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Think TabNav Design Project:
Design Validation Report

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Background – TabNav Project Design Exploration & Validation

- **Scope, participants, and general method**
  - ibm.com V13 tab navigation for PCD 'shop'/'learn' integration
  - Brand-level and series-level page re-designs per WW Brand design requirements
  - LE & SMB purchase decision-makers/influencers (total number = 53)
  - Two rounds of usability design walkthroughs to elicit user feedback, conducted in the IBM Decision-Support Center (DSC)
- **Round 1 – Design exploration (report available on request)**
  - Two sessions completed Oct 2003 – 13 SMB, 13 LE
  - Purpose – Explore design alternatives, including content adjustments, to drive design decisions; resulting design then validated in second round of testing
  - Procedure – Design concept exploration and comparisons of design alternatives
- **Round 2 – Design validation (subject of this report)**
  - Two sessions completed Nov 2003 – 13 SMB, 14 LE
  - Purpose – Validate near-final design and content (based on design exploration results), with time to adjust based on feedback prior to delivery to eDevs team
  - Procedure – Scenario-based design walkthrough, navigation and page re-designs compared to current site design
- **Note:** Complete reports for both rounds, including all participants' typed-in comments and summary statistics for all ratings, are available on request.

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Executive Summary – Design Validation Study Results

- **New overall site structure & tab navigation vs. current design**
  - Overall and at the Personal Computing level, tabs increase awareness of, and likelihood to view, 'learn' information (technologies, features & benefits)
  - Easier, simpler, more consistent navigation; better integration of 'shop' and 'learn'
  - New design greatly preferred, but still 'too wordy', cluttered with text and redundant info
- **New brand-level tabs & page design vs. current design**
  - At the brand level, tabs increase awareness of, and likelihood to view, 'learn' information
  - Product series – 2x2 presentation preferred, but add back 2 or 3 key points
  - Features & benefits – new design preferred; grid effective, important; 'half moons' elicited some negative feedback (represented 'select models' within a series)
- **New series-level tabs & page design vs. current design**
  - At the series level, tabs increase awareness of, and likelihood to view, 'learn' information
  - Improved navigation and integration; new design preferred; 'Features & benefits' label OK
  - Series highlights – new design preferred; table-of-contents effective, well-liked
  - Sub-series comparison – new page useful; grid effective, important; but again, 'half moons' elicited some negative reaction
  - Series accessories – OK for many, but some confused about purpose, some wanted to buy from here
- **Shop/buy task** – Not negatively impacted by redesign; some say shop/buy task improved by tabs
- **'Already own?'** – Placement as tab makes more obvious, improves task of buying upgrades/accessories
- **Final discussion & conclusions**
  - General consensus – New design on track, great improvements in navigation & page design
  - Site is better integrated, easier to navigate; increased awareness of 'learn'/technology information
  - "Hurry to implement"; "great new design"; "getting better, easier, more 'intuitive'"

TabNav design validation agenda

5:00 PM **Welcome, administrative items, confidentiality form, introductions**

5:15 PM **Background survey**

5:30 PM **Session overview & purpose**

5:45 PM **Part 1: PCD site structure/navigation & brand design**

        1A - Notebook purchase investigation scenario

        1B - Brand 'Products' page design

        1C - Brand 'Features & benefits' page design

7:00 PM **Break**

7:15 PM **Part 2: Series-level navigation & page design**

        2A - Series purchase investigation scenario

        2B - Series 'Features & benefits - Highlights' page design

        2C - Series 'Features & benefits - Sub-series Comparison' page design

8:00 PM **Part 3: Additional Shop/Own scenarios**

        3A - Shop/buy a ThinkPad scenario

        3B - Upgrade an already-owned ThinkPad scenario

8:40 PM **Final discussion, debriefing**

9:00 PM **Thanks, meeting adjourned**

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TabNav design validation procedure & scenarios

