



Service Definition Document

G-Cloud 14



Web Usability

We are UX specialists. We provide inclusive user research and advice to optimise digital services

We are a strategic user experience (UX) consultancy, established in 2002. We are customer - not technology - led. We deliver more than just reports; our approach ensures research gets turned into action.

- We combine rigorous user-focused research with a process to generate agreed and actionable results quickly and cost effectively
- Our people combine experience in UX and working with organisations in the private, public and not-for-profit sectors
- We are based in Wiltshire but work for clients based all over the UK and undertake research wherever required



Service Summary

Why Web Usability?

We are user centred: Only by putting the user at the centre of all decision making can you be sure users will have a good experience on your site. We are experts at doing this, having done nothing else for 22 years!

We are action orientated: Knowing the problems is only half the answer. Identifying the right actions and getting them implemented is the difficult bit! As well as doing research we focus on the 'process' of getting actions implemented.

We are specialists: Web Usability is a specialist UX agency. Our entire focus is on understanding what users want and establishing how best to deliver this.

We provide relevant and reliable research participants: We undertake our own recruitment of testers and respondents – we do not use third parties. We believe this allows us to recruit more accurately to our client's specification, provide greater flexibility, and treat testers and respondents in a decent and ethical way.

Discovery



Discovery

Discovery is an essential process to understand user needs, motivations and contexts and potential service/environment constraints to develop effective cloud-based digital services. Our approach is tailored to your requirements, and we offer a range of research methods in line with Gov.uk Service Manual.



User research

User research helps you understand what your users want and how they want to engage with you: it informs the development of effective cloud-based digital services. We tailor our approach using a range of tried and tested qualitative and quantitative research methods to surface rich insight into user needs.



Persona development

Personas help your organisation focus on users and their goals. They act as 'stand ins' for real users and guide decisions about cloud-based digital service aims, content, functionality and design. We use a combination of internal and external research methods to develop personas that are grounded in evidence and reality.

Usability



Usability testing

Usability testing with real people is the best way of assessing the intuitiveness, ease-of-use and effectiveness of a cloud-based digital service: it provides insight into users' behaviours as well as their attitudes. Testing can be conducted in a lab or remotely. Our approach generates actionable insights and recommendations to improve the user experience.



Agile usability testing

Incorporate usability testing into your agile development environment. Fast turnaround times, live streaming of research and on-the-day reporting ensures usability testing fits with your sprints and can form part of an iterative development process.



Expert review

An expert review is an evaluation based on UX best practice and our knowledge/experience of undertaking research with thousands of users since 2002. It can be a quicker/more cost-effective alternative to testing with real users and is also useful when combined with usability testing in an iterative development programme.

UX Services



Information architecture

An intuitive information architecture (IA) is the bedrock of an effective cloud-based digital service enabling users to achieve their goals and complete tasks as quickly and easily as possible. We develop user-centred IAs using discovery research, card sorting and usability testing in a collaborative way that guarantees buy-in from your stakeholders.



User journey mapping

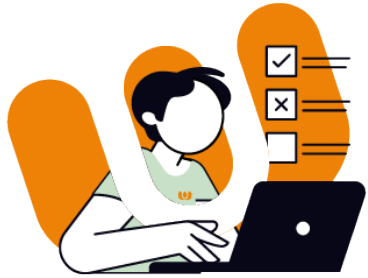
User journey mapping describes the user interaction with an organisation through cloud-based digital services and any other touch points. It puts the focus on the user, helping to increase user satisfaction and conversion rates, break down organisational silos and create a cross-organisational view of the user.



Top tasks survey

A quantitative methodology that identifies and prioritises the key tasks users want to accomplish on a website. This informs the development of the information architecture, navigation and content to ensure that users can get quickly and easily to the information they want.

Accessibility



Accessibility audit

Ensure your cloud-based digital service is compliant with WCAG 2.2 to Level A, AA & AAA with a comprehensive accessibility audit. Evaluated 'by hand', using a range of assistive technologies, the audit provides recommendations to achieve compliance and ensure that most disabled users can use the site without difficulty.



