DRAWING ON KNOWLEDGE:
AN EXPERIMENTAL COMPARISON OF A 'TALKING HEAD' AND ANIMATION-BASED VIDEO

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DESIGN AND MATERIALS

RESULTS

Participant profile

Which video resulted in higher recall?

Which video was seen as more entertaining, interesting and informative? Which video is most likely to be shared with others?

Did men or women have different responses to the video?

Why do people share videos?

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DESIGN AND MATERIALS

This document describes a large-scale online study that experimentally compared the psychological impact of a 'talking head' video with an animation-based video.

Participants were recruited via several social media platforms, including Twitter, Facebook and blog posts.

Those who expressed an interest in taking part were invited to visit the project website. This website explained that the experiment involved watching a short video and answering a few questions about the video. Those wishing to participate in the study were asked to click a button on the website. 2090 people participated in the study.

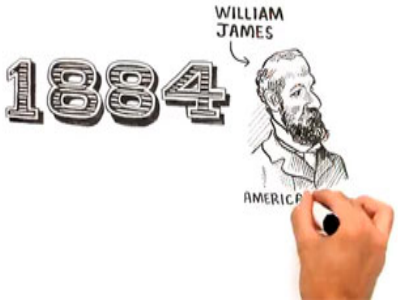
Each participant was randomly allocated to one of two surveys (URLs: http://www.surveyshare.com/s/AQAE57B and http://www.surveyshare.com/s/AQAE5EA). At the start of each survey participants were asked to indicate their gender and age using the following pull-down options.

Are you male or female?
Male
Female

How old are you?
Under 15
16-25
26-35
36-45
46-55
56-65
Over 65

Participants were then asked to watch either a 'talking head' video or an animation-based video.

The 'talking head' video: This video featured psychologist Professor Richard Wiseman discussing research relating to the 'As If Principle'. According to this principle, if you behave 'as if' you are a certain type of person, you become that person (e.g., if you smile you feel happier). This video was filmed in a single take, was just over a minute long, and contained a static head and shoulders shot of Professor Wiseman.



The animation-based video: This video was created by Cognitive Media and used the same soundtrack as the 'talking head' video. However, the 'talking head' shot was replaced with an animation that illustrated Professor Wiseman's comments.

After viewing the video, all participants were directed to another webpage and asked to answer two sets of questions.

Factual recall: The first four items were multiple-choice questions relating to the factual content of the video. Participants answered the questions using the following pull-down options (the correct answers are shown in bold):

According to the video.....

...when did William James have his radical idea?
1880
1884
1900
1905
1910

...when you squeeze your hand into a fist you boost your willpower by....
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%

....the research into aging was conducted at.....
Cambridge University
Oxford University
Stanford University
Harvard University

....when people sat in hard chairs, they.....
Felt happier
Became more inflexible
Felt less happy
Became more flexible

Ratings: The second set of questions asked participants to rate the video along the following seven-point scales:

Please rate how interesting you found the video from 1 (not very interesting) to 7 (very interesting)

Please rate how entertaining you found the video from 1 (not very entertaining) to 7 (very entertaining)

Please rate how informative you found the video from 1 (not very informative) to 7 (very informative)

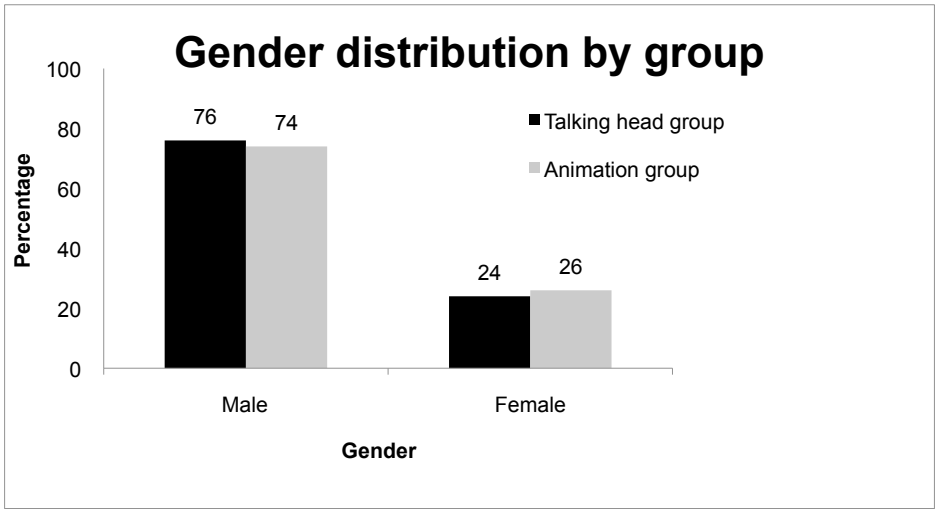
Please rate how likely you would be to share the video with others from 1 (not very likely) to 7 (very likely)