- **General procedure for each part:**
  - Read scenario to group, walkthrough current design, then redesign
  - Collect individual ratings, preferences, likes/dislikes using DSC survey tool
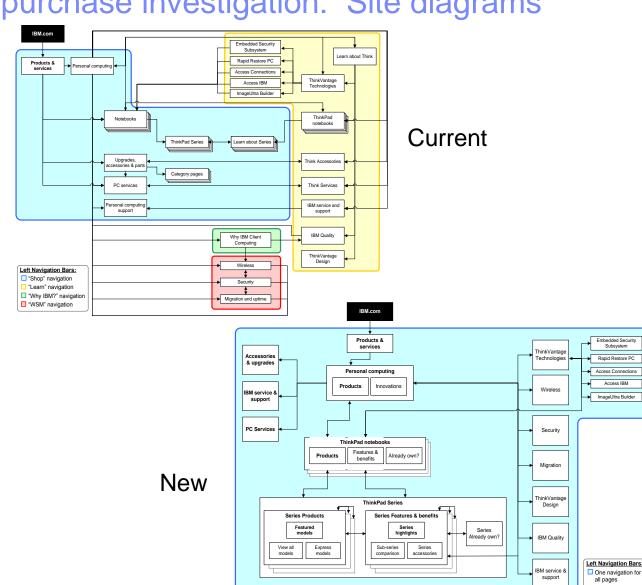 - Review survey ratings/preferences results with group, discuss and probe
- **Scenarios:**
  - **Part 1: Notebook purchase investigation** – Your company is planning a large notebook refresh [SMB = 100+; LE = 1000+]. You are investigating multiple vendors for this purchase. As part of that investigation, you go to ibm.com to find out everything you can about IBM ThinkPads – the range of product offerings & price ranges, types of notebooks (series) and associated features, options, technologies & benefits, etc.
  - **Part 2: Specific series purchase investigation** – You just read a positive review of the IBM ThinkPad R40 in PC World; it was the Editor's Pick in their 'value notebook' category. Go to the ibm.com website to find out all you can about the ThinkPad R Series and the R40 – prices, features, options, technologies, benefits, etc.
  - **Part 3A: Shop/buy a ThinkPad** -- You would like to buy an R series, but only have $1000 to spend. See if you can find one for that price, and add it to the shopping cart.
  - **Part 3B: Order a battery for a ThinkPad** – You purchased a ThinkPad R40 a few weeks ago, and now realize that you need a spare battery. Go to ibm.com to order one.

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Part 1A – Notebook purchase investigation: Site diagrams

- **Current site structure**
  - 'Shop', 'Learn' in separate sitelets, different left navigation panes
  - Interconnected with hyperlinks
- **New site structure**
  - 'Shop', 'Learn' presented as tabs at three levels – personal computing, brand, series
  - Common left navigation pane
- **Navigation comparison**
  - Each site diagram was described prior to, and following, walkthrough of the relevant design (current or new), and were available to participants during ratings and discussion
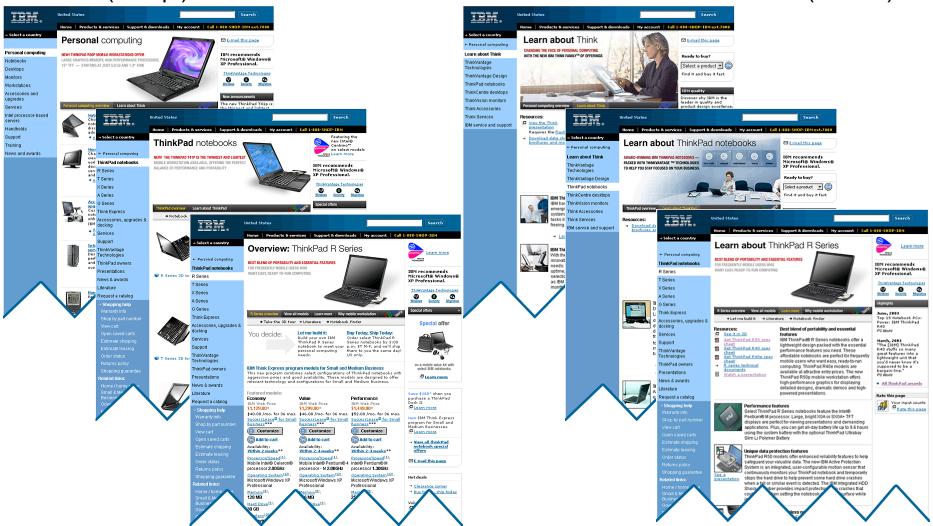

Current

New

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Part 1A – Notebook purchase investigation: Current design

Products ('Shop'):

Innovations/Features & Benefits ('Learn'):

Note: These pages are samples of the walkthrough materials, and were provided as hand-outs during ratings.

