



Plain language testing

Building better business blogs – a **‘before’** and **‘after’** makeover test

Selfie



Yes, this really is a selfie ☺

Who?

Morné Malan

Job?

Head of Brand Language at
Dimension Data, soon to be
Director of Content at NTT

Really, what's that?

Resident word nerd

Team?

Brand team at Dimension Data and
soon Corporate Communications
team at NTT

How long?

8 years – about 20 in language
practice



Testing the effect of plain language on content



Was there ever
any doubt?



Why do we need to make
a case for plain language?

We needed data!

01

Our blogs = ↓ readability

02

↑ plain language = ↑ readability

03

↑ readability = ↑ digital effectivity

How readable are our blogs?

Out of all blogs with a readability score currently on WordPress ...

81%

Needs
improvement

15%

Ok

<5%

Good

What did we do?

Phase 1 – 'Before'



What did we do?

Phase 2 – ‘After’



What we didn't test



Comprehension



Digital promotion



Content quality



Content relevancy



Timing

**Plain language can't turn
bad ideas into good ones.**

Our blog strategy

3 types, different journeys

type **A** ———=

The blurb



50-300 words



Read this!

type **B** ———=

The teaser



300-700 words



Read these!

type **C** ———=

The main event



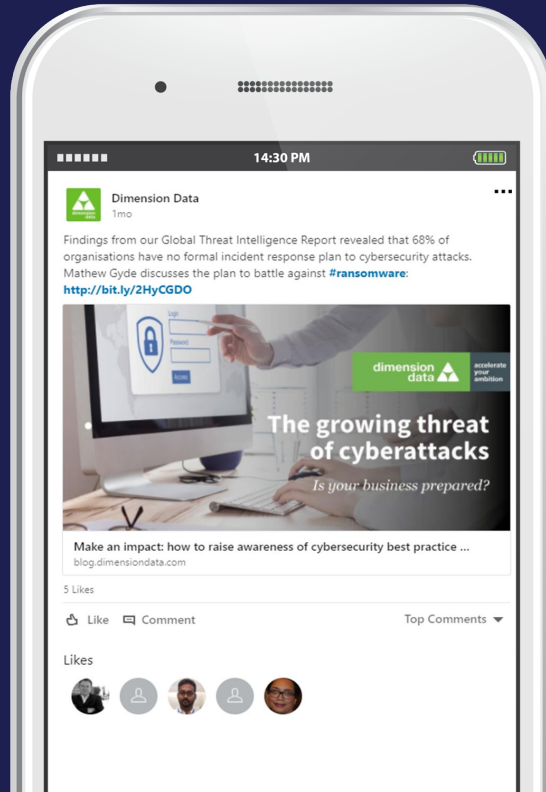
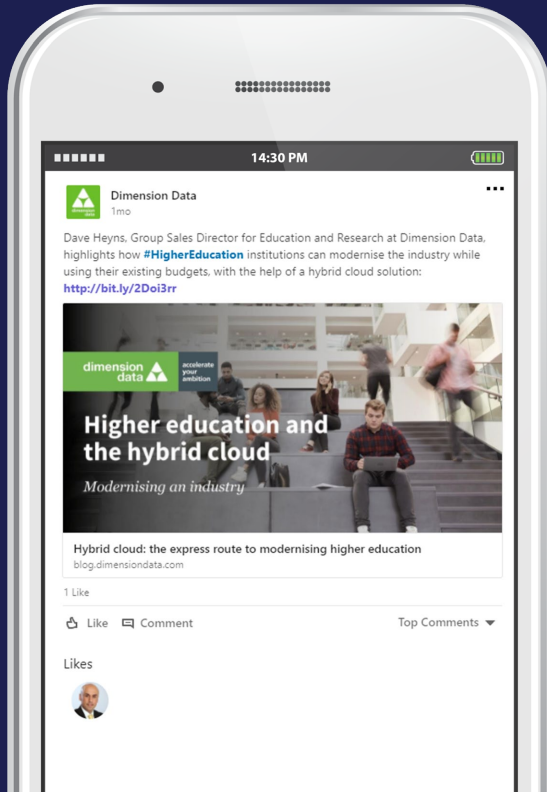
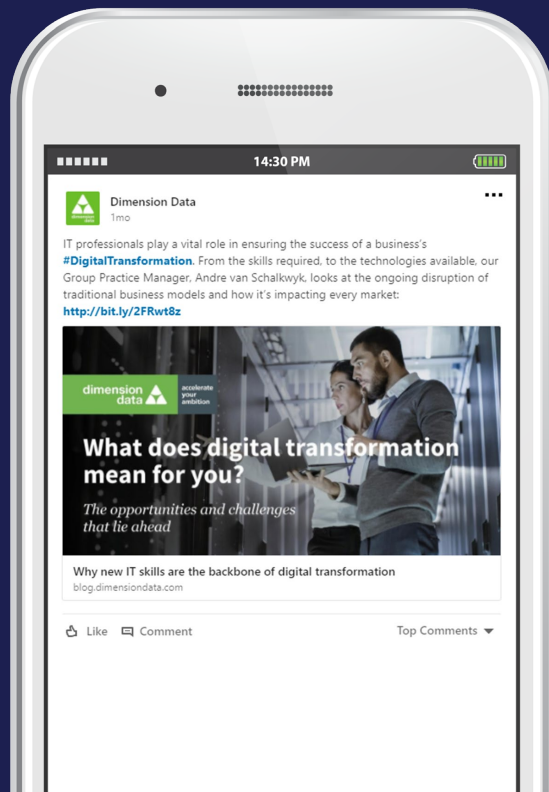
>1, 000 words