Accessibility statement

An accessibility statement demonstrates a commitment to making a cloud-based digital service usable by all users whatever their level of ability or disability. It can be made following the successful implementation of the recommendations resulting from an accessibility audit of a cloud-based digital service against WCAG 2.2 guidelines.



Disabled usability testing

Ensure your service is inclusive and usable for everyone with disabled user testing. We test your cloud-based digital service with users with a range of visual, physical and learning disabilities using their preferred assistive technology. Testing with people with disabilities should be conducted after usability testing and an accessibility audit.



Case studies

Some of our public sector clients



Blood and Transplant



Cabinet Office



Leicester
City Council



Belfast
City Council

GREATER
LONDON
AUTHORITY



Arts & Humanities
Research Council



Leadership Academy



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES



Intellectual
Property
Office



Money &
Pensions
Service



UK
Parliament



Discovery research

National Highways



Background

National Highways (NH) operates, maintains and improves England's motorways and major A roads. NH engaged Web Usability to conduct in depth discovery research to understand users' needs and the effectiveness of their existing digital services in order to identify opportunities for improvement.

What we did

We embarked on an ambitious programme of activities including a review of existing user evidence, interviews with NH staff, research with a range of users for NH services, and workshops with NH staff to identify opportunities and maximise buy-in.

The internal review considered the full portfolio of digital services, 7 websites and apps, social media, site analytics, internal documents and processes, and interviews with 18 key staff.

The results of this review were fed back to the project team and key stakeholders and the insights used to shape their digital strategy.

To ensure this new direction was user-evidenced, we then conducted 50 individual research sessions with users located across England - a mix of public, trade and policy people with an interest in roads.

Conducted both in person and remotely, on mobile and desktop, these sessions allowed us to understand the user needs and gain usability insights into the existing NH digital services.

To maintain organisational buy in, we presented the outcomes of the research at a collaborative workshop with NH stakeholders. This process enabled us to co-created recommendations that fitted NH resourcing, technological and political constraint.

The outcome

This programme of discovery research delivered a clear roadmap for the future of NH's digital services including:

- Site aims
- User goals the site will support
- New top level information architecture and site navigation
- Content strategy
- User centric approach to developing the new site

Personas

Go Construct



Background

Go Construct (GC) is an online resource provided by CITB, the industry training board for the construction sector in England, Scotland and Wales. GC provides information for young people considering a career in construction and is the destination for campaigns to encourage more people into construction.

The old website was unfocused, difficult to use and did not meet user goals. In order to guide the development of a new website, GC wanted to develop personas to fully understand their users, their goals, motivations and frustrations and how they wanted to engage with the website.

What we did

To ensure the new personas were based on a solid foundation of user evidence, we conducted 18 discovery interviews with a mix of young people (aged 13-19), parents and careers advisor.

Interviews were conducted individually and focused on understanding their information goals, motivations and pain points. The GC website was used to stimulate discussion once unprompted feedback was exhausted.

Following the interviews, the Web Usability team created a goals matrix and used it to identify patterns across the different user groups.

We believe that digital personas should be goal-led with each persona representing a group of users with common goals: what differentiates personas are distinct goals and requirements.

With patterns identified, we were able to flesh out these emerging personas into 'archetype' or representative users that act as stand ins for real users.

To maintain organisational buy in, we presented the outcomes of the research at a collaborative workshop with GC stakeholders. This process enabled us to co-create and finesse the personas to ensure they fitted with GC's strategic priorities.

The outcome

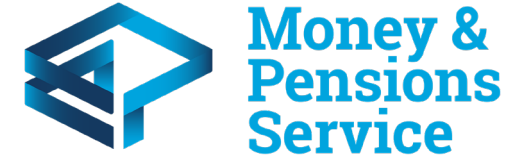
We developed two primary personas for GC, focused on the two primary types of young user: someone decided on a career in construction and someone still deciding on options.

