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Experiments at Conferences...

As part of Sendhil Mullainathan's plenary at the recent Microfinance Impact & Innovation Conference, he showed a video of an experiment conducted by psychologist Daniel Simons. The experiment sets out to illustrate the cognitive constraint of "change blindness" or "limited attention." Participants approach a desk to fill out a form, and whilst they are looking at the form, the first experimenter quickly switch places with a colleague. Around 75% of participants didn't notice the switch.

Naturally we leapt at the opportunity to do some experimenting of our own at the conference. Sadly there was no rigorous data collection involved this time, but we did manage to catch out Laura from AidWatch at our desk. Laura - did you spot the difference?

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