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Visual working memory and the active vision perspective

Due to the limits of visual acuity, the eyes must be directed toward regions of interest in a scene to resolve and encode the details. As a result, information is sampled from a scene via a sequence of alternating saccades and fixations. A program of research is presented that examines a number of inter-related questions from the active vision perspective, which gives the saccade-fixation sequence a central role in visual cognition. One set of questions concerns the role for short-term or working memory in vision. What information can be acquired from a single fixation? What information is maintained in the service of on-going behavioral goals? Studies reported support the idea that objects are the unit of memory capacity as well as a general preference for "just in time" processing strategies that minimize the contents of visual working memory.

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