Part 1A – Notebook purchase investigation: New design

Products ('Shop'):

Innovations/Features & Benefits ('Learn'):

Note: These pages are samples of the walkthrough materials, and were provided as hand-outs during ratings.

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Part 1A – Purchase investigation scenario: Results

Current design vs. new design ratings:

Rating Question	SMB (n=13)	LE (n=14)
Tabs increase awareness of technology ('learn') info	13	14
Tabs increase likelihood to view technology info	10	14
Easier navigation between products-technology info	12	14
Better integration of products-technology info	12	14
'Products', 'Innovations' tab labels meaningful labels	11	13
'Innovation' draws interest, likely to investigate	8	9
'Products', 'Features & Benefits' meaningful labels	13	14
'Features & Benefits' draws interest, likely investigate	12	13
Overall, easier to investigate PC purchase decisions	12	14
Overall, prefer new design	12	14

New design likes:
- 'Clear', 'clean' design, saves time
- Easier to get overview, to navigate, to find info
- Consistent navigation menu, more integrated

New design dislikes:
- Tabs not visually apparent
- Still too wordy, too cluttered with text, too much redundant info
- 'Innovations' disliked by some, but no consensus on alternative label

Conclusion: New TabNav design superior for purchase investigation, greatly preferred by purchase decision-makers/-influencers

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Part 1B – Brand 'products' page design

Current design ('ThinkPad overview'):   New design ('Products' tab):

Part 1B – Brand 'products' page: Results

Current design vs. new design ratings:

Rating Question	SMB (n=13)	LE (n=14)
Reducing info to bring above fold is improvement	11	14
Easier to get overview of series	9	12
Overall, prefer new design	10	14

New design likes:

- Cleaner, clear and concise, less clutter; not overwhelmed by info
- Easier to get overview at a glance, without scrolling
- Quick overview of series differences, more informative

New design dislikes:

- Need some additional info, key differentiators among series
- Some words still 'fluff', not really meaningful (e.g., "Best blend of portability and essential features")
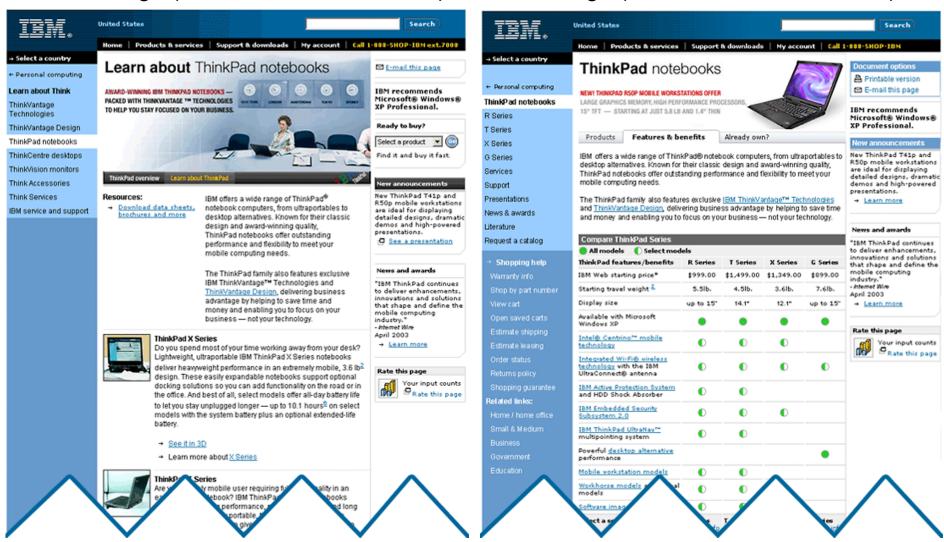- 'Compare ThinkPad Series' link should be more prominent

Conclusion: New brand 'products' page superior to current design, but need some additional info to better differentiate series

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Part 1C – Brand 'Learn'/'Features & benefits' design

