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**WHAT IS VISUAL PERCEPTION?**  
Visual perception is the ability to interpret the surrounding environment using light in the visible spectrum reflected by the objects in the environment. The resulting perception is also known as visual perception, eyesight, sight, or vision  
Without visual perception, you would not be able to make sense of the words on a page, recognize common objects, or have the eye-hand coordination required for many daily tasks. One of the most common examples of visual perception's importance in cognitive processes is reading.  
  
 **THREE FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH VISUAL PERCEPTION**

1. Psychological factors  
   Physiological factors involve the ways in which our eyes, nervous system and brain process visual information. It also involves mental processes such as our past experiences, socio-cultural background, memory, thinking, language, motivations, emotions.

Examples:

* Mouse keyboard movement (affects choice of which controls operate which actions of the system)
* Time taken to move to a target on screen.
* Careful arrangement of menu-items so that frequent choices are placed first
* Disabilities: Designers must design so that disabled users can achieve maximum functionality and usability from computer systems e.g. Java Accessibility API allows keyboard navigation (full mouse less controls).
* Also devices to assist disabled users:
* Speech input and output systems (useful for blind people and those with severe motor impairment)

1. Perceptual set: Readiness to perceive something in accordance with what we expect it to be.  
   Our expectations of what an object or event will be make us more likely to interpret the object or event in the predetermined way.  
   Things that influence perceptual set?  
   context, motivation, emotional state, culture and past experience.

* Context:  
  refers to the setting or environment in which a perception is made. When organising and interpreting visual information, we take account of the setting and pay more attention to those aspects of the setting that are immediately relevant.
* Motivation:  
  refers to processes within us which activate behavior that is directed towards achieving a particular goal.
* Emotional State: .  
  can also influence the way in which we perceive visual information. Different emotions can 'set' us to perceive information in a particular way which is consistent with the emotion being experienced
* Past Experience:  
  refers to our personal experiences throughout our lives. This includes everything we learn through experience, both intentionally and unintentionally.
* Culture:  
  refers to the way of life of a particular community or group that sets it apart from other communities and groups.

1. Cognition  
    The processes by which we become acquainted with things, how we gain knowledge.  
   Involves understanding, remembering, reasoning, attending, awareness, acquiring skills, creating new ideas.  
   The HCI objective is to understand the interaction between humans and computers in terms of how knowledge is transmitted between the two. Cognitive psychology underpins this understanding.

* Focused attention
* our ability to concentrate on one event from a mass of competing stimuli
* Divided attention
* attending to more than one thing at a time
* Interface designers need to focus attention on the right place: –
* Task for which it is being used
* Form of the representation(icon?)