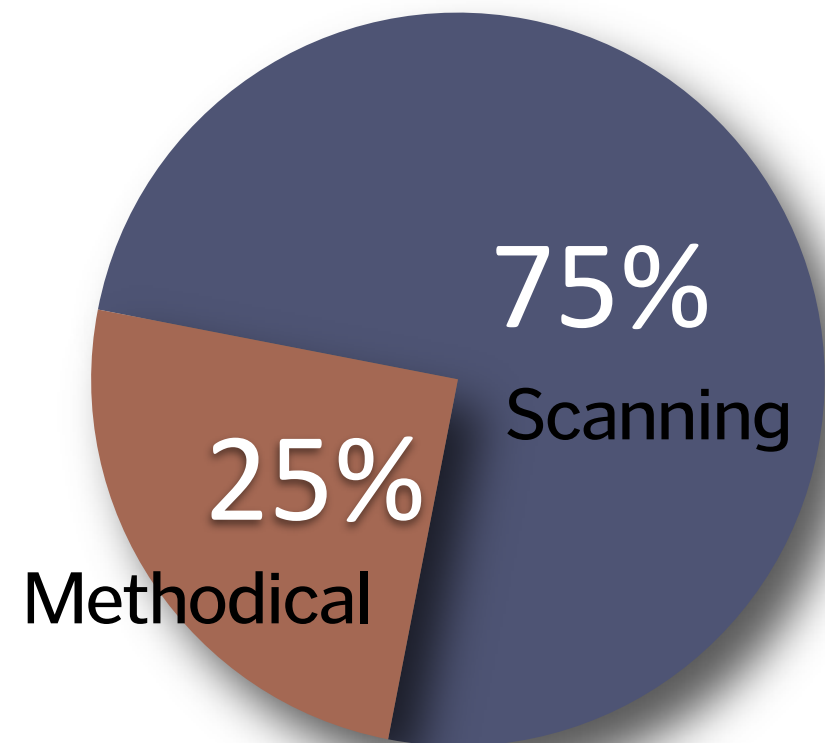
## THE BEHAVIORS:

About half of the people tested read methodically, while half read in a scanning manner.

Printnets  
45-55 years



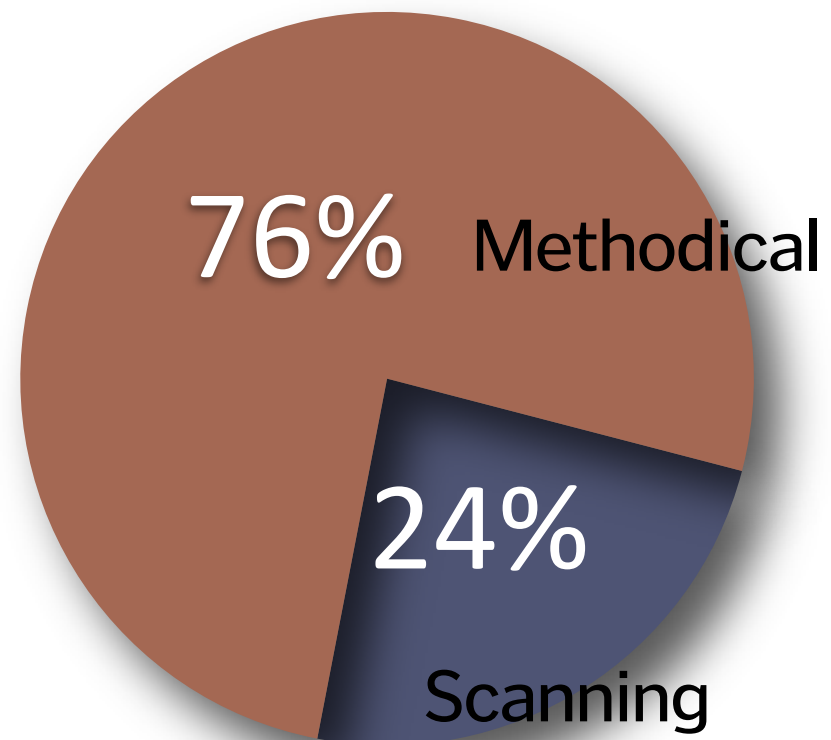
Digital Natives  
18-28 years



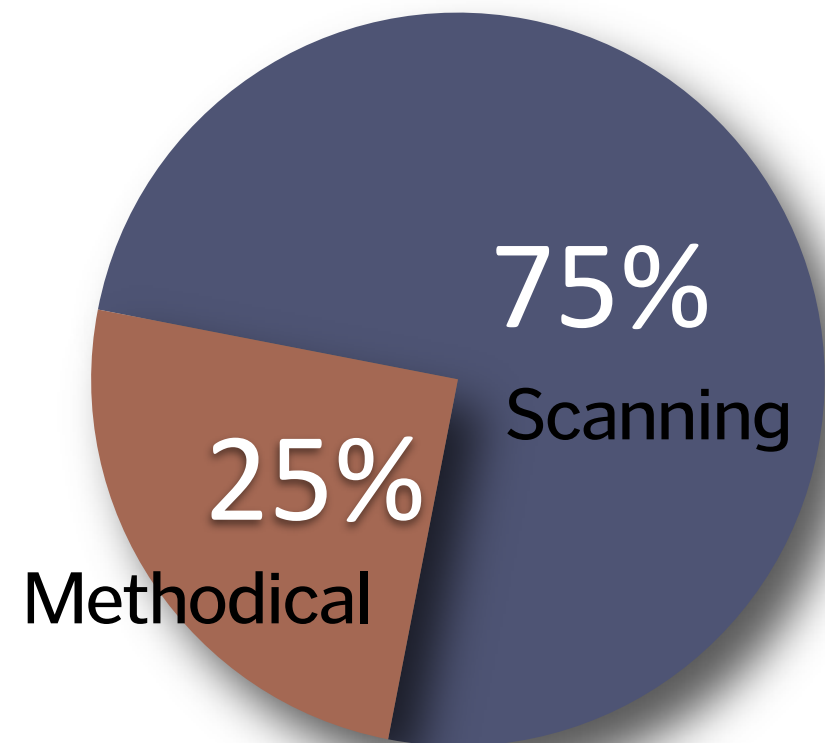
THE BEHAVIORS:

But ...

Printnets  
45-55 years



Digital Natives  
18-28 years



THE BEHAVIORS:

**Both age groups read deeply** when they found what they wanted.

Printnets  
45-55 years

Digital Natives  
18-28 years





THE BEHAVIORS:

This goes counter to the assumption  
that young people don't read.

