

Thesis project:

Designing Persuasive Information for Environmental Issues

Jenny Shirey, Master of Design student
Communication, Planning & Information Design
Carnegie Mellon University

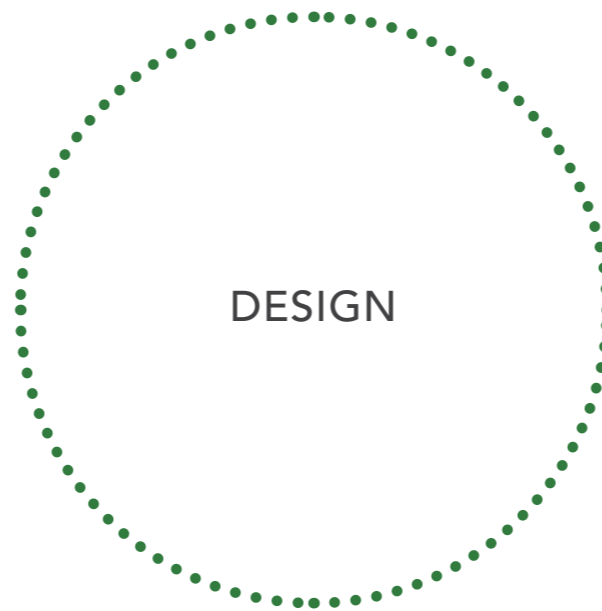
The context

Designing for behavior change: exciting, emerging area

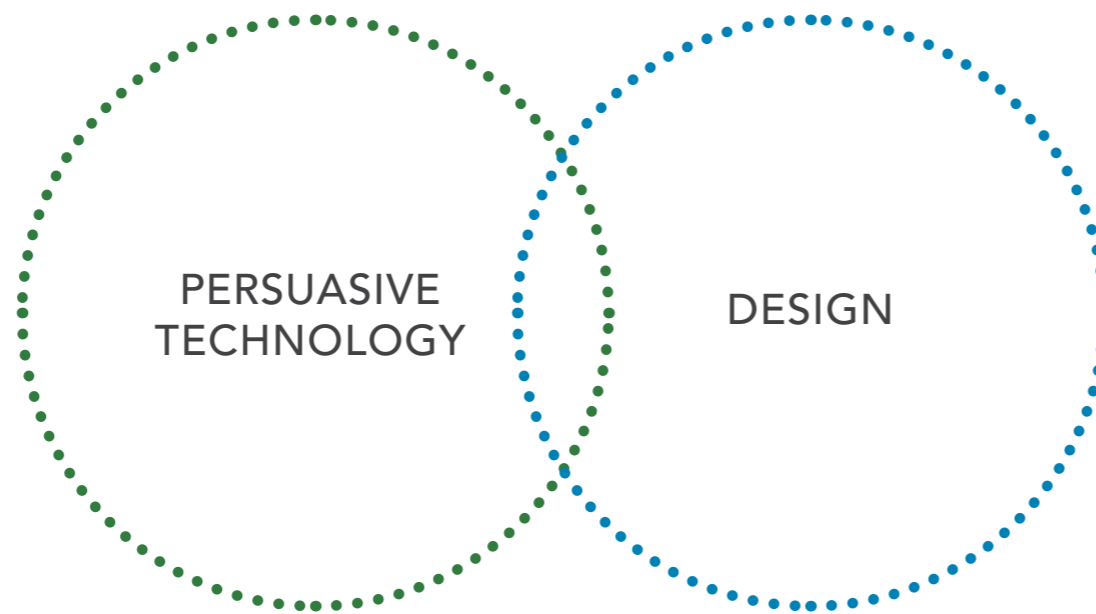


"Piano Stairs" from TheFunTheory.com

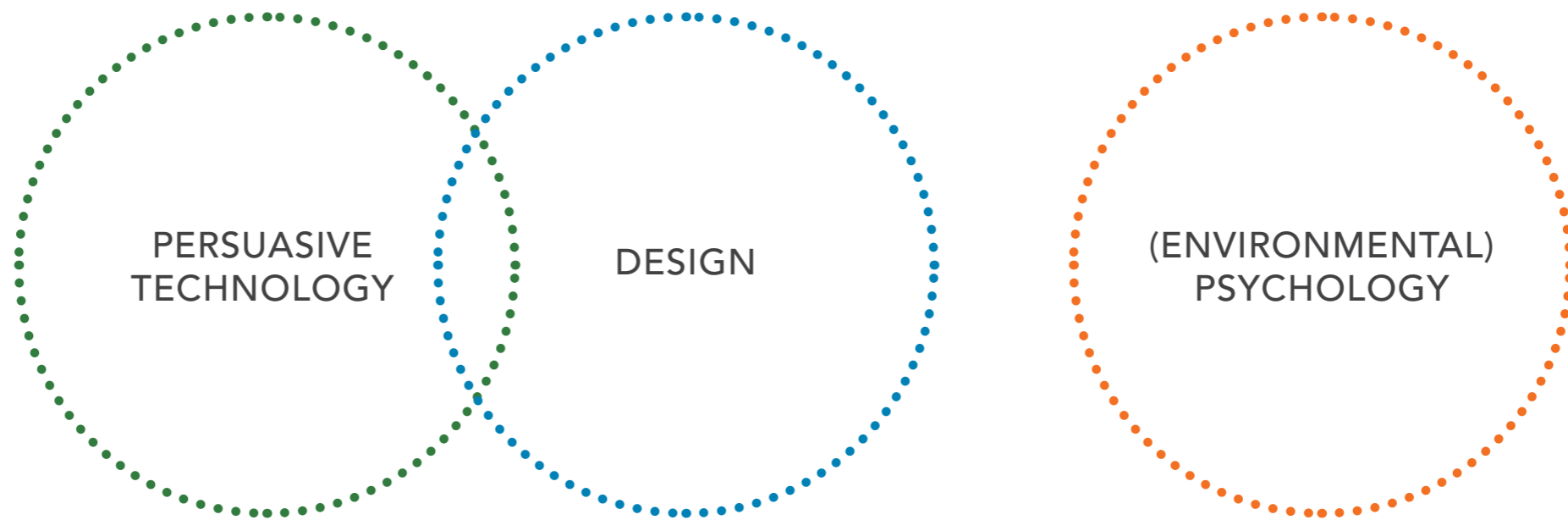
Literature review



Literature review

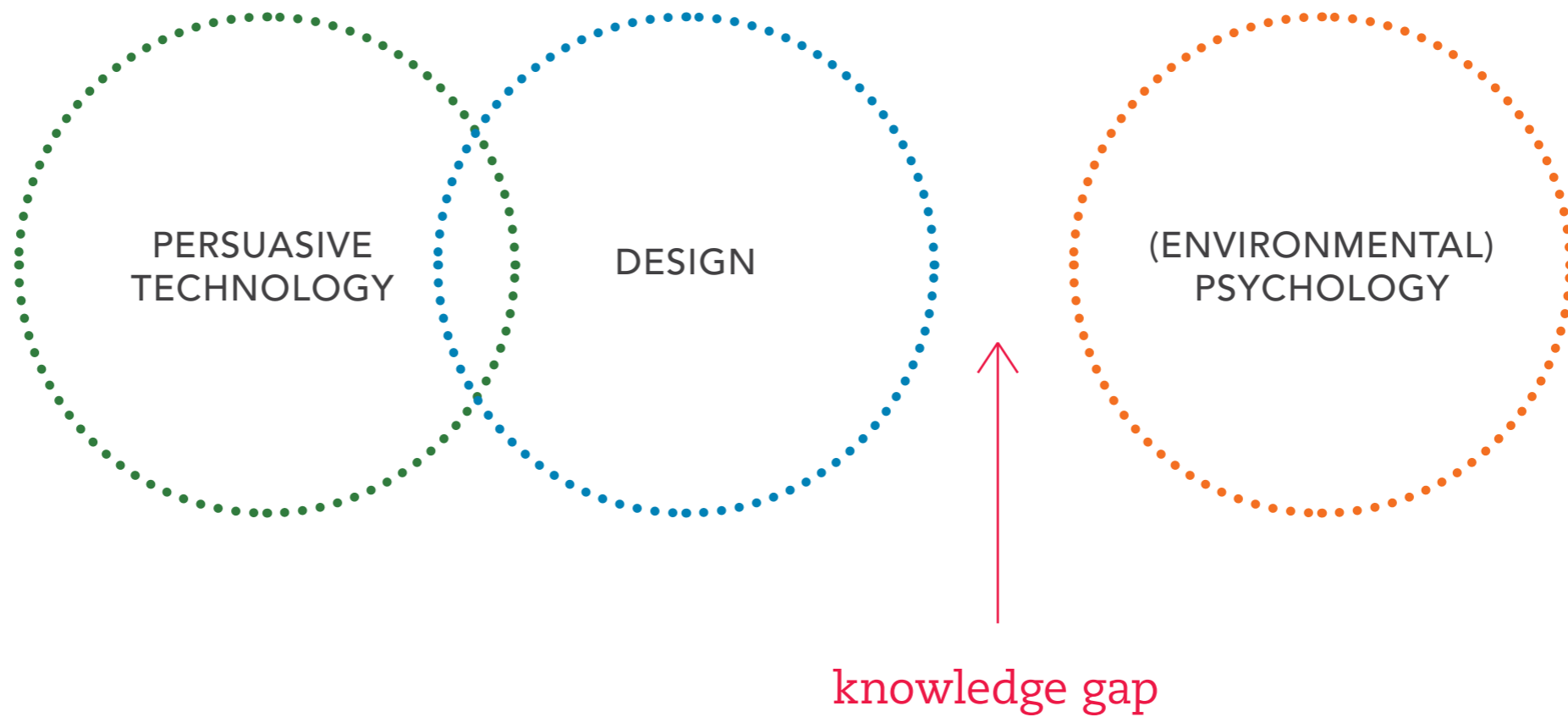


Literature review



Literature review

Problem



Literature review

*“Until we reach out to the individuals who design and deliver environmental programs, **our efforts will remain invisible** to those who can most benefit from them.”*

—Doug McKenzie-Mohr

“Promoting Sustainable Behavior,” *Journal of Social Issues*, 2000, p. 544

My goal, based on psychology literature and my own studies

To provide communication designers with effective recommendations for persuading individuals to adopt environmentally-friendly behaviors.

Case study: bottled water

Why this case study?

- » Simple, everyday habit
- » Low barriers (most people have access to clean tap water)
- » General unawareness of its effect on the environment



Target audience: 25- to 40-year-old non-activist adults

Why does this audience present a great opportunity for change?

- » Young adults want to do their part, but being eco-friendly is not their primary motivation
- » They didn't grow up with the emphasis on being "green" experienced by younger generations
- » Generally willing to help out and try new behaviors