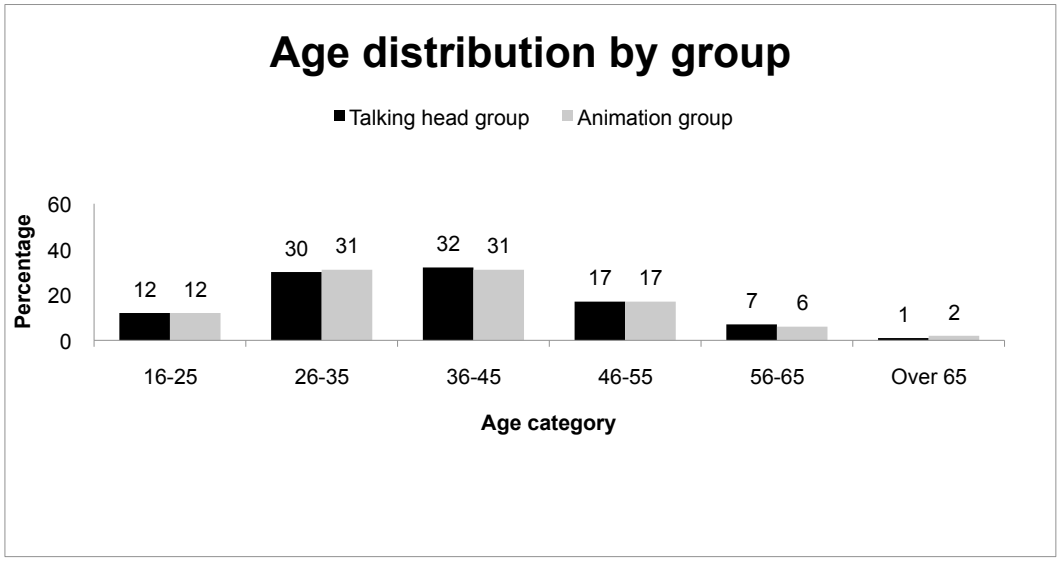
At the end of the experiment participants were thanked for taking part.

RESULTS

Participant profile

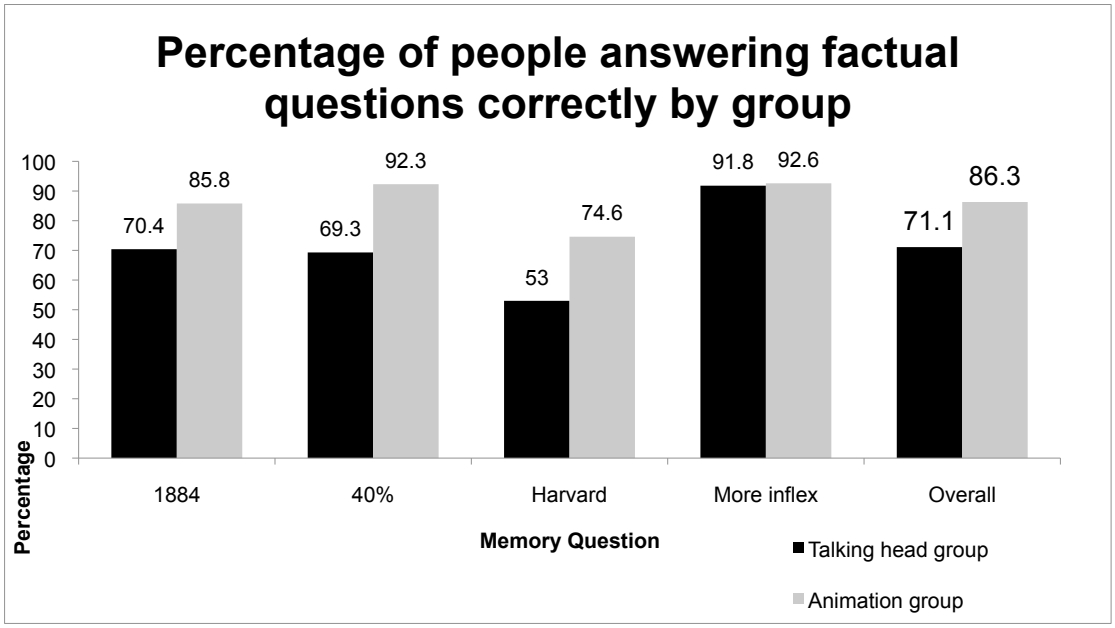
Participants were randomly assigned to either the 'talking head' or animation video, and so the two groups would be expected to have the same distribution of gender and age. This is indeed the case, with both groups consisting of a roughly 75%/25% male/female split, and the majority of participants falling into the 25-45 age bracket (see graphs below).