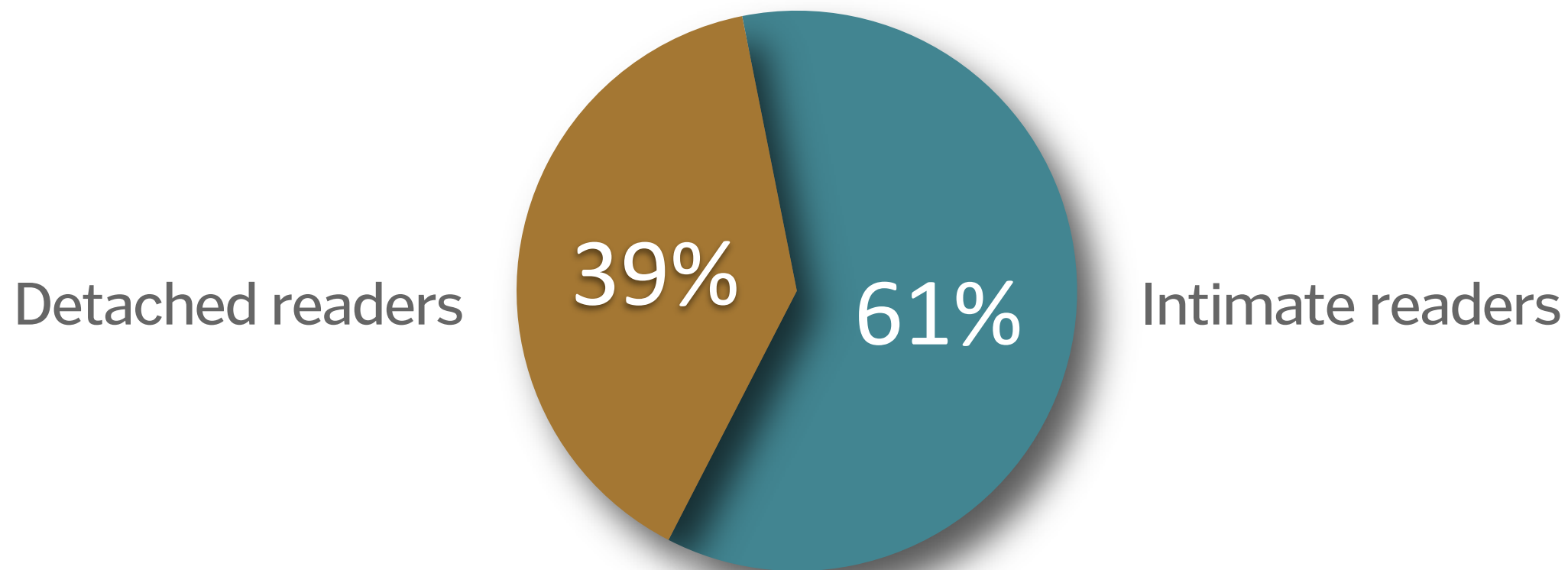
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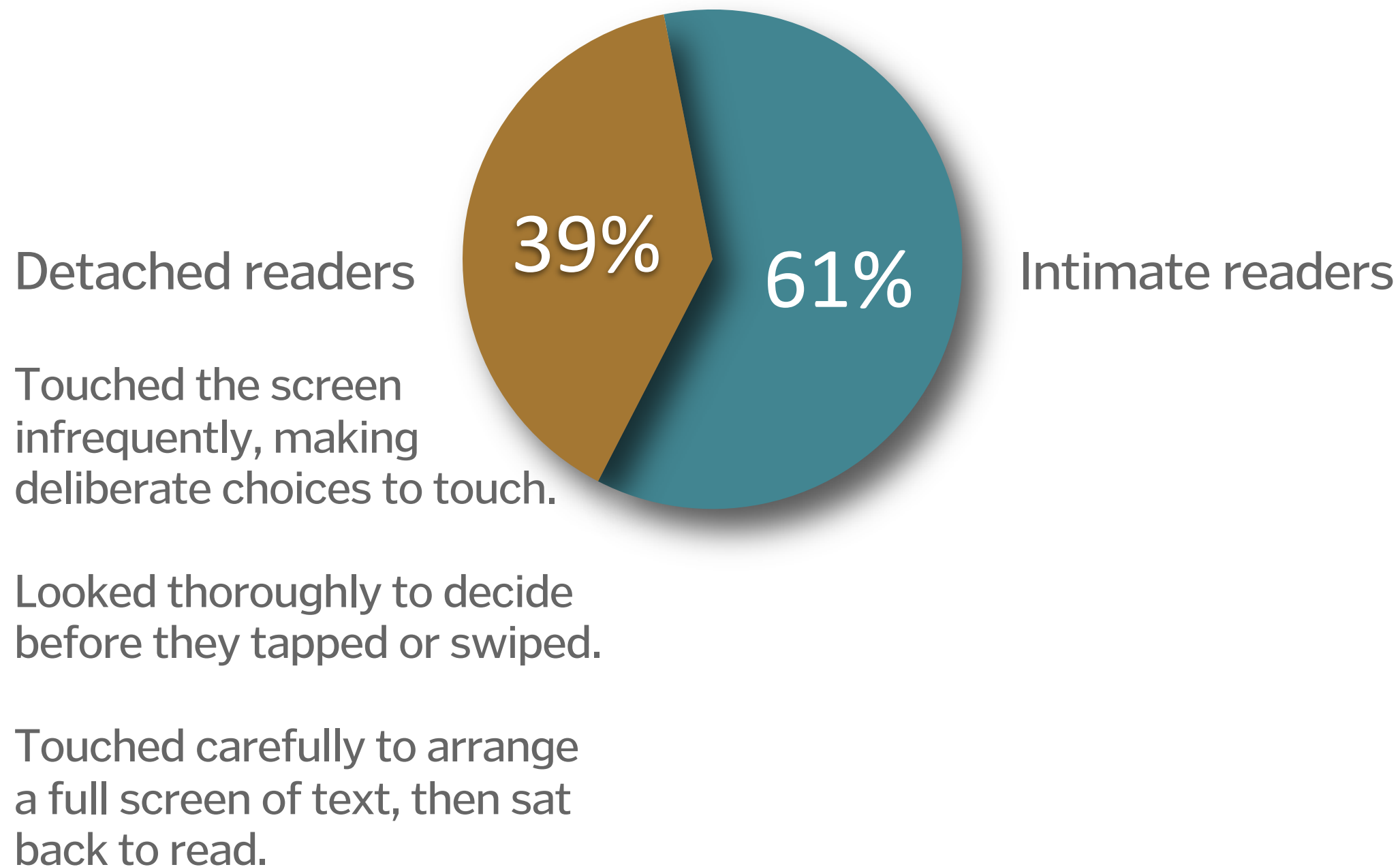
THE BEHAVIORS:

61 percent of readers touched the screen frequently.  
Others were more hands off.



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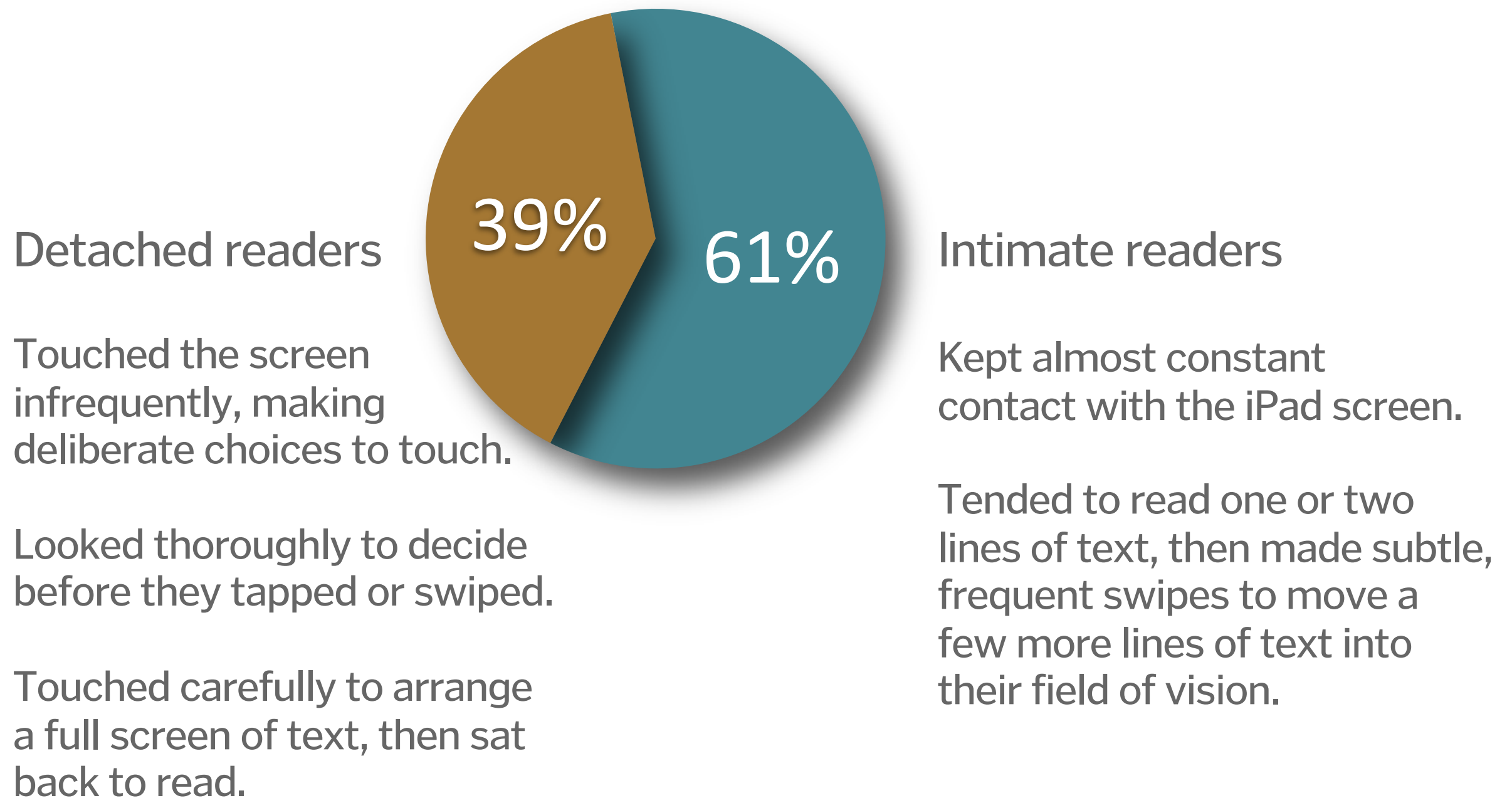
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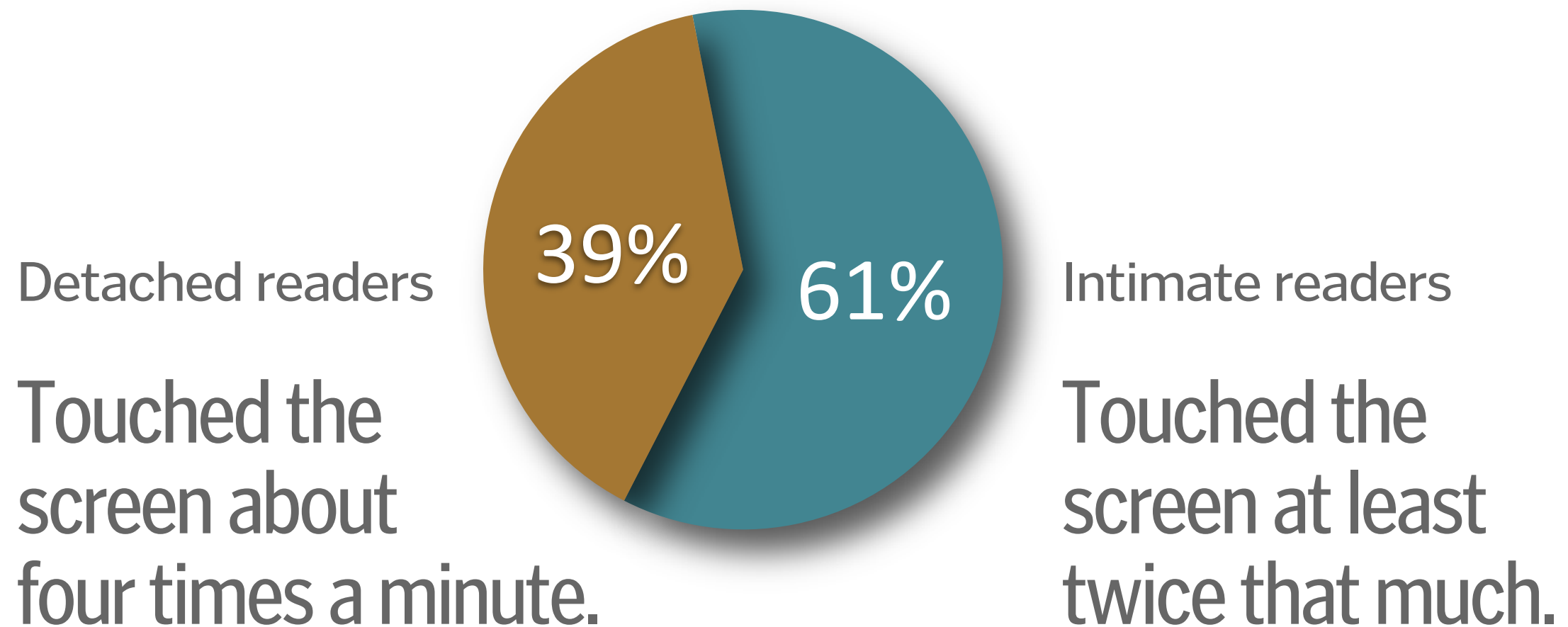
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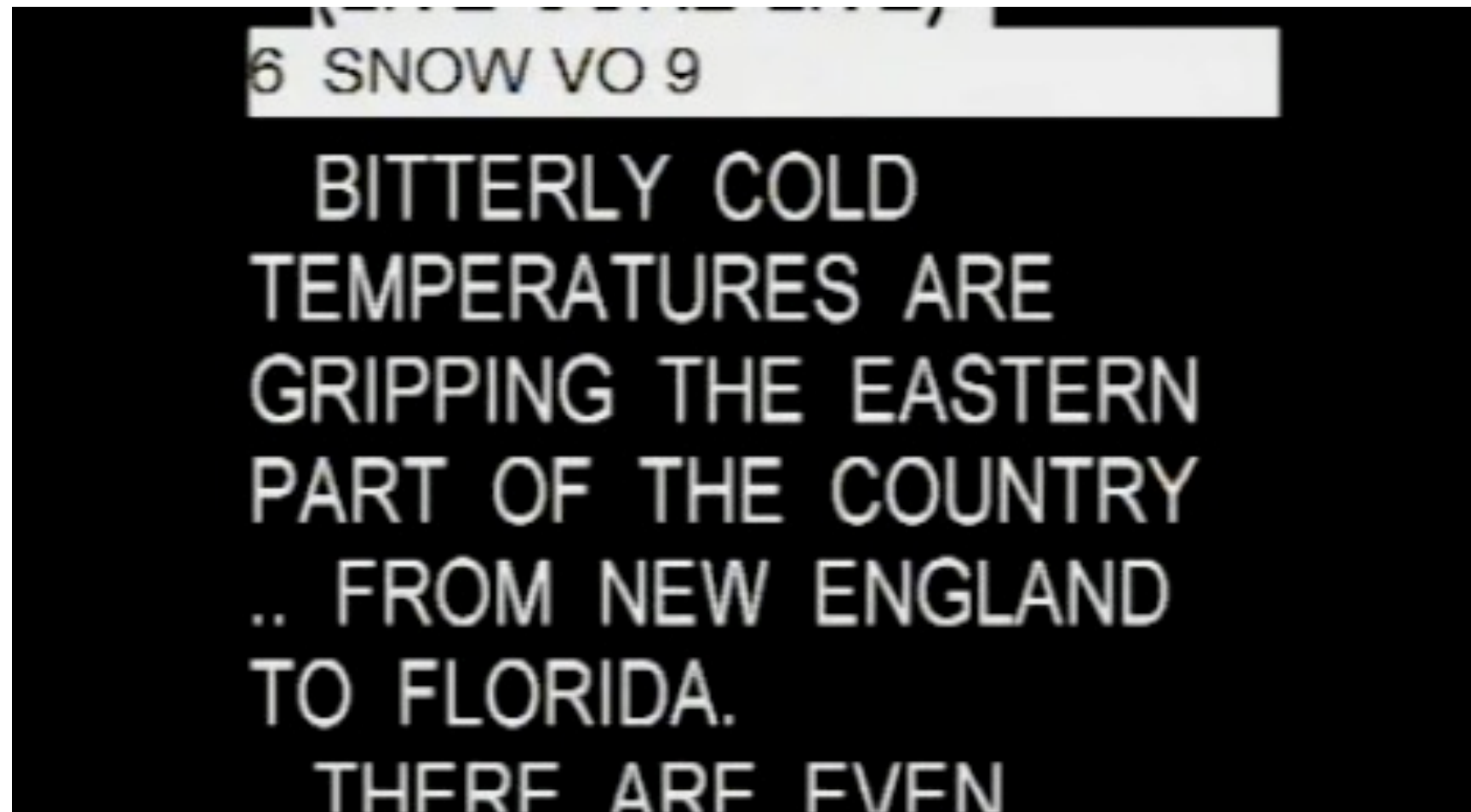
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## THE BEHAVIORS: INTIMATE READING BEHAVIOR