Contact us!

Our LinkedIn promotion ads

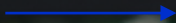
We used the same target lists, ads, and budgets to promote both the 'before' and 'after' blogs.



Technical readability – how did we test?



Readability tool scores –
‘before’



- 01 Shorter, punchier titles
- 02 Simpler words
- 03 Shorter sentences
- 04 Passive to active voice
- 05 Subheads
- 06 Bullets
- 07 Images and captions



Readability tool scores –
‘after’



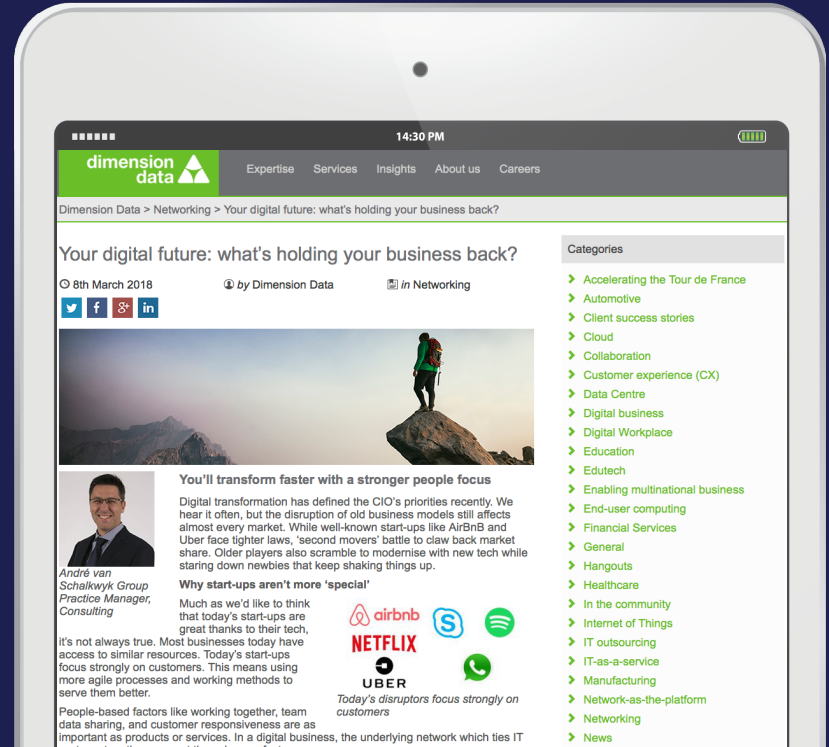
Introducing our test subjects

Blog 1 : Digitalisation

Before



After

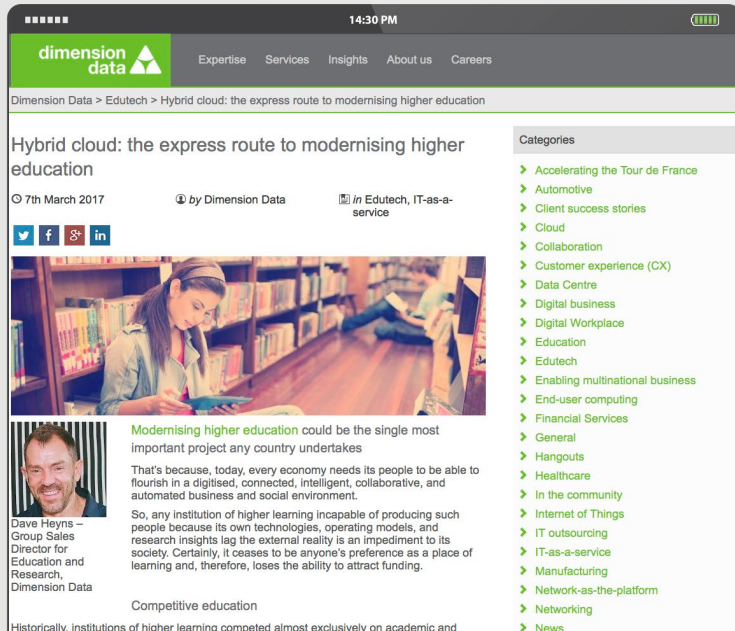


Introducing our test subjects

Blog 2: Cloud

Before

After



Introducing our test subjects

Blog 3: Cybersecurity

Before

After

dimension data

Expertise Services Insights About us Careers

Dimension Data > Security > Make an impact: how to raise awareness of cybersecurity best practice at your organisation

Make an impact: how to raise awareness of cybersecurity best practice at your organisation

7th March 2017 by Dimension Data in Security



Given the number of high profile cybersecurity incidents in recent years, it's no surprise industry is taking a more proactive approach towards protecting data.

Our 2017 *Global Threat Intelligence Report* revealed that last year there was an 11% year-on-year improvement in the number of organisations *actively maturing* their incident response preparedness. However, the research also revealed that 68% of organisations have no formal incident response plan.

How can your organisation become one of those businesses that are *actively maturing* their response to the modern cybersecurity landscape? There's no simple formula for success here. However, if you're ready to act on cybersecurity, this blog and the rest of the series will provide you with the essential steps you can take to achieve this goal.