Which video resulted in higher recall?

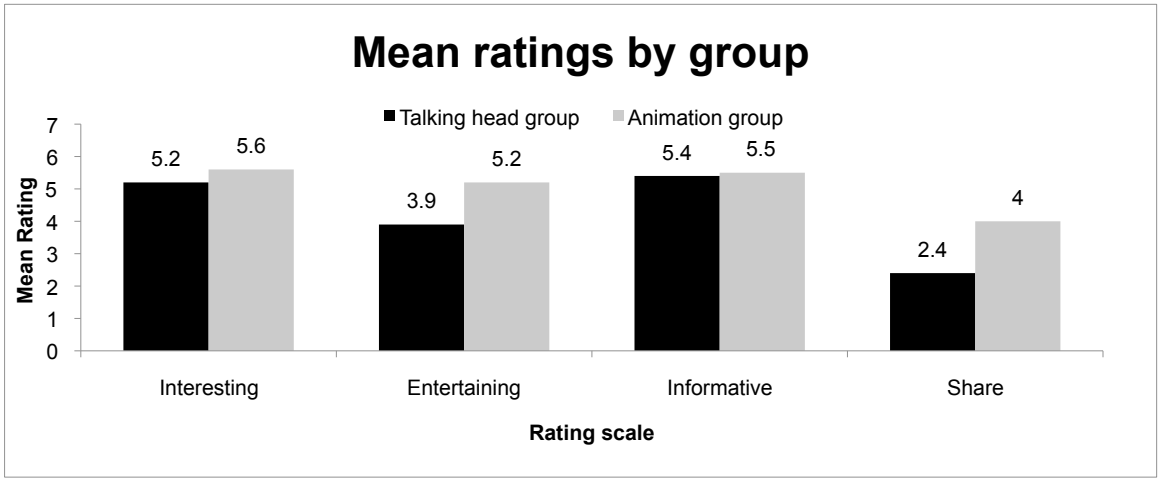
The percentage of participants in each group answering each of the four factual questions correctly is shown in the graph below.



Participants were 15% more likely to remember information after watching the animation-based video.

Which video was seen as more entertaining, interesting and informative? Which video is most likely to be shared with others?

The mean ratings of participants in each of the groups answering each of the rating questions are shown in the graph below.



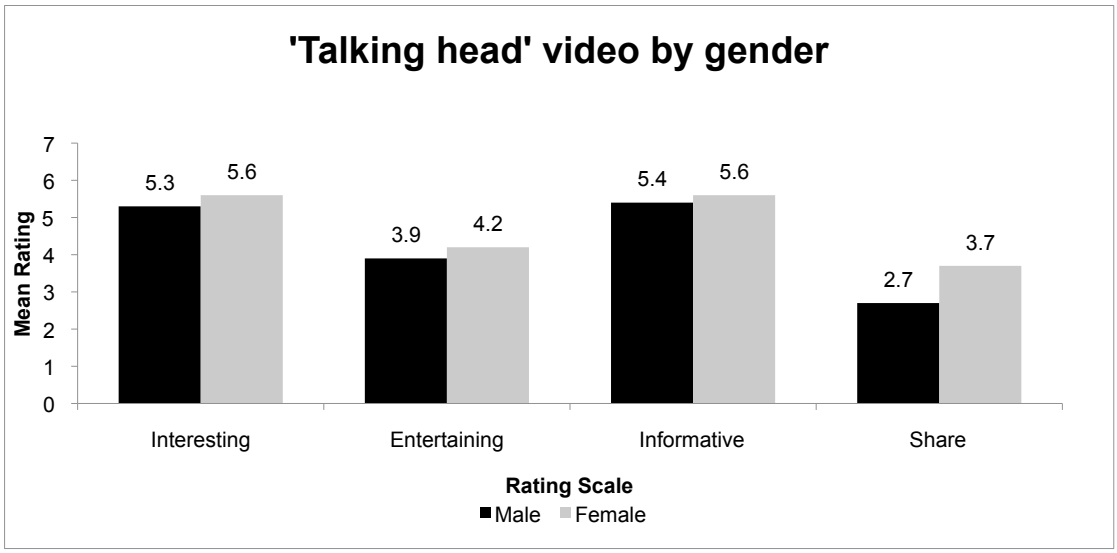
The animation video obtained higher mean ratings than the 'talking head' video across all four questions. The largest differences emerged from the 'How entertaining...' and 'How likely would you be to share....' questions, and reveal that participants found the animation video 33% more entertaining than the 'talking head' video, and were 66% more likely to share the video with others.