Current design ('Learn about ThinkPads'):

New design ('Features & Benefits' tab):

Part 1C – Brand 'Learn'/'Features & benefits': Results

Current design vs. new design ratings:

Rating Question	SMB (n=13)	LE (n=14)
Easier to understand differences across series	12	14
Easier to get to learn more for each series	11	14
Easier to get products for each series	9	13
Overall, prefer new design	13	14

New design likes:
- Clear, concise, easier comparisons; saves time, more visible, intuitive; "100% improvement"
- Grid has base info to start investigation; additional feature details available via links
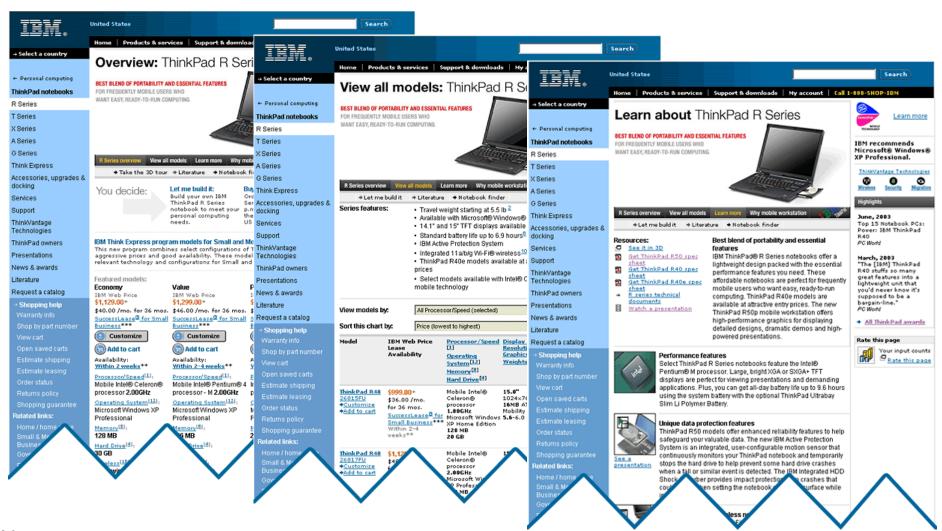- Inclusion of price, weight, display size

New design dislikes:
- Grid legend not prominent enough
- Some commented though info is important, there must be something better than 'half-moons'
- Missing some important info – battery life, min. processor speed, min. RAM, etc.; some not important – XP available; possible to choose which characteristics to include in comparison?
- Links at bottom not fully clear ('products', 'more info')

Conclusion: New brand 'Features & benefits ' page superior to current design, but legend, 'half-moons', and content need some improvement

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Part 2A – Series purchase investigation: Current design

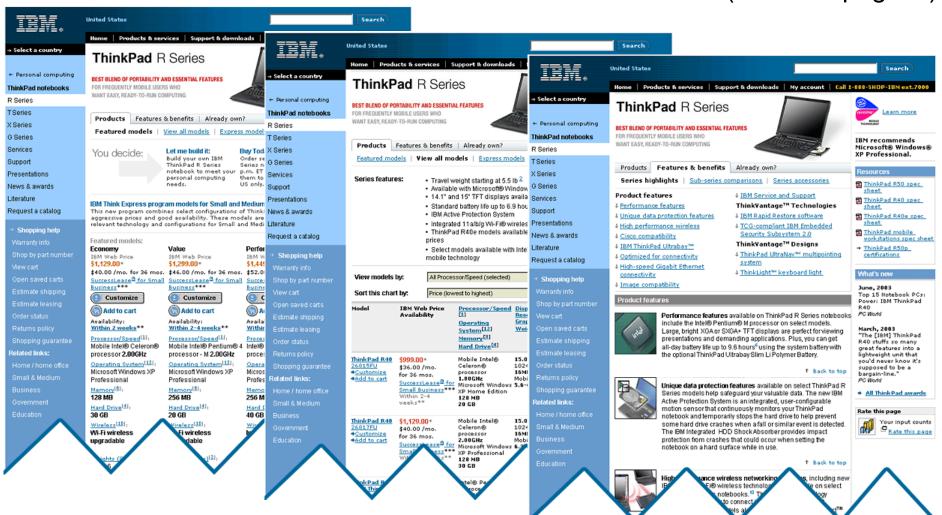## Series overview → View all models → Learn about series

Note: These pages are samples of the walkthrough materials, and were provided as hand-outs during ratings.