To learn more, our new Frost & Sullivan authored white paper, *Ransomware: The Pervasive Business Disruptor*, outlines the drivers and impacts of the most important cybersecurity threats facing your organisation. It provides a summary of the latest research on ransomware and offers guidance on how to limit that risk. We would encourage you to [download your free copy](#).

Matthew Gyde | Group Executive, Security, Dimension Data

Categories

- Accelerating the Tour de France
- Automotive
- Client success stories
- Cloud
- Collaboration
- Customer experience (CX)
- Data Centre
- Digital business
- Digital Workplace
- Education
- Edutech
- Enabling multinational business
- End-user computing
- Financial Services
- General
- Hangouts
- Healthcare
- In the community
- Internet of Things
- IT outsourcing
- IT-as-a-service
- Manufacturing
- Network-as-the-platform
- Networking
- News

dimension data

Expertise Services Insights About us Careers

Dimension Data > Security > Eyes wide open – raising cybersecurity's profile in your business

Eyes wide open – raising cybersecurity's profile in your business

8th March 2018 by Dimension Data in Security



Simple steps you can take today to keep your data safe

Our 2017 *Global Threat Intelligence Report* showed that, year on year, 11% more businesses were improving their incident response ability. But 68% still had no formal incident response plan.

How can your organisation be more ready to face today's security threats? There's no simple formula for success, but if you're keen to act, we'll suggest some steps you can take.