We also developed three secondary personas that are in supporting roles: parents, careers advisors and professionals in the construction industry.

These personas have subsequently been used to guide site strategy, functionality and design developments. As well as focusing the team on what to develop, personas highlighted what not to develop.

Usability testing

Money and Pensions Service



Background

The Money and Pensions Service (MaPS) were developing a tool to allow users to explore and compare their investment options when taking part of their pension as a lump sum. MaPS wanted to carry out 3 iterative rounds of usability testing to ensure that the tool will be useful and easy to use.

The testing need to fit into MaPS existing sprint cycles, meaning speed and efficiency was paramount.

What we did

At the beginning of the contract, we held a kick off call with the MaPS project team to define the testing objectives, agree the programme of testing and confirm tester profiles.

For each round of testing, Web Usability recruited 6 target users (people with a range of pension types, knowledge and experience) and developed a facilitation guide that was used to shape the structure of the testing sessions.

Testing sessions were undertaken 1-2-1 with testers and last 1 hour. Testers explored the tool using a real-time think-aloud protocol to identify issues with both the usability, content and proposition.

Testing was carried out remotely using Zoom, allowing us to share screen and mouse control with testers. Observers joined the sessions anonymously so they could see, in real time, the challenges being experienced.

The MaPS project manager worked closely with the Web Usability Consultant throughout to shape the research. On completion of the final session in each round, observers took part in a facilitated discussion to agree on issues identified and discuss actions to take into the next round of testing

The outcomes

Significant changes were made to the structure and content of the tool across the 3 rounds of testing, resulting in a robust, clear and usable tool.

The user focus and observer engagement throughout the project also ensured that the client team, including wider stakeholders, understood the reasons behind the changes, and the requirements for the tool going forward.



Background

The Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) is the industry training board for the construction sector in England, Scotland and Wales. They are sponsored by the Department for Education and funded by a levy collected from all large construction companies and federations.

They wanted to develop a new website that was more user-focused and would better meet the needs of their target users. In order to do this, they wanted to begin by developing a new information architecture (IA) to underpin the new site, based on the goals of their users

What we did

Using discovery research methods with large numbers of users and internal customer-facing staff, we had identified a long list of user goals and used these to develop personas.

We then took these user goals and used them as the basis for open card sorting exercises with key members of the CITB digital team, to begin to establish a logical structure for the IA.

This proposed structure was then compared against content mapping work carried out by the CITB team to achieve two goals: to identify any gaps in the draft IA, and review the existing site content to identify content that did not meet user goals and, therefore, should not be migrated to the new site.

Once a first draft IA had been developed and agreed with the stakeholders, we tested it with target users using a digital tool called Treejack. Testers were given a 'naked' information architecture (i.e. without any content) and asked to click through it to achieve tasks based on key user goals. This allowed us to quickly identify areas where the new IA was not working and informed us of how the users were thinking about the content and the link labels.

Based on the first round of testing we iterated the draft IA through workshops with the stakeholder team and then tested again. After a final round of tweaks the new IA was ready to go to the developers.

The outcome

New, user-led IA with an overall task success rate in testing of over 70%, including lower priority tasks.

This was used to build a much more effective and straightforward mega-menu style navigation on the new website, which was well received by users and has been much more successful than the previous site.

NHS Blood and Transplant



Background

NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) were concerned about the number of people who register to become a blood donor but never go on to attend an appointment. By better understanding the user journeys and needs, along with the business needs and rules, opportunities to improve the journeys could be identified and tested.

The project aimed to:

- Describe the existing new donor journey and identify pain points
- Reimagine the journey to create a better user experience
- Prototype and test revisions to the current digital journey to establish principles to take forward

What we did

Existing research and understanding was augmented by two email surveys to people on the blood donor register – one to people who had registered and attended 1 appointment, and the other to people who had registered but never attended an appointment (7661 total responses), plus online surveys in the search and book process (2050 responses).