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Part 2A – Series purchase investigation: New design

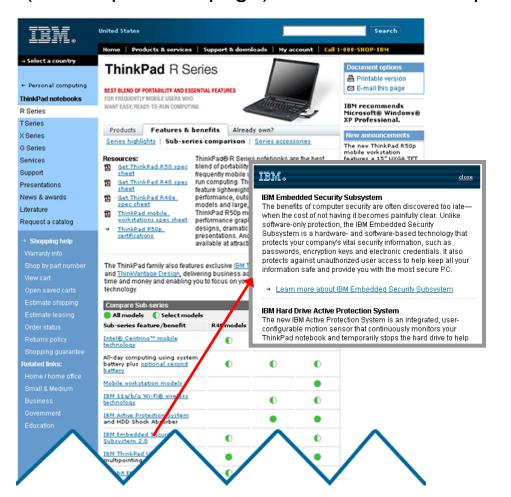## Series overview → View all models → Learn about series → (see next page…)

Note: These pages are samples of the walkthrough materials, and were provided as hand-outs during ratings.

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Part 2A – Series purchase investigation: New design (cont'd)

(…from previous page) → Sub-series comparison (w/ popup) → Series accessories

Note: These are completely new pages, not available on the current site; the technology items in the grid link to descriptions in a popup, which in turn has links to the related 'learn' pages – allowing the user to 'drill down'

Part 2A – Series purchase investigation: Results

Current design vs. new design ratings for series page:

Rating Question	SMB (n=13)	LE (n=14)
Tabs increase awareness of technology ('learn') info	11	12
Tabs increase likelihood to view technology info	11	13
Easier navigation between products-technology info	11	12
Better integration of products-technology info	12	14
'Products', 'Features & benefits' labels meaningful	13	13
'Features & benefits' draws interest, likely investigate	12	13
'Products', 'Features & Benefits' meaningful	13	14
'Features & Benefits' draws interest, likely investigate	12	13
Overall, easier to investigate PC purchase decisions	12	13
Overall, prefer new design	12	13

New design likes:
- Improved navigation and integration; cleaner, simpler
- Easier to get overview, to navigate, to drill down
- Sub-series comparison
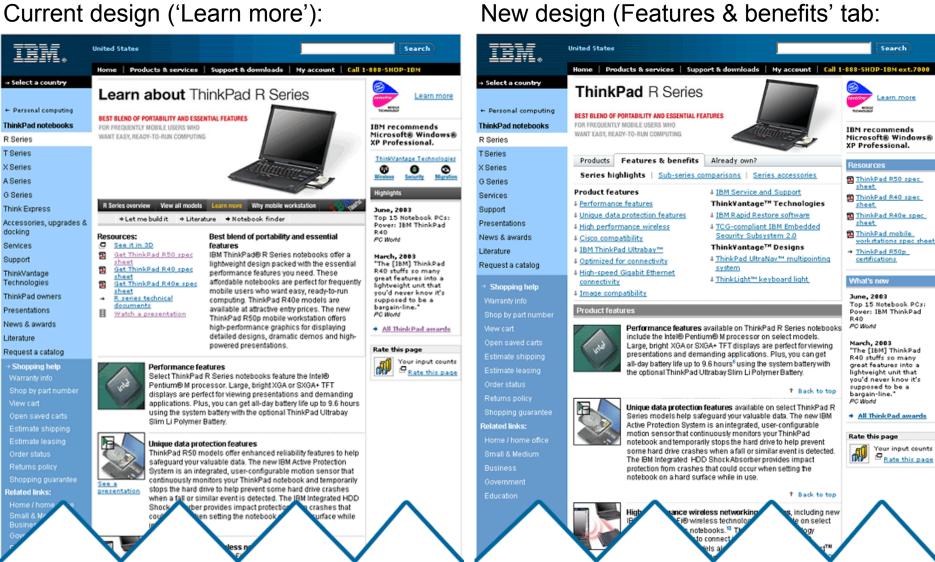
New design dislikes:
- Accessories need pricing, add to cart
- Still too cluttered, overwhelming amount of info
- Some felt tab label inappropriate -- mostly 'features', not 'benefits'