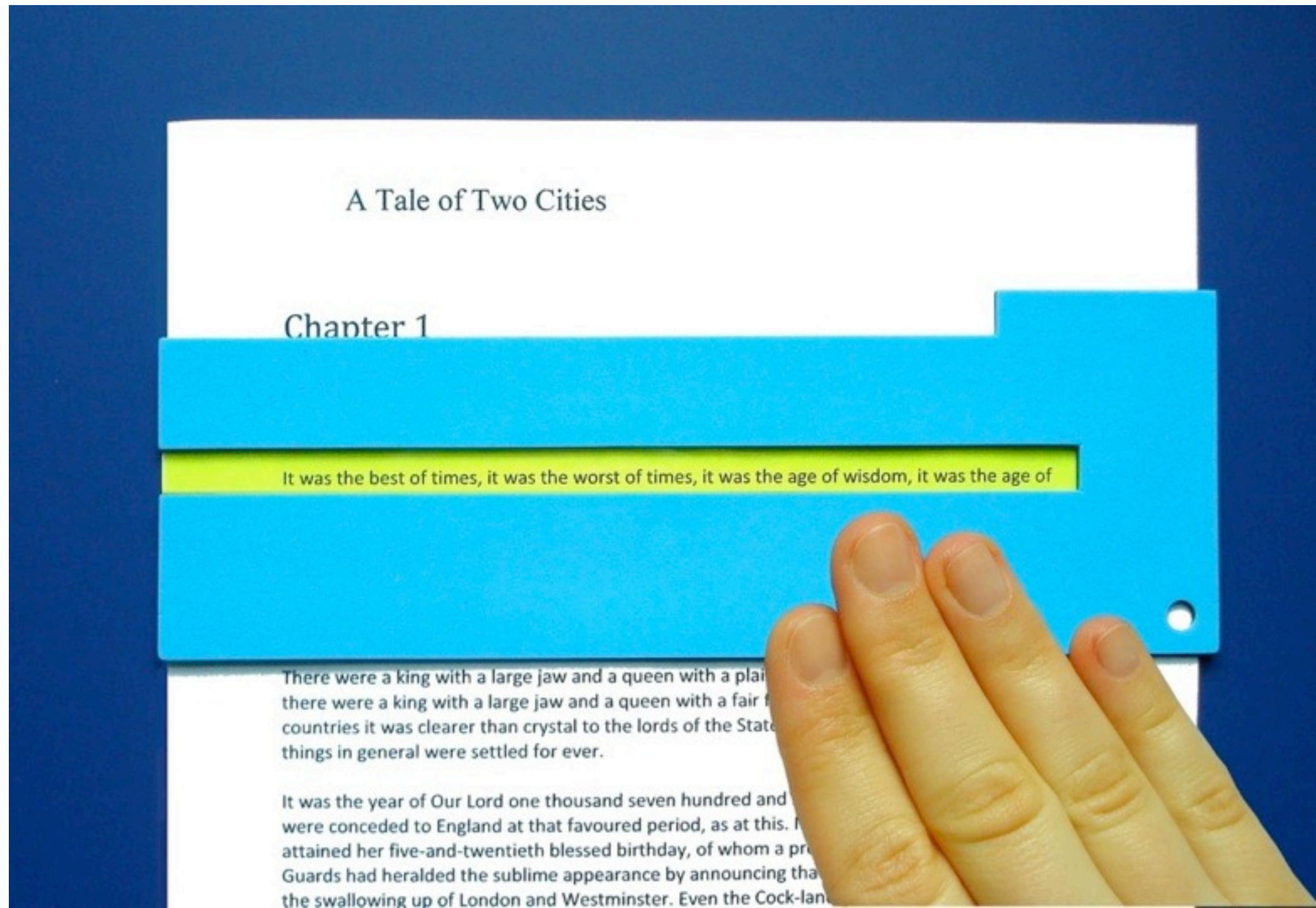
Intimate readers use their finger like a teleprompter.





## THE BEHAVIORS: INTIMATE READING BEHAVIOR

An analog tool helped people keep their place, a digital version might have a place in tablet design, too.



FINDINGS

Here's why this was  
worth your time.





WHAT THEY CHOSE TO READ:

# Tablet users have a high number of fixations before making a selection.





WHAT THEY CHOSE TO READ:

Often, they fixate on the same story multiple times before choosing it.



WHAT THEY CHOSE TO READ:

More fixations before a selection suggests the user is more likely to read to completion.



HOW THEY READ:

75-85 seconds was the critical  
**'bail out point.'**





HOW THEY READ:

75-85 seconds was the critical  
**'bail out point.'**

Give them a reason  
to keep reading.