Our Frost & Sullivan authored white paper, *Ransomware: The Pervasive Business Disruptor*, describes the most pressing cyberthreats you face today. It summarises the latest research on ransomware and guides you to limit that risk. A good first step is to [download your free copy](#) today.

Matthew Gyde – Group Executive, Security, Dimension Data

Be a catalyst for change

Our white paper also shows that ransomware is

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- News

Results: technical readability

Blog 1 : Digitalisation

Flesch Reading Ease score –
realistic target: **60–80 out of 100**



■ Before (Difficult to read)

■ After (Standard/Average)

90-100: Very easy

80-89: Easy

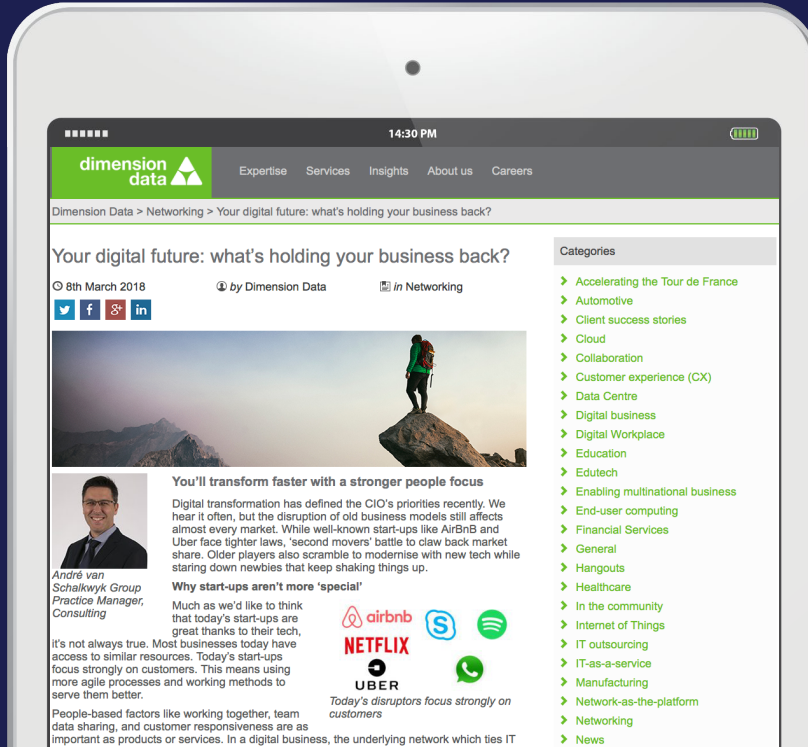
70-79: Fairly easy

60-69: Standard

50-59: Fairly difficult

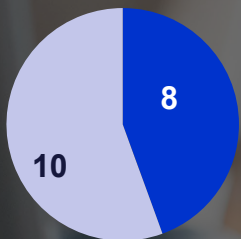
30-49: Difficult

0-29: Very confusing



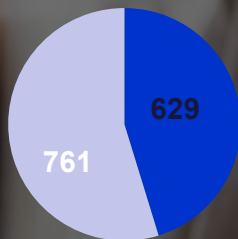
Results: technical readability

Blog 1 : Digitalisation



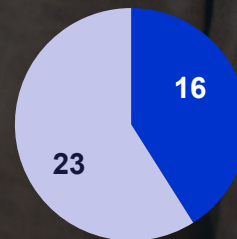
-2
Improvement

Title length (<8)



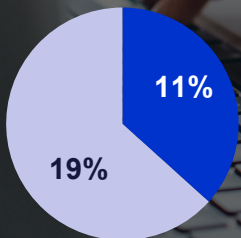
17.3%
Improvement

Total word length (300-700)



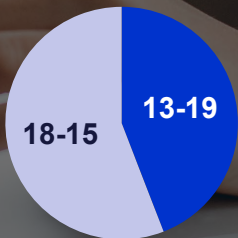
30%
Improvement

Average sentence length (<18)



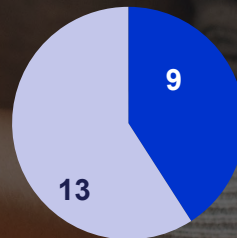
4%
Improvement

% of 3+ syllable words (<15%)



On target
Improvement

Reader's age (13-15)



On target
Improvement

Reader's education level (US: grades 8-9)

■ Before ■ After

Anecdotal readability – how did we test?



