

Does organizing your page help organize your mind?

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If you have ever wondered how you manage to keep track of the immense amount of information coming to you each day, you might want to thank the positional tagging system in your mind.

A recent study from Murdoch University investigated the Spatial Positional Association of Response Codes (SPoARC) effect to determine just how organization in our cognitive systems is impacted by the way we receive our [information](#).

The research, "Spatial organization in the [human mind](#) as a function of the distance between stimuli," is [published](#) in the *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology*.

Murdoch University Pro Vice Chancellor of Health and Education Professor Guillermo Campitelli said the new understandings have valuable applications in [everyday life](#).

"Understanding spatial positional association can help inform strategies to determine how to present information for learning and teaching and to disseminate information to the public," Professor Campitelli said.

Murdoch University Ph.D. student and lead author, Hannah Fenwick said the study focused on the spacing and order of information.

"As humans, we store and process a vast amount of information in the mind, and for us to make sense of this information our mind needs to organize it efficiently," Ms. Fenwick said.

"Studies investigating serial order in working memory have shown that participants from Western cultures are faster at responding to items presented at the beginning of a sequence using their left hand and faster at responding to items at the end with their [right hand](#).

"This is known as the SPoARC effect, which provides evidence that our mind spatially tags information in our memory system from left to right consistent with our culture's reading and writing direction.

"Our study investigated the flexibility of spatialization by testing the effect that distance between items presented on a screen has on the magnitude of the SPoARC effect.

"We hypothesized that by increasing the distance between items on a screen, a larger Spatial Positional Association of Response Codes would be found.

"What we found was that no matter how the information is spaced on a screen or page, it will be treated the same way by your mind.

"These findings add to the robust evidence of the SPoARC effect and deepen understanding of how the human mind organizes information, which has significant implications for improving memory retention strategies and enhancing learning techniques."

More information: Hannah Fenwick et al, Spatial organisation in the human mind as a function of the distance between stimuli, *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology* (2024). [DOI: 10.1177/17470218241255690](https://doi.org/10.1177/17470218241255690)

Provided by Murdoch University

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