HOW THEY READ:

Younger readers are more likely to be scanners.

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Younger readers are more likely to be scanners.

Older readers are more likely to be methodical.



HOW THEY READ:

Younger readers are more likely to be scanners.

Older readers are more likely to be methodical.

Both read deeply, when they find what they want.

# What's next?



# What's next?

Comprehension  
and retention





# What's next?

Comprehension  
and retention

Advertising  
and editorial



WORKING ON, RIGHT NOW:

# Comprehension and retention





WORKING ON, RIGHT NOW:

Do pop ups and tappable elements of surprise help people to understand and remember?





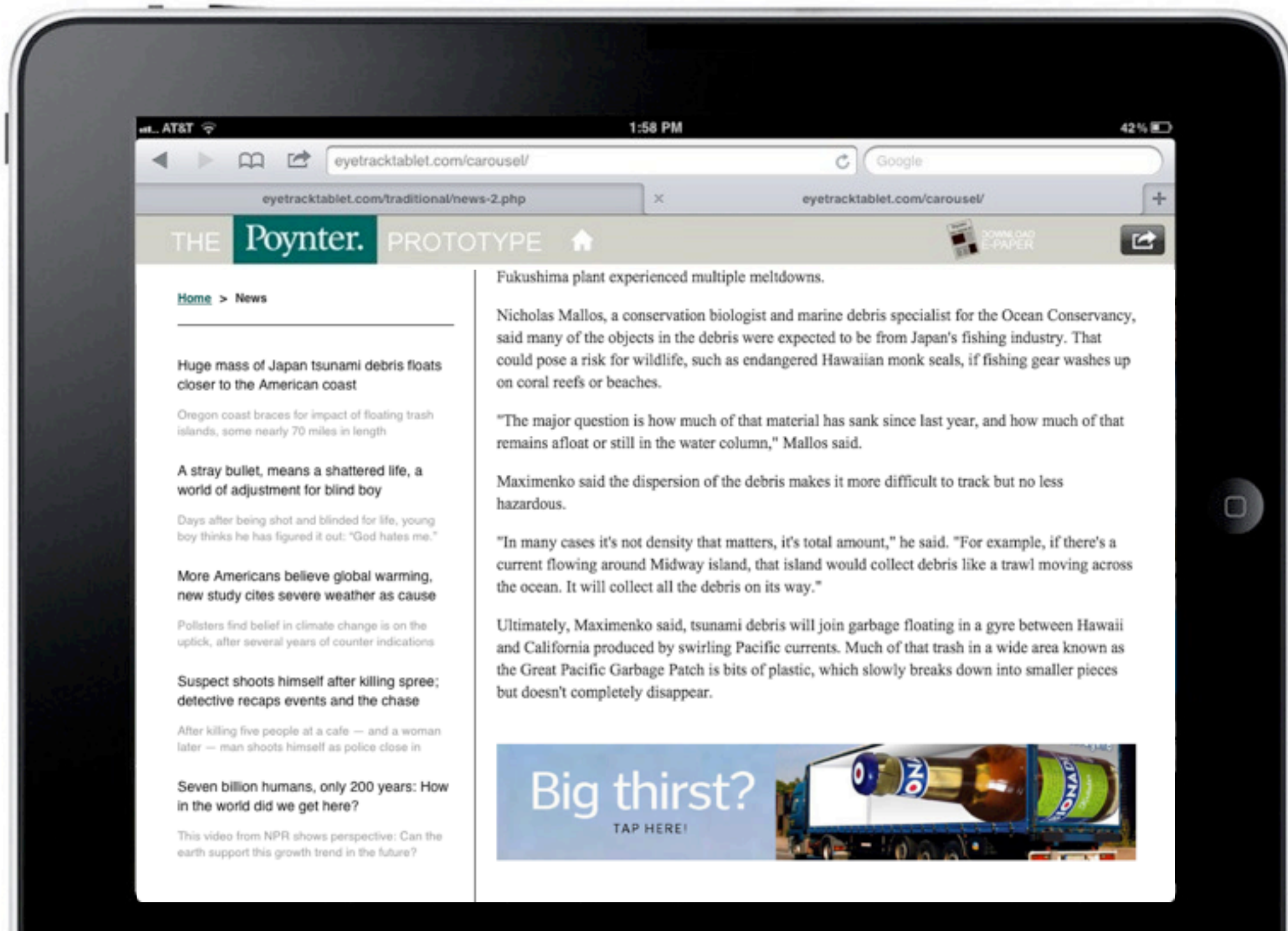
WORKING ON, RIGHT NOW:

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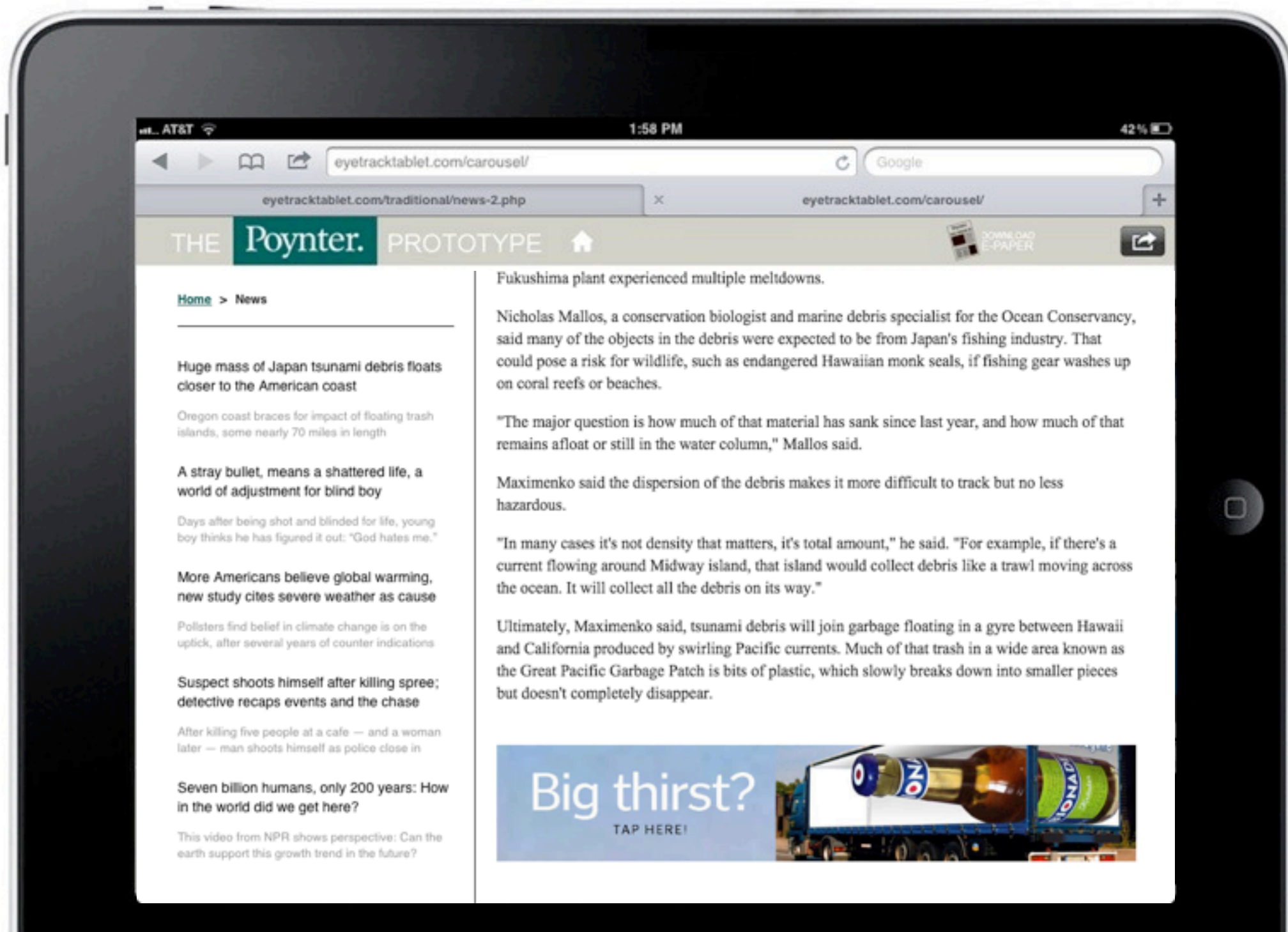
NEXT UP:

# Advertising and editorial



NEXT UP:

