

An Introduction

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The second issue of the Interdisciplinary Journal of Signage and Wayfinding is dedicated to the topic of visibility. As simply put by the Texas Transportation Institute:

Seeing the road and everything around it while driving is not a preferred option, rather it is an essential component of safe driving. Driving is a visual activity, and as we make our way down a road, we all look at a wide range of visual inputs—the roadway, the surrounding terrain, other vehicles, roadside buildings and advertisements and traffic control devices such as signs, markings, and signals—to help us get where we are going. How we distinguish those visual inputs and maneuver the vehicle safely varies from person to person and can depend on quite a number of random, uncontrollable things—the weather, time of day, driver age, health and experience, as well as unexpected distractions inside or outside the vehicle—all can have an effect.

<https://tti.tamu.edu/group/visibility/>, last visited 6/12/17. As businesses know, their businesses must be visible to be viable. Clear signage enhances their visibility in the marketplace.

Regardless of sign type or intended audience, being able to see and read the message on a sign is critical. In this issue of the Interdisciplinary Journal of Signage and Wayfinding, Bullough explores the literature on visibility as it relates to the conspicuity and legibility of signage. This article provides contexts for what we know about the typographic and symbolic characteristics of signs, as well as the environments in which they are placed. Pedestrians rely on signs to help them navigate exterior and interior environments. Apardian and Alum demonstrate the importance of different high-visibility pedestrian warning signs at midblock crossings for pedestrian safety. Symonds explores the significance of clear wayfinding strategies inside airports while Ward and his students provides an analysis of the critical wayfinding elements on college campuses.

Visibility is also critical for motorists as they traverse US roadways. Auffrey and Hilderbrant provide an accounting of the lost opportunities of those businesses whose signs cannot be viewed by passersby. Utilizing 3M's Visual Analysis Software, the researchers demonstrate the average probability that a sign is being viewed by motorists and make recommendations for improving visibility.