Understanding my audience

Survey + journals + contextual interviews + early prototype

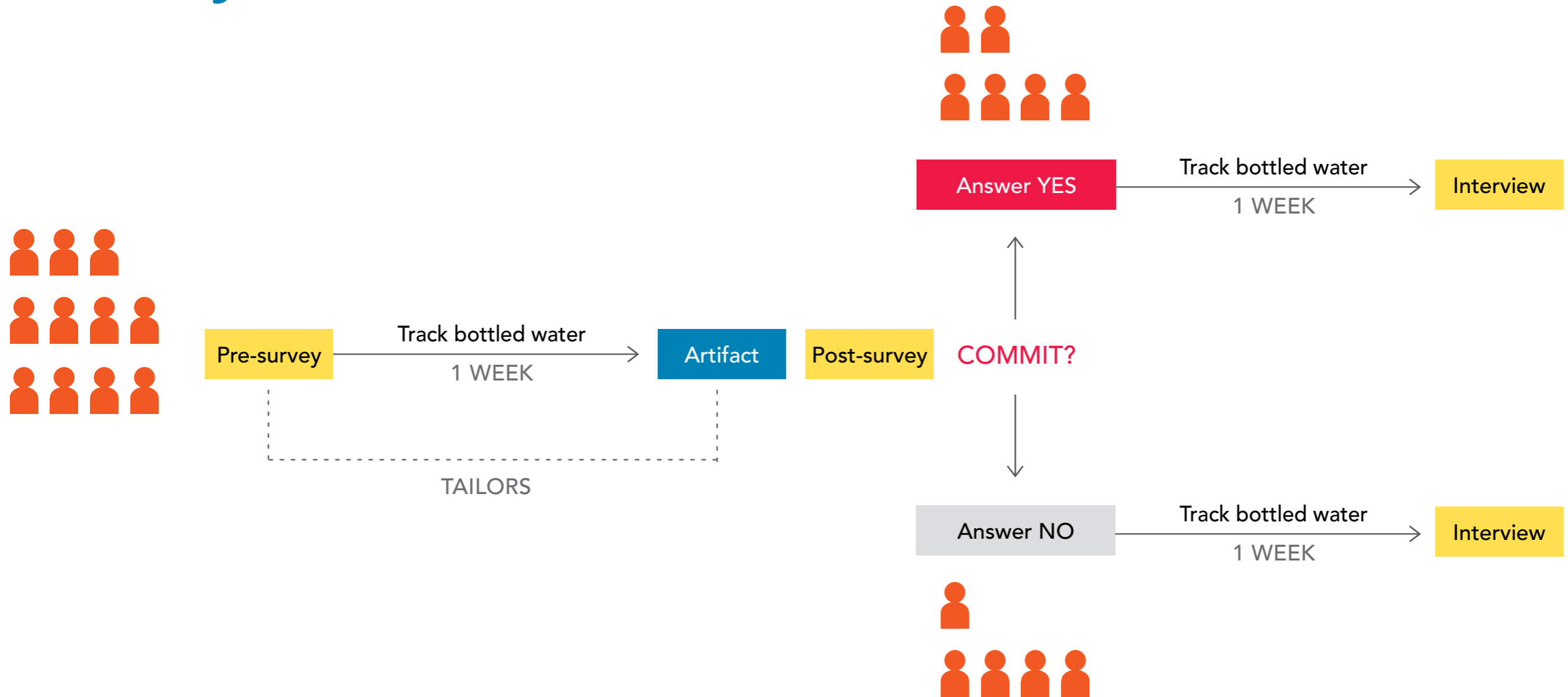


Prototype study question

How does a communication piece affect a person's behavior when tailored to interests, learning style, and preferred emotional tone?