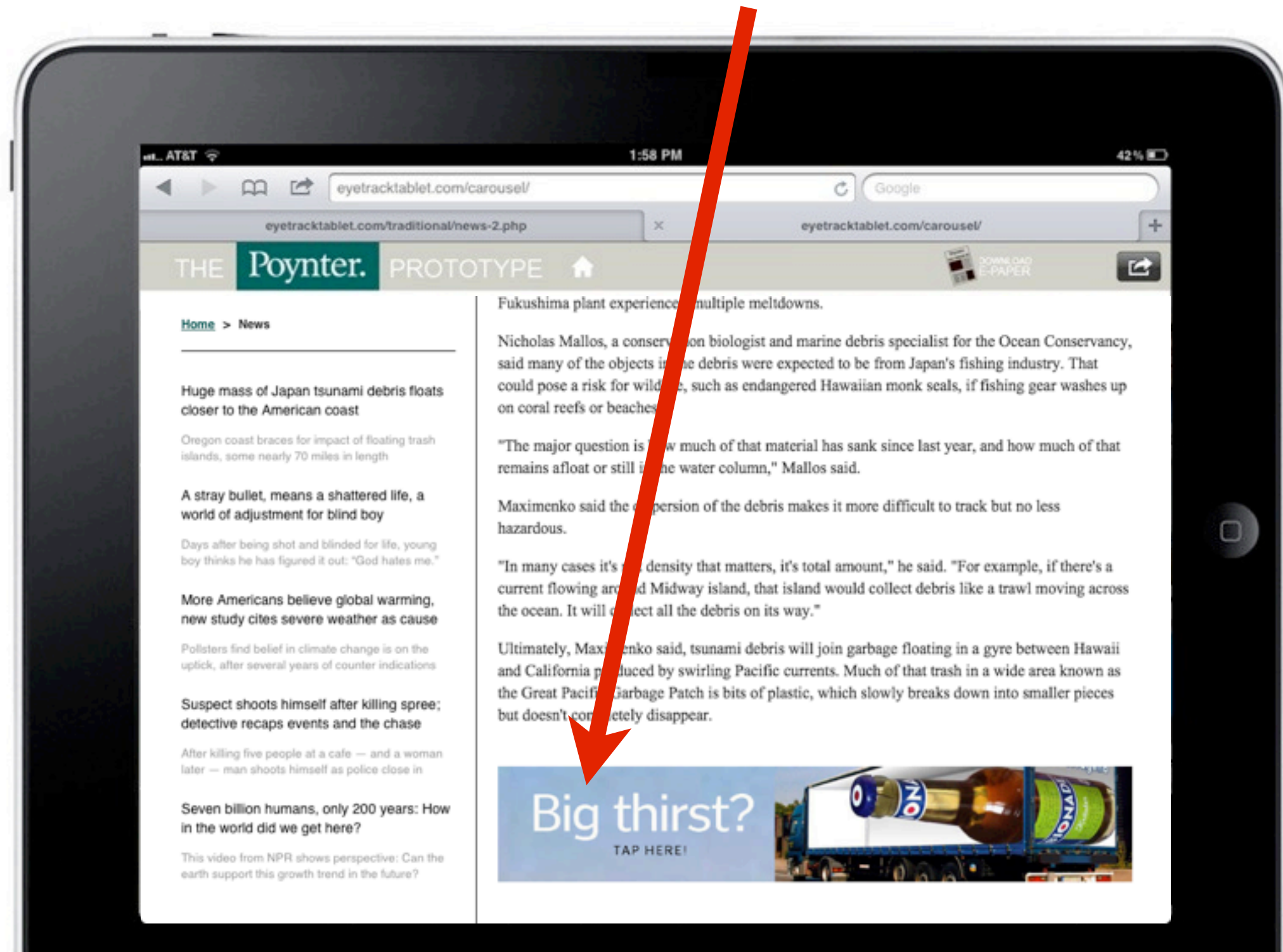
Few people tapped on banner ads.





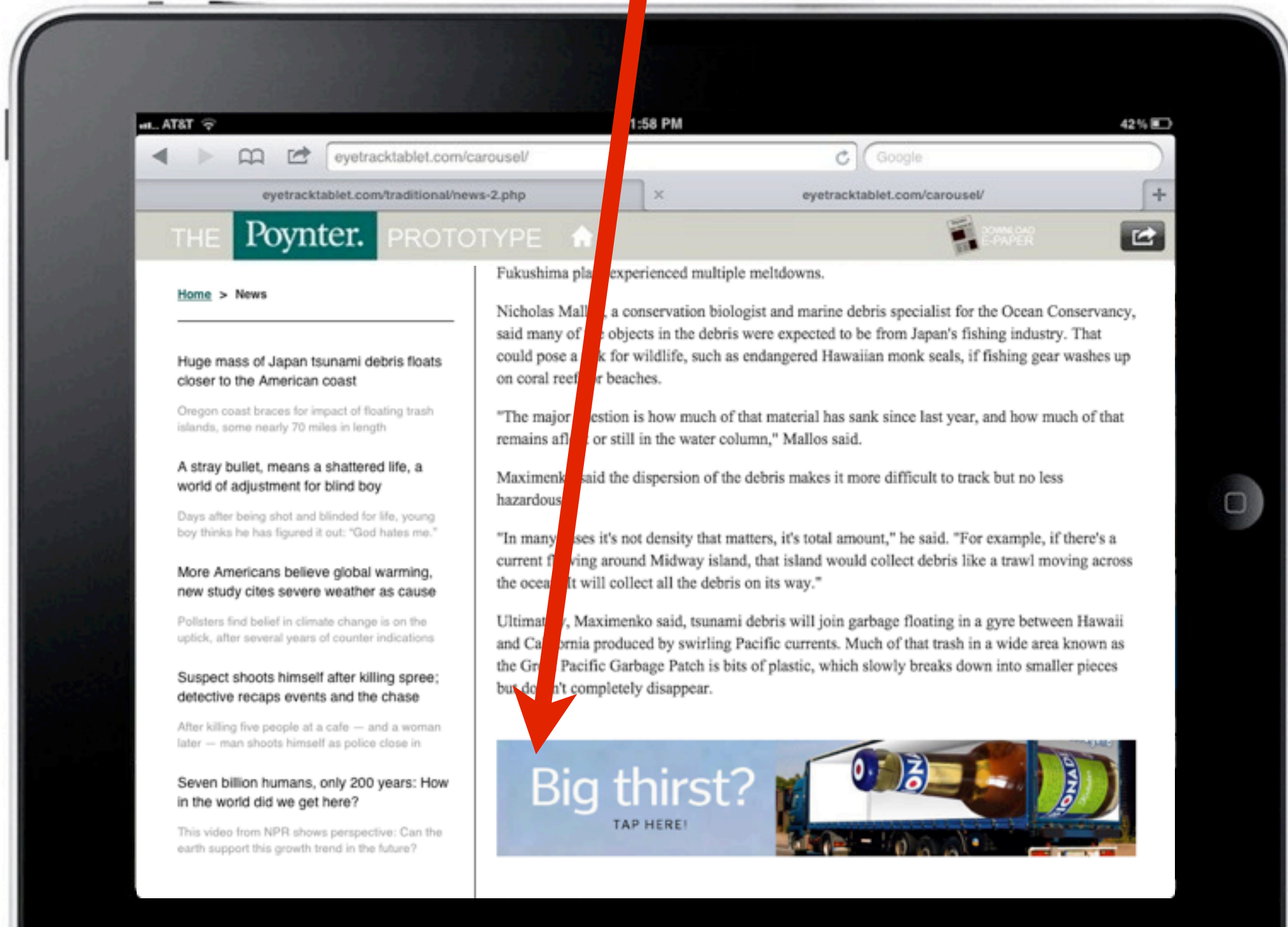
NEXT UP:

Few people tapped on banner ads.  
Even though ads were available on every story.



NEXT UP:

Each banner ad was tappable.





NEXT UP:

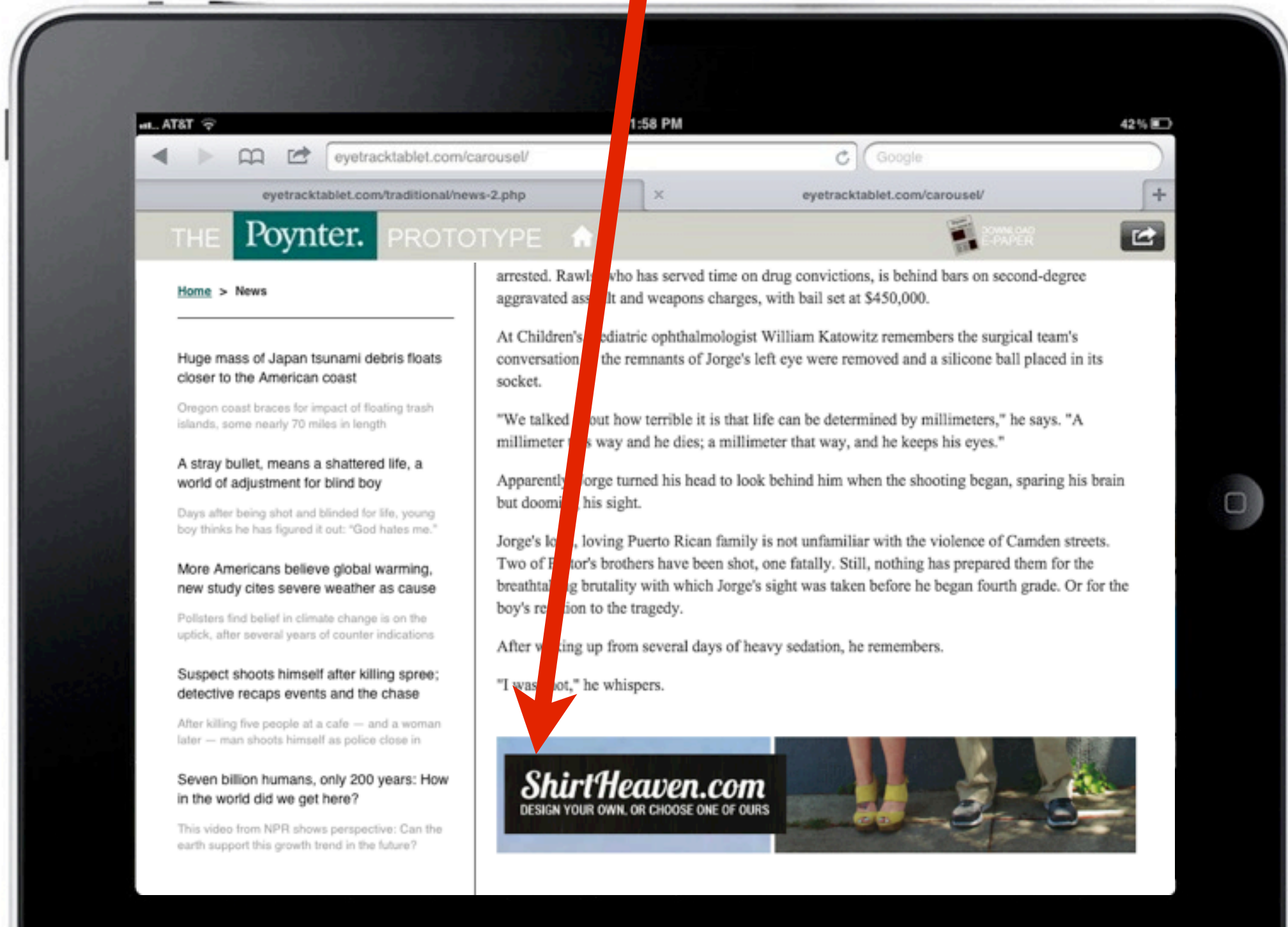
Each banner ad was tappable.