10 readers, 2 X 5
(individually)



5 readers → 'Before' blogs



5 readers → 'After' blogs



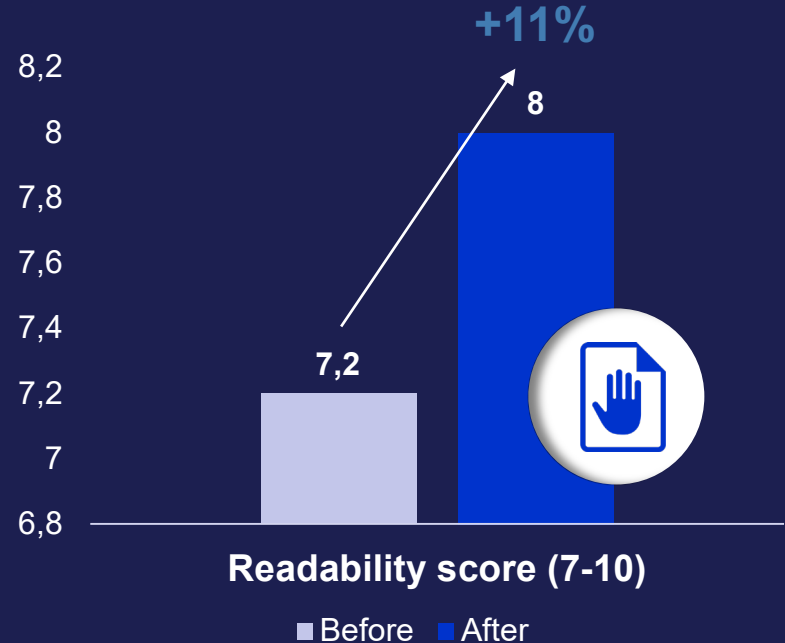
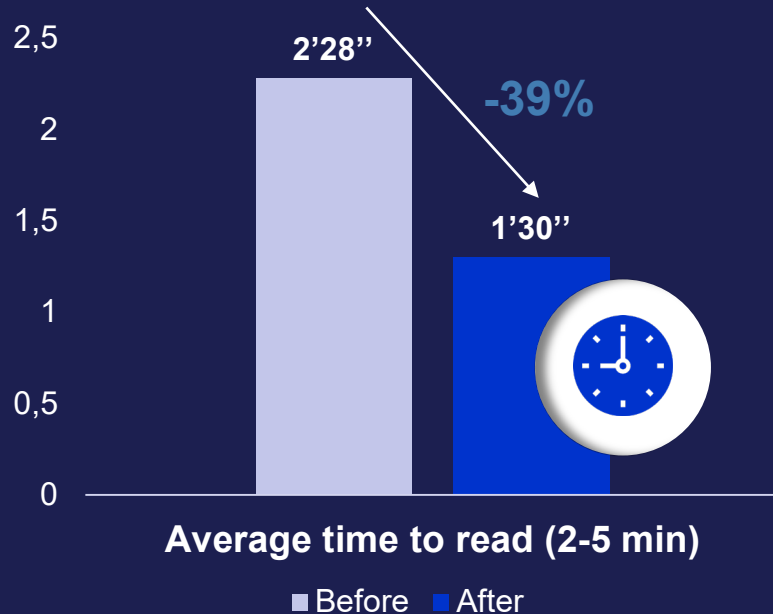
Time to read



Readability rating

Results: anecdotal readability

Blog 2: Cloud



Digital effectivity – how did we test?



