Objective
To analyze and compare the behavior of two web sites and to describe the tasks required to complete a goal, using these interfaces

Documentation
Journey Logs
Network Associates
Clicked virus information library button
Clicked “L”
Scrolled for Lirva
Typed in Lirva in textfield box
Clicked back button
Clicked on Search site text field box
Typed Lirva in text field box
No info was found

Symantec Security
Clicked search
Typed “Lirva” in text field box
Clicked on “Symantec Security Response – W32.Lirva”
Read through
Information on Lirva found

Task Analysis
See attached Task Flowcharts

Design and Behavior Analysis
The Symantec interface was much easier to use. The prominent main navigation buttons allow easy scanning.

Design Analysis
The Symantec interface utilized a three-column, three row layout. The most obvious difference from the Network Associates site is the use of color. The designers chose a yellow background with burgundy text for the home page. It is effective in grabbing the user’s attention. When a user clicks on a button such as “Purchase,” the interface changes completely. The designers have chosen to abandon the yellow background and instead opted for a white background. Yellow is used only as an accent color and font color defaults to black. The dull logo found on the home page also changes to a more glistening logo. The main navigation buttons that were originally located horizontally are now placed in a vertical, left-hand column.
These changes can mislead and confuse a user. Depending on which link a user clicks on and the information they are looking for, the interface can be either a solid white or a solid yellow background.

The Symantec website does exhibit some liquid behavior characteristics. The interface design is pixel-based. Depending on how a user resizes a browser window, information can be easily overlooked. However, the design does employ a few tables that are rule-based, but a majority of the interface design is pixel-based. It is not apparent that the interface is degradable and designed for variables. It is also not context-sensitive. It looks as if it would function across all platforms. Further, there are no alternatives for text. A quick look in the page code does not reveal any attempts to utilize a liquid design.

The Network Associates website exhibits some liquid behavior characteristics as well. The interface does not appear to be context-sensitive. It is not apparent that the interface is degradable and designed for variables. Like the Symantec website, it looks as if it would function across all platforms.

The design uses a two column, five row layout. Unlike the Symantec website, the color is consistent throughout. The logo and main navigation buttons are found in the exact same area on each page. However, there is a problem with the logo. When a user arrives to the Network Associates home page and clicks on a category such as “Virus Library,” the Network Associates logo changes to a McAfee Security logo. The layout and color scheme has not changed, yet there is no indication to the user that McAfee Security is related to Network Associates. If a user did not have previous knowledge that McAfee Security is a product of Network Associates, it could be easily mistaken the two websites, although similar, are not related.

The search function is difficult to locate on the Network Associates interface. Based on previous mental models of other websites, a user might expect to find the search function near the top of the page. Instead, on the home page, the designers placed the search function near the middle of the page. After typing a search term in the text field box, a user is expected to click on an unlabeled arrow to continue the search. A simple label on the search button would greatly aid users.

**Behavior Analysis**

The Network Associates website was used first to search for information regarding the Lirva virus. The interface gave the impression of a hierarchical organization. I clicked on “Virus Library” under “Virus Information.” After clicking on “L,” I scanned for the Lirva virus. I did not locate it, and I thought I had been too hasty on my initial scan. I resorted to using the search function on the page. However, there were no results found. I decided that Network Associates did not have any information regarding the Lirva virus.
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Task Comparison Analysis

Based on the usability of the Network Associates interface, I decided to alter my search method on the Symantec website. Instead of utilizing a top-down approach, I used the search function on the home page. With less effort on my part, Symantec returned information matches regarding the Lirva virus.

There was a correlation between the number of steps I had to complete and my impression of the site’s usability. The Network Associates website forced me through seven steps only to leave me disappointed. I could not meet my goal of finding out if Lirva could spread through my system via ICQ. Armed with this new knowledge, it affected how I searched the Symantec website. I did not want to waddle through the links; a direct search was far more effective.

Although Symantec found information regarding the Lirva virus, it also had much more text to read through compared with Network Associates.

Conclusion
I was able to achieve my goal of learning if the Lirva virus could spread to my system via ICQ through the aid of the Symantec website, which I preferred. I think the visual design and behavior design of a website are equally important. The visual design allows users to scan and find information quickly while the behavior of a website can determine likeability. If the behavior of the system aids the user is accomplishing their goal, it is likely the user will return to the website in the future.

Although both sites demonstrate some characteristics of liquid behavior, I would be hesitant to classify them as such. Both of the interfaces are primarily pixel-based.