Conclusion: New TabNav design at series level is superior for purchase investigation, especially sub-series info; greatly preferred by purchase decision-makers/-influencers, but some confusion regarding the Accessories info

Part 2B – Series 'Features & benefits – Highlights' design

Current design ('Learn more'):

New design (Features & benefits' tab:

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Part 2B – Series 'Features & benefits – Highlights': Results

Current design vs. new design ratings:

Rating Question	SMB (n=13)	LE (n=14)
TOC anchor links make page easier to explore	13	14
More effective presentation	13	12
Overall, prefer new design	13	14

New design likes:
- Easier navigation, topics can be viewed without scrolling, one click to get to topic of interest, easy to 'zero in'
- Spec sheet resources at the right is good, they are 'related links', not part of main content

New design dislikes:
- Technical terms need better definition (e.g., what is 'Image compatibility'?)
- Some commented that the page really contains 'features', but no 'benefits'
- Some commented that this page had too much information; perhaps eliminate this page and add some of this content to sub-series comparison

Conclusion: New series 'Features & benefits – Highlights' page superior to current design, but content may need some improvement
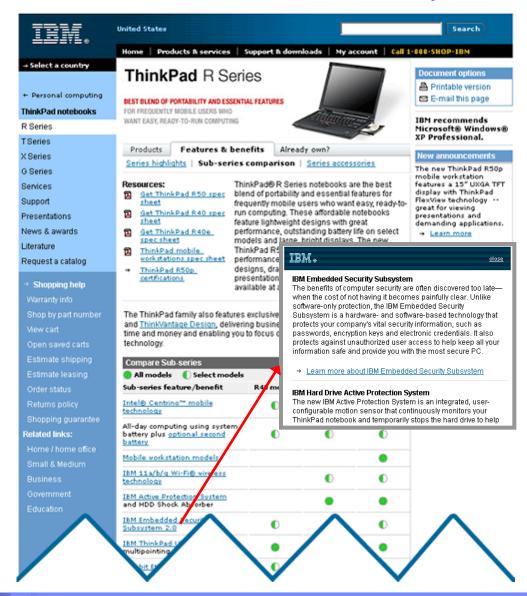
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Part 2C – Series 'Features & benefits – Sub-series comparison'

New design:

- The current site does not have direct means to learn about sub-series differences
- Like the series comparison grid, items in the grid have links to descriptions in a popup, which in turn has links to the related 'learn' pages – allowing the user to 'drill down' for more information

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Part 2C – Series 'Features & benefits – Sub-series comparison'

Current design vs. new design ratings:

Rating Question	SMB (n=13)	LE (n=14)
Easy to understand differences across sub-series	12	14
Grid layout is effective presentation	11	14

New design likes:
- Grid is clear, concise, effective way to comparisons sub-series
- Information is useful for purchase investigation (some thought unnecessary)
- Inclusion of price, weight, display size

New design dislikes:
- 'Half-moons' again elicited some negative comments ("The half moons drive me nuts!")
- Need more info regarding which models have each feature
- Possibly add prices, other base features; reduce some wordiness (e.g., "…models are available at attractive entry prices.")
- Move Resources links to right to be consistent with 'Series highlights' tab, reduce paragraph at top describing the series

Conclusion: New 'Sub-series comparison' page is good addition, but 'half-moons' and content need some improvement, and Resources links should move to right

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Part 3A – 'Shop/buy' ThinkPad scenario

Current 'Shop/buy':

New 'Shop/buy':

Note: These pages are samples of the walkthrough materials, and were provided as hand-outs during ratings.