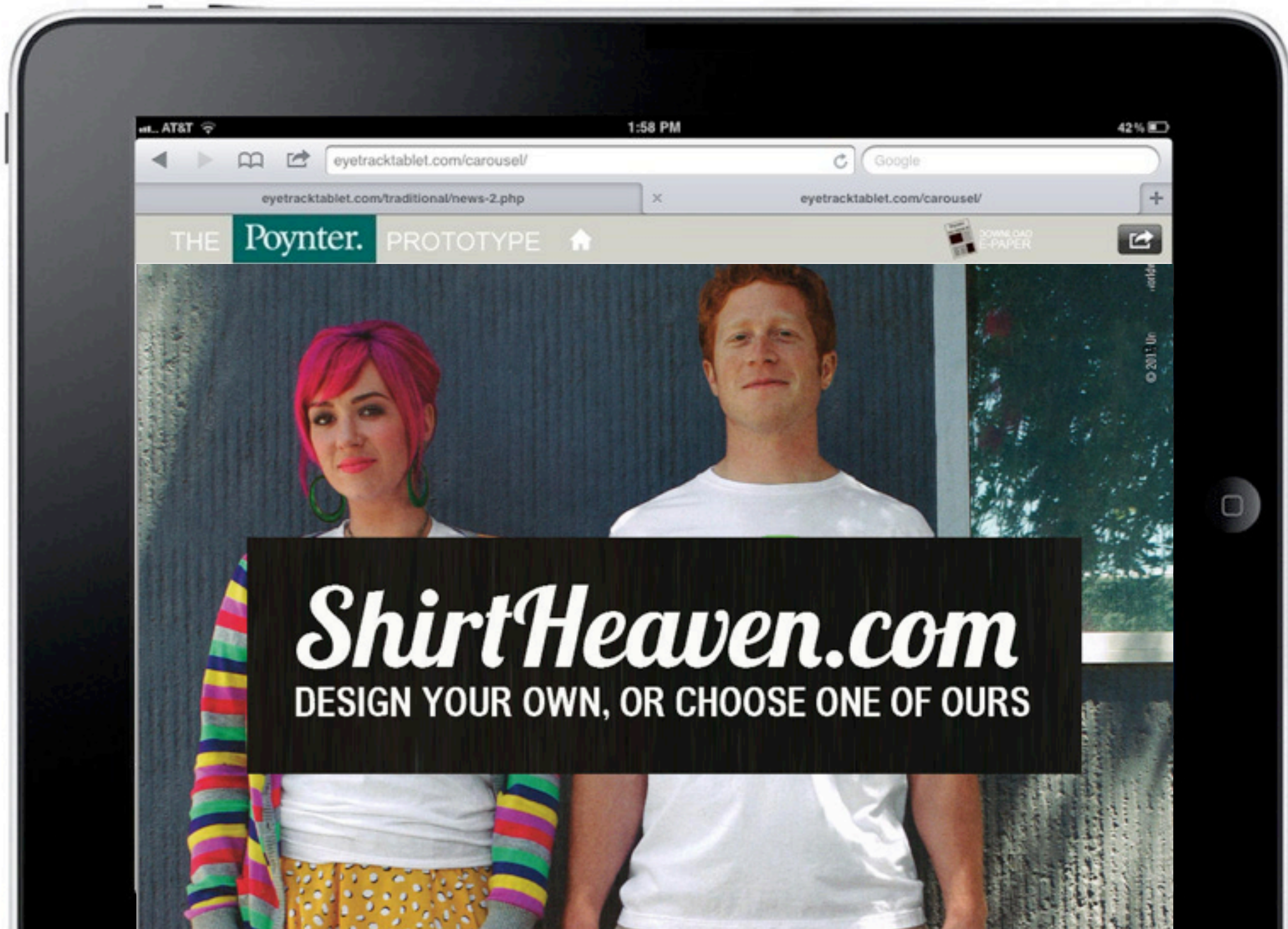
NEXT UP:

Each banner ad was tappable.



NEXT UP:

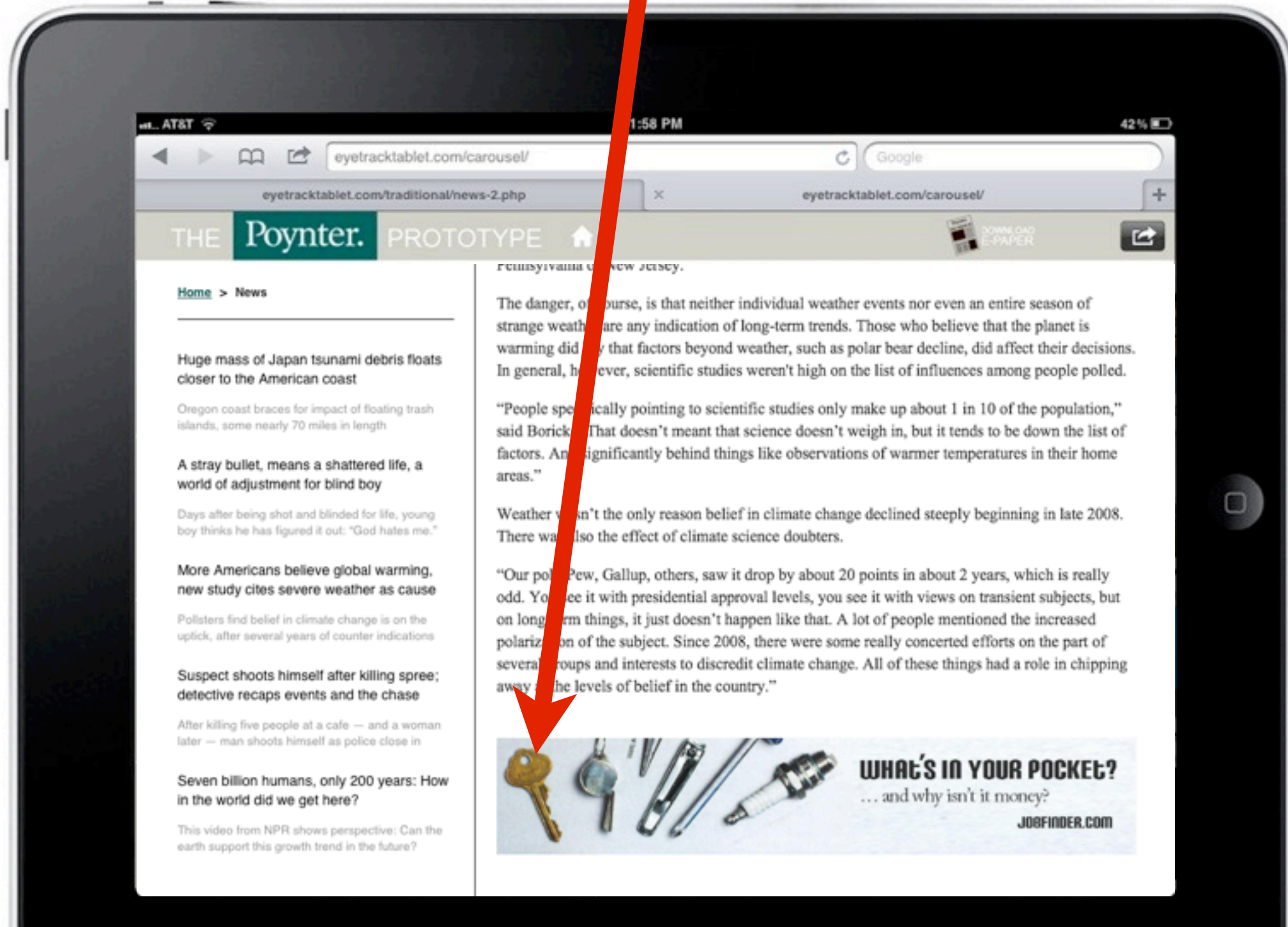
Each banner ad was tappable.