This allowed us, in conjunction with key members of the NHSBT digital team, to map the user journey, identify pain points and drop-off locations/rates and to identify opportunities for improvement.

This journey was then refined through workshops with NHSBT staff including senior stakeholders, and possible alternatives were discussed and agreed. The changes to the digital part of the journey (the online search and book tool) were then prototyped by Web Usability and NHSBT and tested with a total of 13 testers over two rounds.

The outcome

The project provided a clear user journey map for stakeholders to understand the new donor journey. We also identified a number of opportunities to improve the journey and increase the efficiency of the process – both at a large-scale, 'reimagining' level, and also smaller-scale, quicker fixes.

The digital prototypes formed the basis for rapidly actionable and measurable improvements and were immediately integrated into the blood tech strategy as well as the new donor journey reimagining project.

Leicester City Council



Background

Leicester City Council (LCC), as a public body, is required to comply with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.

Like many councils, they have a large and complex digital estate with many websites, apps and portals in use. LCC wished to establish an ongoing accessibility partnership to ensure this estate was compliant with the accessibility regulations.

What we did

In 2022, Web Usability began working with LCC to undertake accessibility audits against the WCAG 2.1, and now 2.2, to Level A and AA. In that time, we have undertaken 33 audits.

Accessibility is often perceived as a complex and confusing subject, especially for non-technical members of client teams. We aim to demystify the process and provide a clear 'to-do' list that can be distributed to the correct content or development teams to ensure the whole organisation gets on board with accessibility.

To begin each audit, we identified a representative sample of pages that covered all the unique functionality and elements that existed on the website, including forms, tables, images and videos. Each of these pages was then audited 'by hand' against the WCAG 2.1, and now 2.2, to Level A & AA.

This involved testing with a range of assistive technologies, including screen readers, screen magnifiers and speech recognition software along with a series of manual inspection techniques, that considered the HTML, CSS markup and ARIA labels plus colour contrast and other design elements.

Testing was conducted on a mix of devices and browsers, including desktop and mobile, Safari, Google Chrome and Firefox.

The outcome

For each audit, all WCAG guideline non-compliances were documented in an accessible PDF. Issues were prioritised based on how often they occurred and how much they impacted the user journey. This helped LCC structure their workplans going forward.

Following the remediation of issues we have undertaken subsequent re-audits to ensure adherence to WCAG and developed a number of accessibility statements to be compliant with PSBAR.

Disabled user testing

Belfast City Council



Belfast
City Council

Background

Belfast City Council (BCC) is committed to offering their users as accessible and inclusive experience as possible.

As well as working hard to ensure WCAG compliance is achieved across their digital estate, BCC wanted to go a step further and check how practically accessible their main corporate website was for people with lived experiences of disability.

What we did

To assess the practical accessibility of the BCC corporate website, we undertook a round user testing with people with disabilities.

To begin, we held a remote kick off call with BCC to understand the testing objectives, the key user journeys to be tested and the people to be included in the testing.

Web Usability then undertook recruitment of people with a range of disabilities, including those with sight loss, sight impairments, physical disabilities and neurodiversity.

Testing was conducted remotely, using screen sharing software. Testers were asked to share their screen and, where relevant, their assistive technology with the Web Usability consultant moderating the session. This allowed us to observe their behaviours, the interaction of their assistive technologies as well as probing, in real time, on their attitudes; how they found the experience of using the website.

Testers were asked to complete a series of pre-agreed tasks that tested the key customer journeys on the website.

The sessions were recorded with videos made available to BCC for subsequent viewing.

The outcome

The insights from the testing sessions were compiled into a detailed PowerPoint report. The issues were categorised using a traffic light system to help BCC prioritise their workplans. Where relevant, we also flagged where issues were non-compliant with WCAG to further help BCC structure their remediation plans.

The findings were presented back to BCC and the recommendations shaped to ensure they were implementable. This has allowed BCC to deliver a more than compliant website; one that is genuinely accessible to all.



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