Bounce rate



Time on page



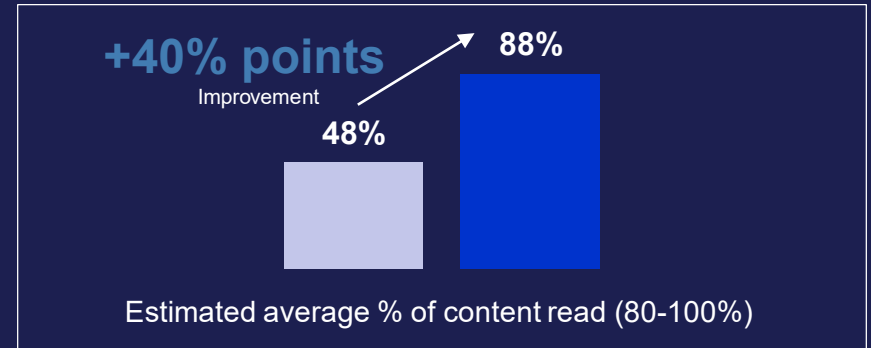
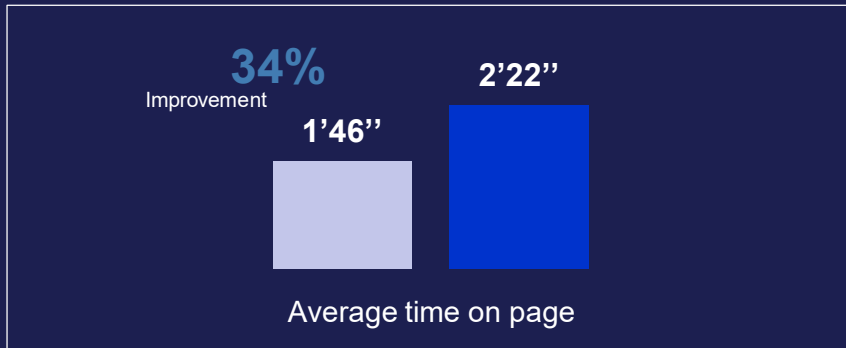
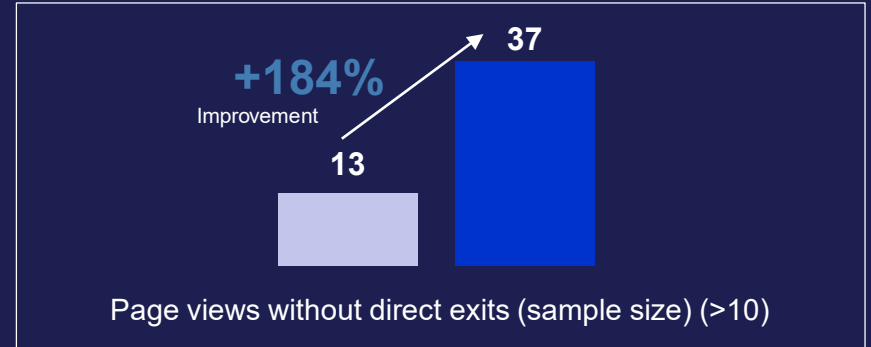
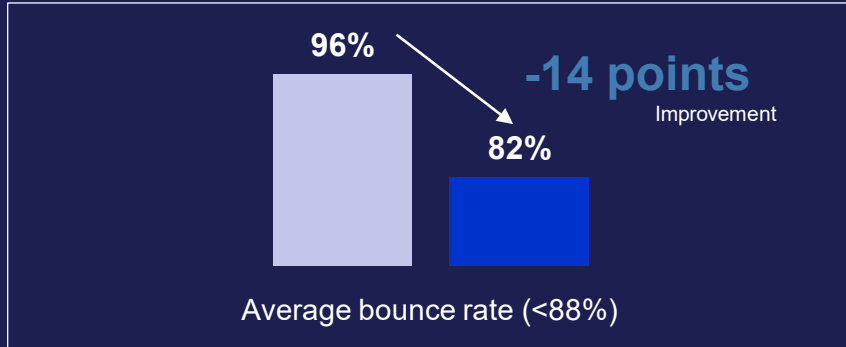
Est. % content read
(time to read minus
time on page)