Part 3A – 'Shop/buy' ThinkPad scenario: Results

Current design vs. new design ratings:

Rating Question	SMB (n=13)	LE (n=14)
Current & new designs are equivalent for shop/buy task	9	6
New design makes it easier to shop/buy	3	8
Current design makes it easier to shop/buy	1	0

Why new design is easier:
- Consistent tab structure, better layout
- Better layout (2x2) on ThinkPad page, less scrolling, all series above the fold
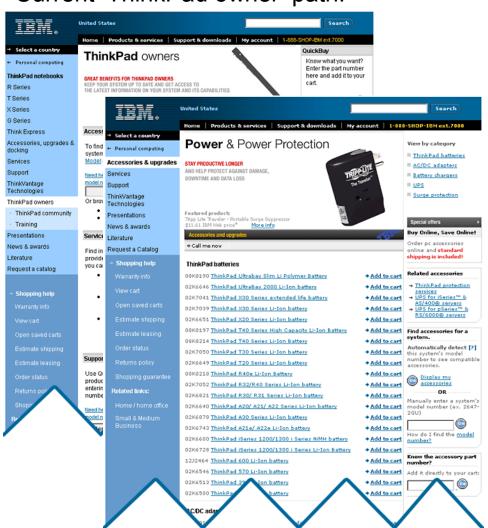
Why current design is easier:
- One participant thought that more info on the ThinkPad overview page is better, cleaner, and makes it more likely to see 'View all models'

Conclusion: New tab navigation design integrating 'shop' and 'learn' information does NOT interfere with current shop/buy path, and new brand page design is significant improvement
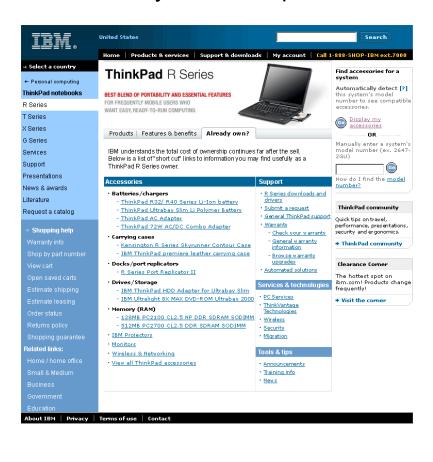
Part 3B – Upgrade/add accessory scenario

Current 'ThinkPad owner' path:

New 'Already own?' tab path:

Note: These pages are samples of the walkthrough materials, and were provided as hand-outs during ratings.

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Part 3B – Upgrade/add accessory scenario: Results

Current design vs. new design ratings:

Rating Question	SMB (n=13)	LE (n=14)
New 'Already own?' tab makes it easier to find series-specific accessories and upgrades	13	12
Overall, prefer new design	13	12

New design likes:
- Better layout and navigation with tab design, more intuitive, more easily spotted
- Series-specific access is easier, less options to browse/search through
- Useful placement of this functionality within the overall tab structure

New design dislikes:
- One participant thought that the current design is more visually appealing
- Consider moving serial # entry field from right column into center space

Conclusion: 'Already own?' tab provides improved access to series-specific upgrades and accessories, a definite improvement over the 'ThinkPad owner' left navigation pane link to non-series-specific items

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Design validation conclusions & final comments

Design conclusions:

- Overall, 'shop'/'learn' integration and tab navigation viewed as tremendous improvement for purchase investigation tasks by virtually all participants
- New design increases awareness of, and likelihood to view, 'learn'/technology information
- Almost all new page designs viewed as great improvements, especially addition of comparison grids and bringing all brand page series 'above the fold'
- New site structure does not interfere with shop/buy task; in fact, page design changes improve the simple shop/buy task
- 'Already own?' tab improves upgrades/accessories task; some confusion over 'Series accessories' tab
- Reduction in content positively viewed, but content should be further reduced where possible
- Two-column design for Brand Shop page preferred, but add 2 or 3 key differentiators
- Grids are great, but improve the 'half moon' graphic

Final discussion & comments:

- Though new design increases awareness and likelihood to view 'learn' information, increased consideration, preference, and likelihood to buy depends on convincing content
- General consensus: New design is on track, great improvements in navigation & page design
- Site info better integrated, tab navigation simpler/easier; some e-site users requested we redesign their sites similarly
- Increased awareness & likelihood to view learn/technology info, but increased preference/likelihood to buy dependent on truly convincing case for true benefits over competitors; 'qualified' TCO and ROI info available?
- Some final comments: "Hurry to implement"; "great new design"; "getting better, easier, more 'intuitive'"; 'excellent discussion group'