Case study

Wellcome Trust publication success built on user research and testing
Wellcome Trust utilised user experience (UX) and usability expertise to support the successful launch of Mosaic, its online magazine.

In 2014 the Wellcome Trust launched its Mosaic online publication, which has proved a triumph. Our UX and usability services have been employed from the project’s inception, providing expert insights and helping to power its success.

The Wellcome Trust is a global charitable foundation dedicated to improving health. Headquartered in London, it provides more than £700m annually, supporting bright minds in science, the humanities and social sciences, and public engagement.

“The relationship with System Concepts has been very active. Their work has had a massive bearing on how the website is presented and functions.”

Nancy Willacy, Lead User Experience Practitioner, The Wellcome Trust
The Wellcome Trust identified a market opportunity to launch an online scientific publication aimed at non-specialised public and opinion-former audiences.

In order to do this successfully, it needed to find out more about its intended audiences.

We were brought on board at an early stage to provide user research expertise, delivering audience insights and giving the Wellcome Trust a deeper market understanding.

In the early stages of the project, research was needed on potential users' needs and expectations, such as:

- How potential users consume long form literature
- The relative desirability of video, audio and text content
- Tablet and mobile device usage, and how to make Mosaic future friendly.

“The information from the audience diary study was so valuable. It’s still the backbone for our product personas. It gave us a really strong set of hypotheses to move forward with, and develop a prototype.”

Nancy Willacy, Lead User Experience Practitioner, Wellcome Trust
**What we did**

We’ve undertaken a series of user research and testing programmes since 2012.

Initially, we focused on ensuring that the new magazine filled genuine market gaps. We also looked at identifying potential untapped user audiences and opportunities for this type of product.

1. **ROUND 1: Early stage product development phase**

For the first piece of research, our team used targeted vox pops and a seven day diary study. Our work delivered insights on user profiles, the triggers for people to read up on or research science topics, how they go about it, the most effective content and formats, and how they evaluate publication trustworthiness.

2. **ROUND 2: Post-launch phase**

Following the 2013 launch of ‘Mosaic’, the new free-to-access online publication, we conducted rigorous usability testing. As well as looking at standard areas such as navigation and comprehension, we also investigated potential issues that the Wellcome Trust team had identified.

The usability testing included a series of in-depth focus groups, validating product concepts and identifying the most powerful areas of product appeal for different user groups.

3. **ROUND 3: Product tuning phase**

A year into Mosaic’s life, we undertook a further round of work, this time employing our specialist user research lab facility in London to discover more about users’ online behaviour and interactions.

Nancy Willacy says that this input has had “a massive bearing” on how the website is presented and functions, improving usability and ensuring that users’ needs are met.
Benefits

Launching a completely new product was a brave move by the Wellcome Trust, but with the support of smart user research and testing, it’s paid-off.

Nancy Willacy describes our support as, “Exceptional,” continuing, “Everyone within the business feels that Mosaic has been a success. One of our goals was to see our articles republished on other websites and in other print publications, and that’s been extremely successful.”

Content read by 10 million in first year

Mosaic has met all of the editorial team’s goals. In fact, almost 10 million people across the world read Mosaic’s original articles in its first year.

Robust methodology & reports

Robust methodology is always the cornerstone of our approach, so our clients enjoy maximum confidence in our insights, findings and recommendations.

This certainly rings true for the Wellcome Trust, as Nancy testifies, “I don’t have any qualms about sharing reports with the rest of the organisation because I know that they stand up to scrutiny.

That’s really important to me.”
Could your business benefit from expert UX insights?

For friendly advice on how we can help your business, just get in touch.

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