NEXT UP:

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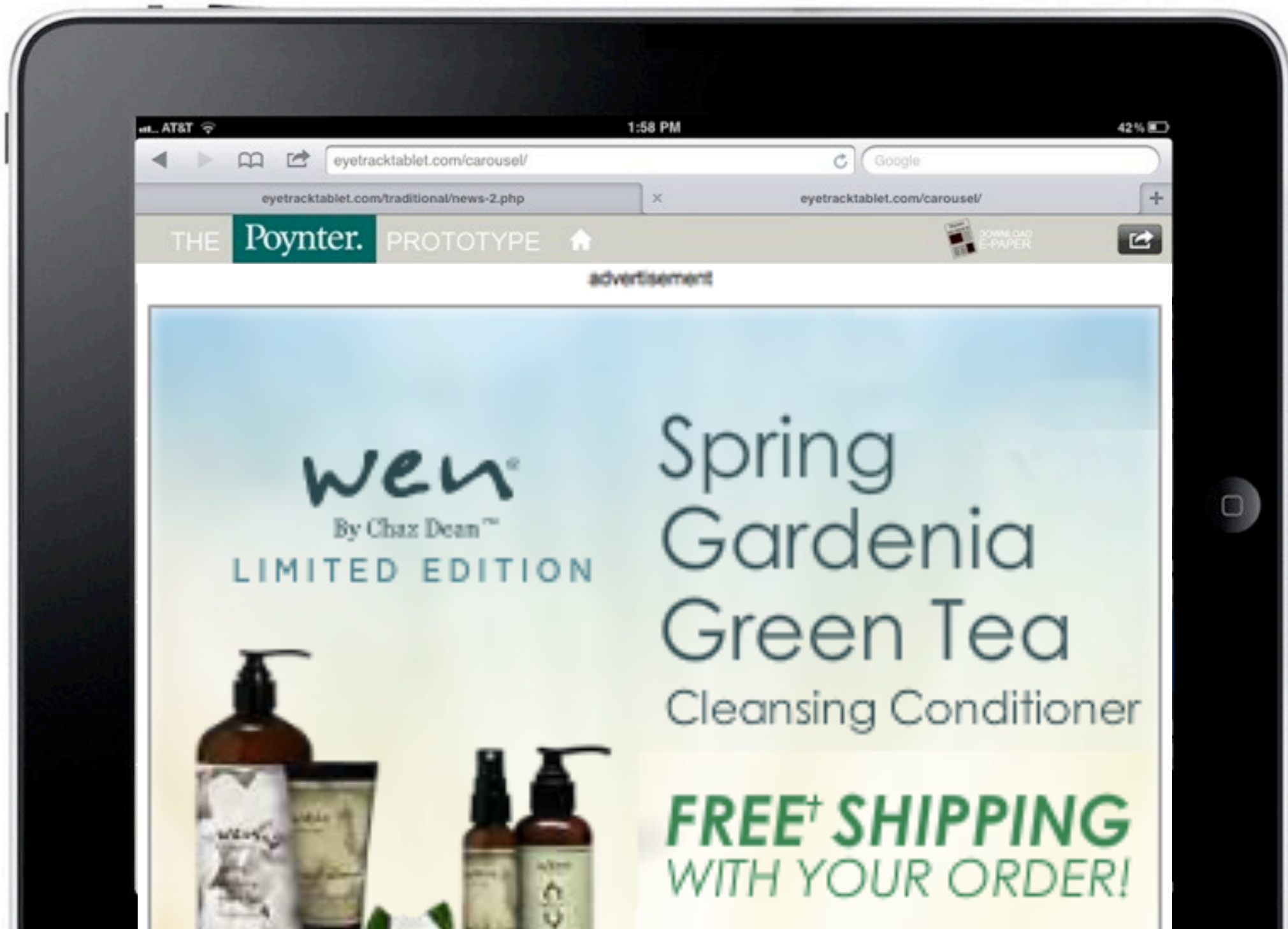
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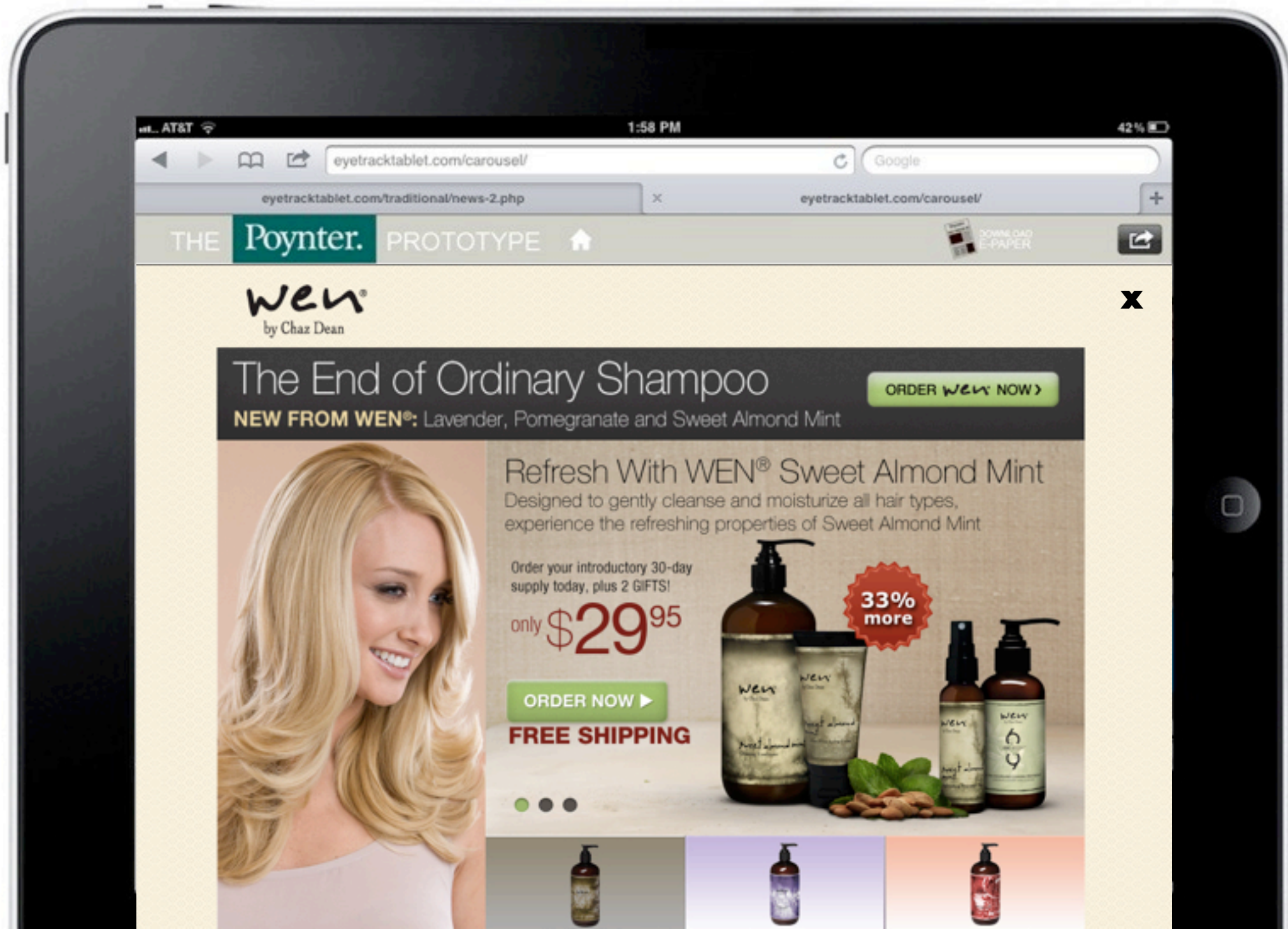
We plan to test interstitial ads that pop up between stories.





NEXT UP:

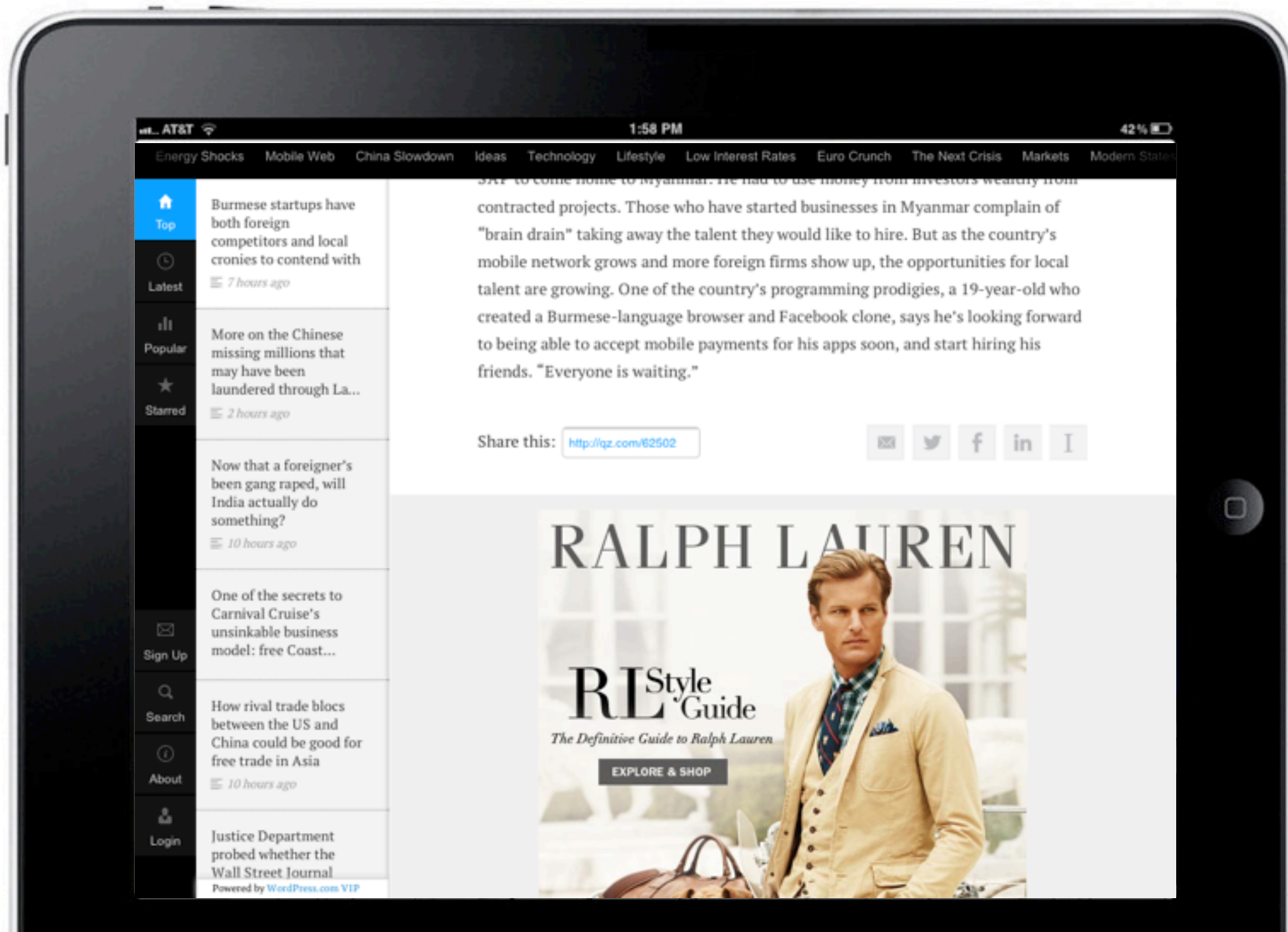
... perhaps ads in which a purchase can be made within the ad.





