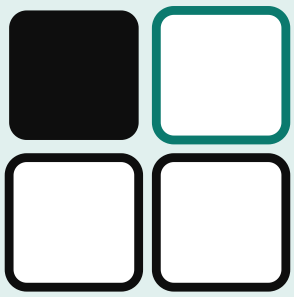
Approach

EAST framework

A Behavioural Insights Team framework that sums up how to encourage a behavior: make it easy, attractive, social and timely.

In Spanish
Marco EAST

Origin
Behavioural Insights Team (2014)



What it's for

Offers a short, practical checklist for designing interventions that change behavior without banning or forcing.

Principles

Easy
Remove steps and effort, and choose defaults well.

Attractive
Make it catch attention and feel desirable.

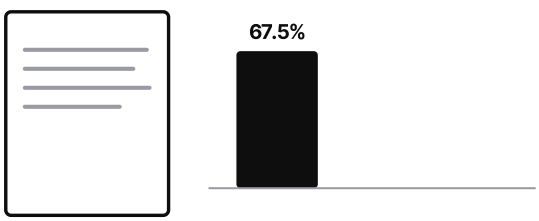
Social
Show what others do and rely on commitments.

Timely
Intervene when people are most receptive.

An example

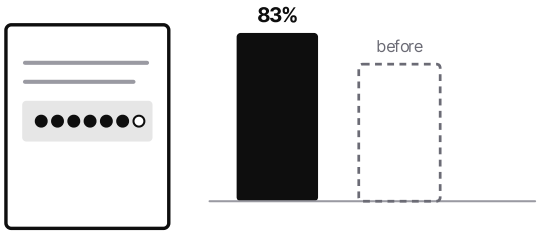
The UK tax authority sent letters to people with unpaid taxes.

Standard letter



It reminded them of the debt and how to pay it. **67.5% paid.**

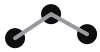
Letter with a social norm



It added that most people in their town had already paid on time. **83% paid.**

Telling people what others do was enough to get many more people to pay, at no extra cost.

How it's done

1 

Choose the behavior you want to encourage, specifically.

2 

Go through the four letters: remove effort, catch attention, show what others do and pick the moment.

3 

Run an experiment to see which version really works.

Applications in design

When to use it

Before asking people to do something: pay, sign up, reply or change a habit.

Avoid

Using social pressure with false or exaggerated data.

Don't fall for it

Test with a control group: what works in one service may not work in another.

+15 percentage points

What the research says

The letter saying that most people in the town had already paid raised payment from 67.5% to 83%, in a trial with 140,000 taxpayers (Behavioural Insights Team, 2012).

●●○ **Debated evidence.** A later trial with more than 200,000 people confirmed that social norm messages increase payment, although the size of the effect depends on the message (Hallsworth et al., 2017).

Connections

Builds on

- COM-B model
- Fogg Behavior Model
- Nudge and choice architecture
- Default effect
- Deceptive patterns (dark patterns)

Used by

- Behavioral design

Authors and works

2014	**Behavioural Insights Team**	Published the EAST framework.
2017	**Michael Hallsworth et al.**	Tested social norm messages in tax letters with more than 200,000 people.

Sources

Original sources

- Service, O., Hallsworth, M., Halpern, D., Algate, F., Gallagher, R., Nguyen, S., Ruda, S., & Sanders, M. (2014). EAST: Four simple ways to apply behavioural insights. Behavioural Insights Team. View source (https://www.bi.team/publications/east-four-simple-ways-to-apply-behavioural-insights/)
- Behavioural Insights Team (2012). Applying behavioural insights to reduce fraud, error and debt. Cabinet Office. View source (https://www.bi.team/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/BIT_FraudErrorDebt_accessible.pdf)
- Hallsworth, M., List, J. A., Metcalfe, R. D., & Vlaev, I. (2017). The behavioralist as tax collector: Using natural field experiments to enhance tax compliance. Journal of Public Economics, 148, 14–31. View source (https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2017.02.003)

Last reviewed: October 25, 2026

Atlas público de diseño, de Adriana Ojeda. Texto e ilustraciones bajo licencia CC BY 4.0.