Refined prototype

Study flow



Communication piece

Variables

MEDIUM

Interactive

or

Video

TONE

Humorous

or

Matter-of-fact

or

Dramatic

TOPIC

Animals

or

Waste

or

Money

Communication piece

Variables

Video

Humorous

Waste



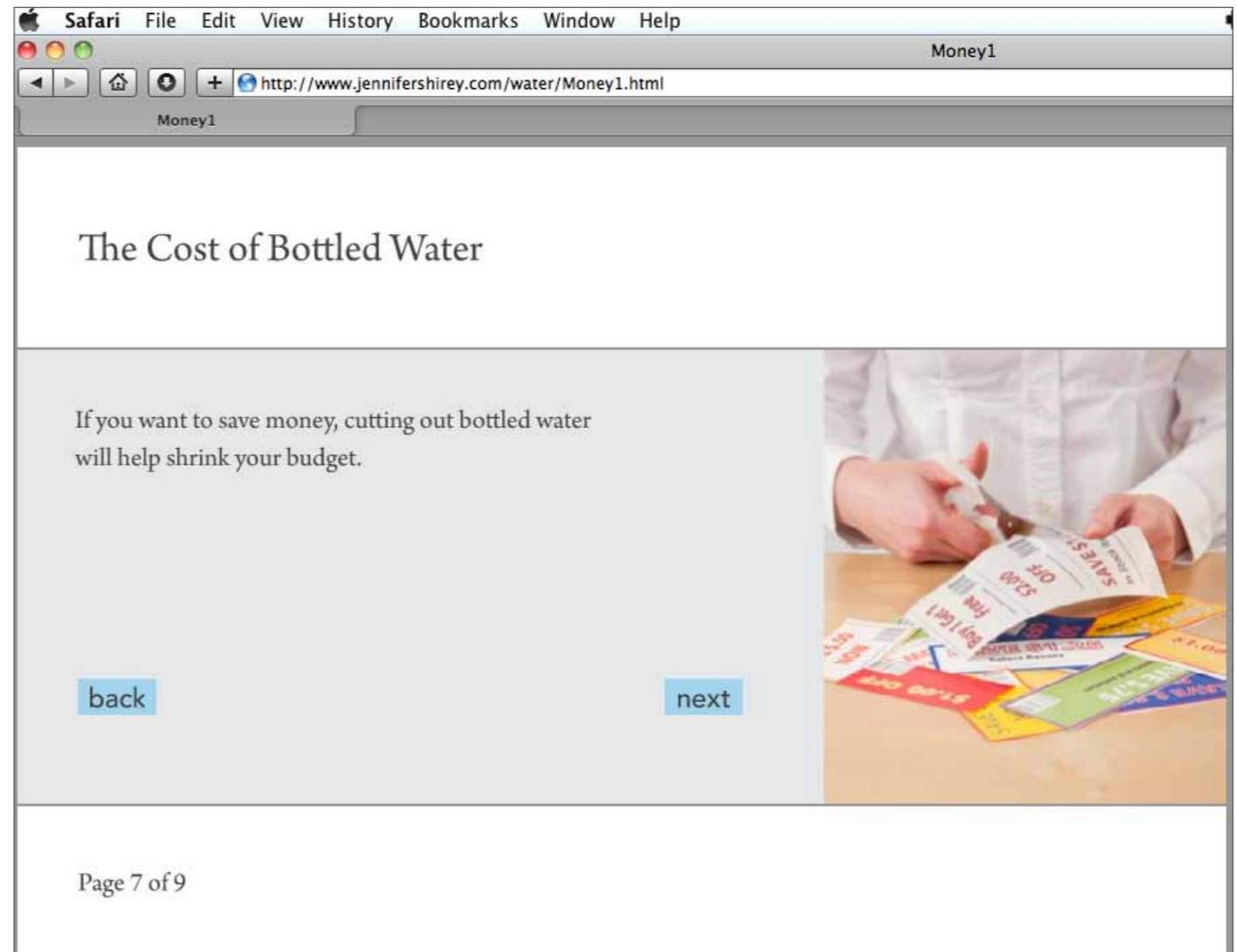
Communication piece

Variables

Interactive

Matter-of-fact

Money



Communication piece

Variables

Video

Dramatic

Animals



Refined prototype

Study results

Said the piece changed their feelings

YES



Believed they would drink less bottled water in the future

YES
MAYBE



Committed to not drinking bottled water for 1 week

YES



Drank less bottled water (week 2)

YES



Didn't drink any bottled water (week 2)

YES



A few findings so far

1. Use tracking to enhance awareness
2. Beware of barriers that prevent change
3. Show people that small actions make a difference
4. Commitments are powerful motivators
5. Keep goals reasonable

What's happening next (March)

A few questions

- » What are the common factors of those who did change behavior?
(IN PROGRESS)
- » What was the actual effect of matching?
FOLLOW-UP STUDY

What's happening next (March-April)

Develop design recommendations

- » To be completed at the end of April
- » Based on my literature review, principles from environmental psychology, and my own participatory studies