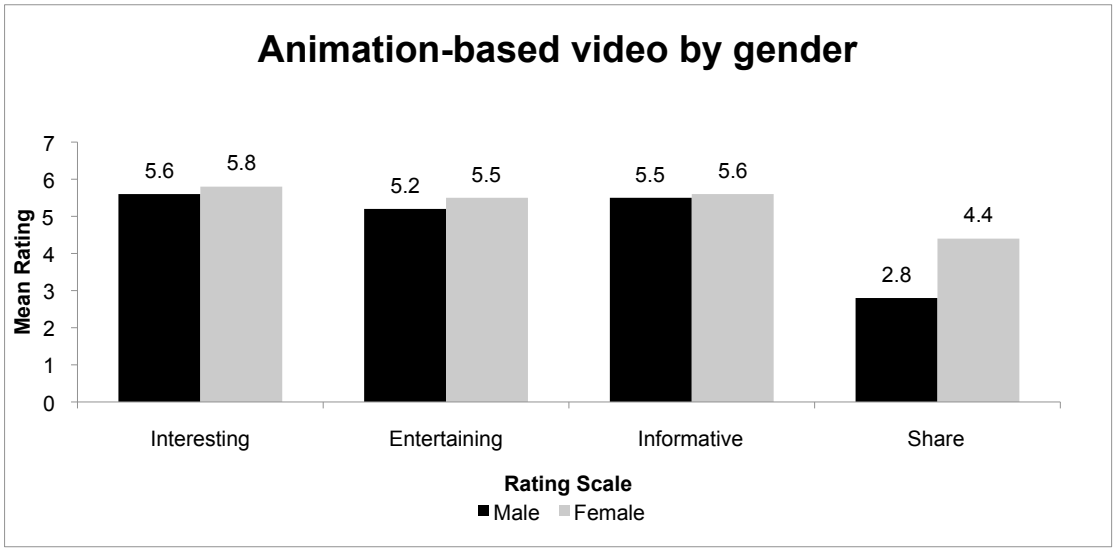
Participants found the animation-based video 33% more entertaining than the 'talking head' video

Participants were 66% more likely to share the animation-based video compared to the 'talking head' video.

Did men or women have different responses to the video?

The following two graphs show the ratings data analyzed by gender for each of the videos.





Men and women did not significantly differ in their responses to the two videos. However, females tended to give higher ratings than males to both videos when assessing how interesting, informative and entertaining they found the videos. Females were also more likely than males to share the videos.

Why do people share videos?

The following table presents the correlation coefficients (which can range between '0', which would indicate no relationship, to '1', which would indicate a perfect correlation) between participants' 'interesting', 'entertaining' and 'informative' ratings, and the likelihood of them sharing the video with others.

	'Talking head' video	Animation-based video
Interesting	.51	.55
Entertaining	.43	.49
Informative	.47	.52

All three factors influenced the likelihood of sharing, but participants' perceptions of how interesting and informative the video was played a more significant role than the degree to which they found the video entertaining.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document describes a large-scale online study that experimentally compared the psychological impact of a 'talking head' video with an animation-based video.

A self-selecting sample of over two thousand members of the public were randomly allocated of one of two groups. Participants in one group were presented with a video containing an academic describing research into the psychology of change. Participants in the other group were shown a video that had the same soundtrack as the 'talking head' video, but whose visual content comprised of an animation that illustrated the academic's comments.

Participants were then presented with questions about the factual content of the video, and also asked to rate the degree to which they found the video interesting, informative, and entertaining. Finally, they were asked to indicate how likely they were to share the video with others.

The main findings were as follows:

- The animation-based video resulted in a 15% increase in the retention of factual information.

- Participants found the animation-based video 33% more entertaining than the 'talking head' video.

- Participants were 66% more likely to share the animation-based video than the 'talking head' video.

- Females found both videos more interesting, informative and entertaining than males.

- The degree to which participants found the videos interesting and informative was more predictive of sharing than the degree to which they found the video entertaining.