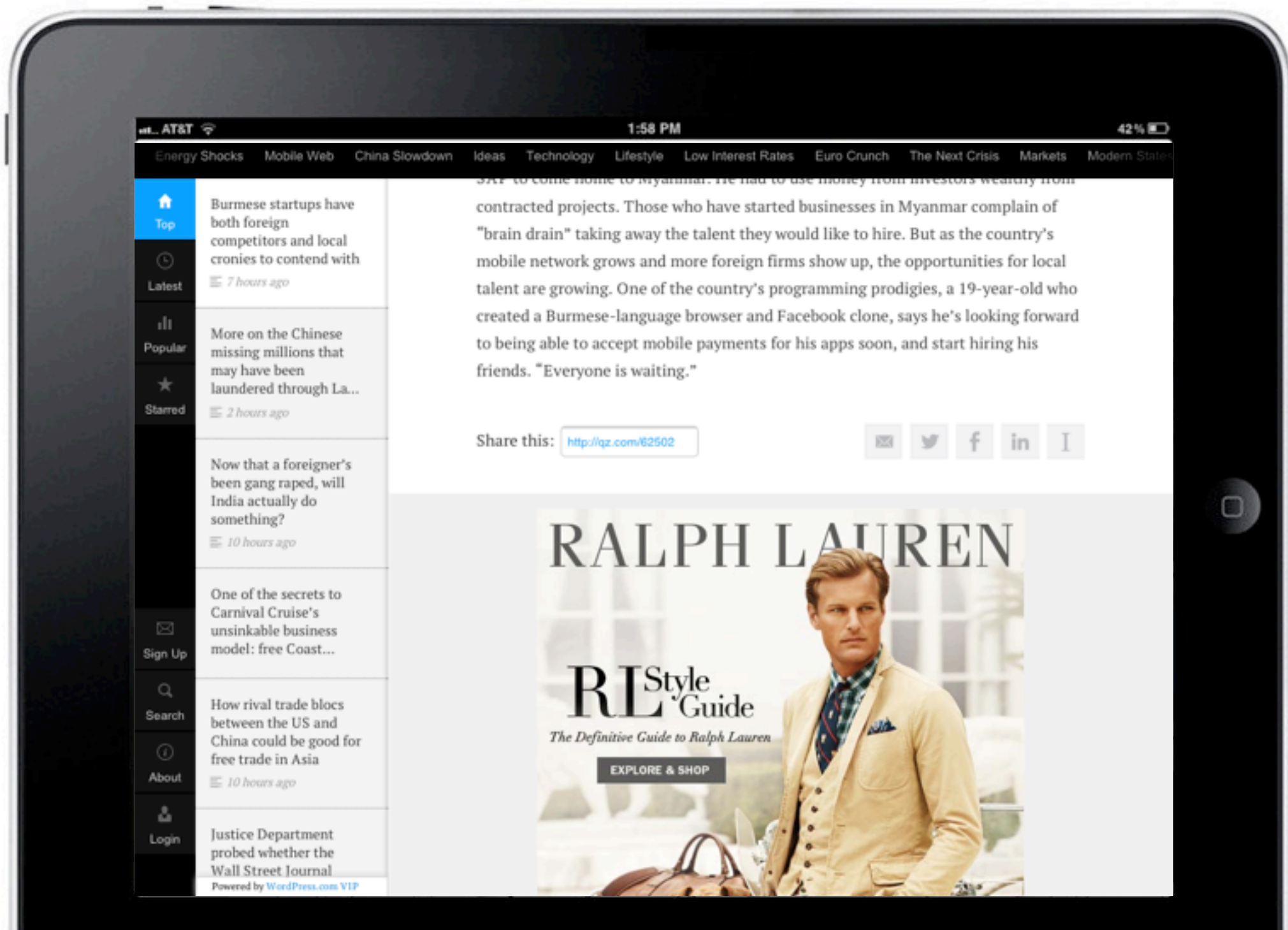
NEXT UP:

We'll test “in-stream branding”  
or sponsored content.



NEXT UP:

Sponsored content “ads” might follow the stories wherever they go.



NEXT UP:

We'd like to test whether game-ification of news (or ads) encourages times on site.





NEXT UP:

Challenges, news quizzes, contests.





NEXT UP:

What if ads tell stories—with pop up moments, games, in-ad shopping and such?





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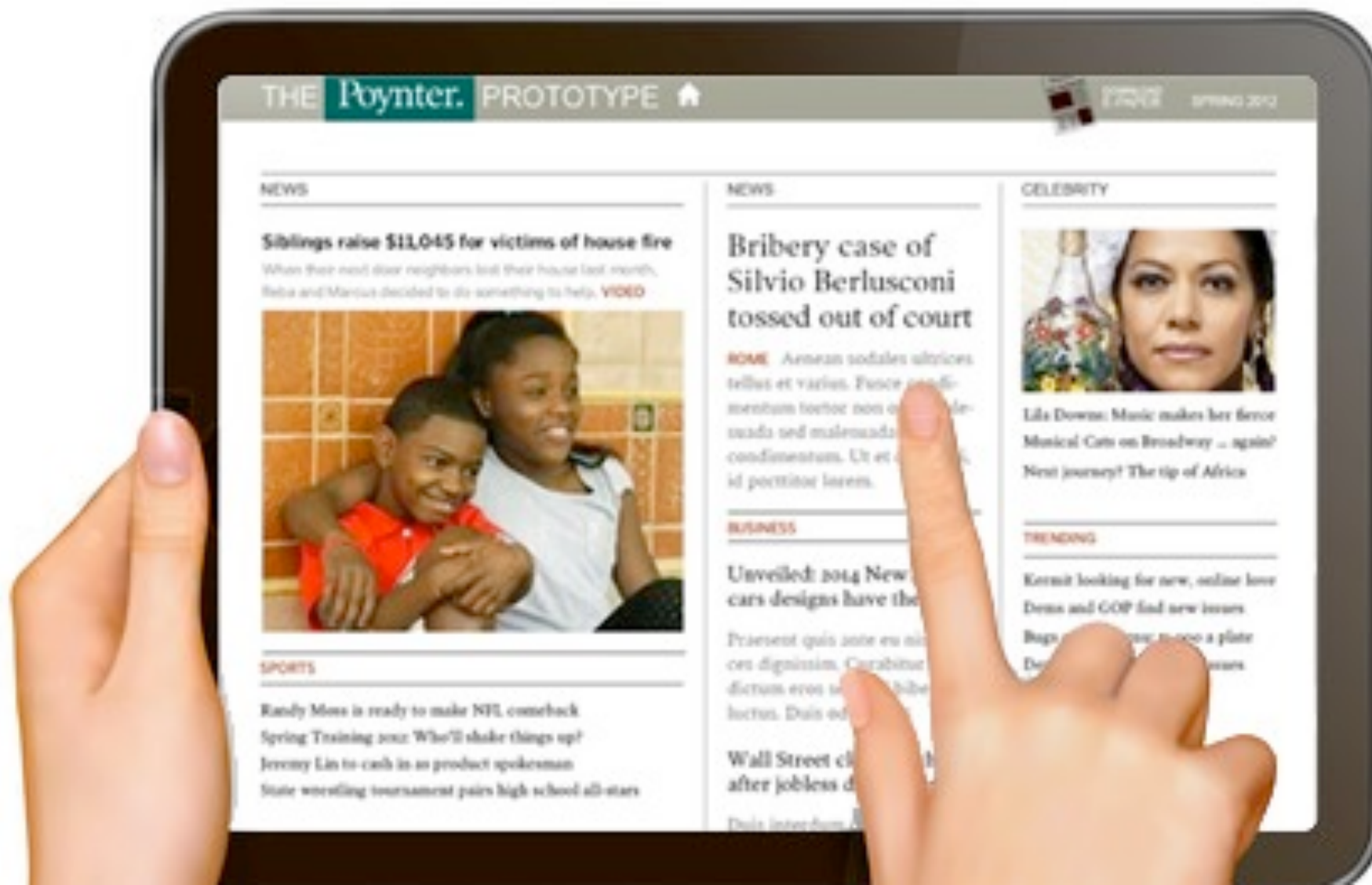
What if ads tell stories—with pop up moments, games, in-ad shopping and such?



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@gotoplanb — [davestanton.us@gmail.com](mailto:davestanton.us@gmail.com)

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