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:
The two sites compared were:
Network Associates URL: http://www.nai.com
Symantec URL: http://www.symantec.com

Goal:
Find more information about the recent Lirva virus, and whether Lirva can spread to other systems via ICQ?

Network Associates site (Final destination)
The log of my journey at Network Associates site

1. I typed this site’s URL. The homepage look nice in design and the speed was pretty fast.
2. I scanned though page navigation. It was clean and I immediately saw “virus library” under virus information.
3. I clicked on it, and it brought me to virus information library.
4. The page displayed virus Alphabetically, I clicked “L” alphabet, and expected to find “Lirva” there.
5. I could not find “Lirva” under L alphabet, so I started to wander if it was listed on this website.
6. I decided to try W alphabet because I knew that “Lirva” virus was Win32 computer virus.
7. I clicked W, and it displayed the list of W virus. W32.Lirva.A@mm (Symantec) was listed
8. Goal
The log of my journey at Symantec site

1. I typed this URL site. The homepage looked nice in way it was designed.
2. I clicked the security response buttons in the middle of the page. I thought that it should guide me to get the virus information.
3. I clicked on the virus encyclopedia, but I couldn't find any information. I decided to go back to previous page.
4. The page had much more information. As I scrolled down the page, I expected to find more options that match my search.
5. I looked down right in the “removal tools” section. It showed me the lists of information and “W32.Lirva” was listed.
7. As I scanned through the page, the page displayed information on teaching people how to remove virus. I did find the link for W32.Lirva.A@mm
8. I clicked on it and got to W32.Lirva.A@mm page.
9. Goal
Task Analysis

Network Associates (Task Flowchart)
Design and Behavior Analysis:

**Design Analysis:**

**Comparison**

The similarities between these two interfaces:

According to the *Visual Design principle*, both of them use the same technique of proximity, alignment, repetition, text and the grid as a tool.

*Proximity*: both of interfaces arrange items in groups according to their logical associations.

*Alignment*: both of them use alignment technique to arrange components near to one another to imply relationships.

*Repetition*: both of them use the repetition of lines, design elements, and font size.

*The grids as a tool*: both of them show the balance and proportion of the whole page.

The differences between these two interfaces:

According to the *Visual Design principle*, both of them use the different technique of Layout and Color:

*Layout*: In terms of layout, both interfaces seem to follow a linear template. The Network Associates site is arranged in columns while the Symantec uses layout by having the visual picture and text information on the screen and the control buttons on the top of the page to control interface.

*Color*: Network Associates site is consistent with the use of their colors of black and red. The Symantec site uses multiple colors such as black, yellow, and red though out the page.

A liquid page is one in which the page elements will flow into whatever size screen audience is using. When People are using different screen sizes and viewing area, liquid design can help the page look good on all sizes and viewing areas. It is important to design liquid pages for the site. When I try to resize my browser window from both sites, the Network Associates site exhibits liquidity to a certain degree. The top portion holds the important attributes of the site. Navigation options are still visible. The site is still functional if the window is resized to only the top portion. In contrast, the Symantec site does not conform
when the window is resized to anything smaller than 800x600 resolutions. It is static, but degradable.

Those two sites’ differences in visual design affect my completion of the tasks. I liked using Network Associates site better because it has liquid design and I often use smaller windows on my 19-inch monitor. However, Symantec does not provide me with flexibility to adjust window size.

**Behavior Analysis:**

Based on my observation, I think that the Network Associates site seems easier to use because I do not need to take extra steps to achieve my goal. From the Network Associates main page my attention was pulled to the virus information, which listed virus library. It brought me to virus information library which I can find viruses based on Alphabet. On the other hand, from Symantec main page, I could not locate where the virus information are in first place. I was expecting they have the lists of task named “virus information” where I can click. However, I could not find the information until I clicked “Security response USA”. I clicked on the “Expanded Threat List and Virus Encyclopedia” hyperlink, which is listed under latest virus treat task. I was still unable to find it until I went back to the previous page, and tried to scroll down the page. I saw W32.Lirva located as part of the removal tool. I clicked on it and it brought me to the description of removal method. Finally I was able to find the Lirva virus information.

In my opinion, there are a correlation between the number of tasks I have to complete and my impression of the site’s usability. If I want to find the information from site, it’s common that I will go to the site that it’s easier to use and help me to achieve my goal easily. I would rather see usable navigation information architect instead of interface design.

From Network Associates site, I just completed 3 steps and I could achieve my goal of getting more information about the recent Lirva virus from this site. The interface behaves as I expected even though I got confused on where I should go, but it is not too difficult to find the way. In contrast, the Symantec site requires additional two steps to achieve my goal. I think that the task name they used is a bit complicated for user to use and understand, especially people who are not familiar with those technical words. For instance, they used “Security Response” instead of “Virus information”. I don't think that the interface behaves as I expected from this site because additional steps are required compared to Network Associates.

**Comparing the tasks to compete a goal**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Network Associates</th>
<th>Symantec</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Click Virus Library</td>
<td>1. Click Security Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Click Alphabet “L”, couldn’t find information</td>
<td>2. Click virus encyclopedia, couldn’t find information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Click alphabet “W”</td>
<td>3. Click W32.Lirva (under remove tool)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<<<Goal>>> 4. The page showed the description of the removal page and link of W32.Lirva

5. Click W32.Lirva

<<<Goal>>>
Conclusion:

Based on my observations, Network Associates and Symantec offer almost the same functionality, but because of their different ways of displaying information and task name, one appears to be more user-friendly. Presentation is not the only determining factor that can affect the interaction and ease of use. Network Associates behavior is also more flexible, giving it an edge over the more static Symantec.