Scroll and
heat maps

Results: digital effectivity

Blog 1 : Digitalisation



■ Before ■ After

Digital effectivity – desktop scroll maps

Blog 2: Cloud

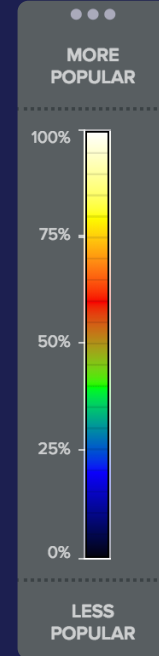
Before

After



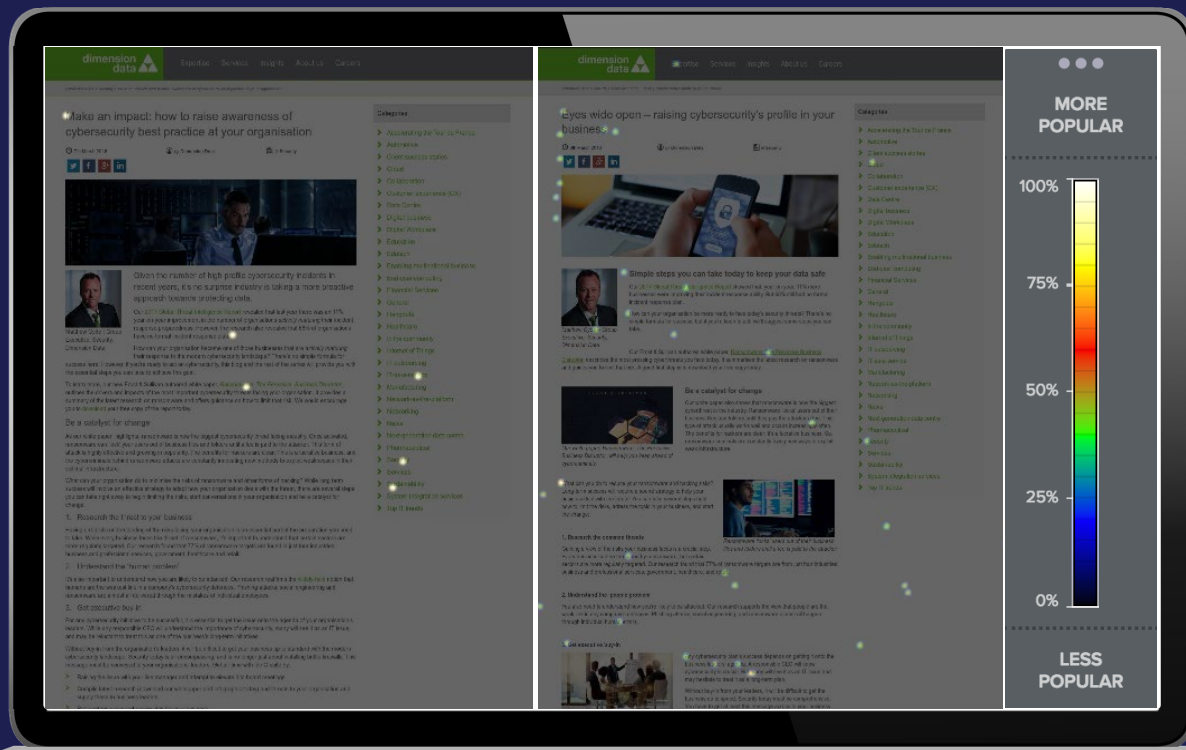
Digital effectivity – mobile scroll maps

Blog 1 : Digitalisation



Blog 3: Cybersecurity

After



What did we learn?

50-100%

more readable

1/3 shorter

to read

Readers will ...

Engage and read more
Be more likely to click

What should a good teaser blog have?

01

Brevity

Short punchy headline, short, simple words, short readable sentences

02

Visual appeal

At least 3 images with captions, sub-heads, bullets

03

Links to deeper content

Don't repeat content, don't link to more than 3 places

What should we do next time?



Test for longer!



Parallel A/B testing



Comprehension tests



**Plain language must be
synonymous with our brand.**
