

Case study

**Amadeus
takes airline
website
usability to
new heights**

amadeus





Usability testing enhances iterative, tablet-first design of e-Retail product

System Concepts has worked with Amadeus on several high profile ecommerce-related projects. Amadeus' e-Retail product is one of the world's most widely used airline Internet booking engines.

A white-label solution deployed on hundreds of airline industry websites, e-Retail is the vital connection between airlines and travellers, powering transactions and revenue. When Amadeus committed to taking a tablet-first approach to the redesign of e-Retail, it engaged us to deliver business critical usability testing.

Having previously worked with us to address the accessibility of the e-Retail product, Amadeus took the decision in early 2016 to optimise the e-Retail user interface for tablets. It engaged its internal user experience (UX) teams, including Marina Castejón Ramírez, a usability specialist.

“System Concepts always offer really good insights on the best way to approach a specific research issue. Their knowledge is so valuable.”

Marina Castejón Ramírez, Usability Specialist for e-Retail, Amadeus



Challenge

Marina explains that within an IT organisation like Amadeus, the UX team has a vital role to play in advocating a user centred approach, and communicating the value of usability techniques. She was involved in initiating design work, analysing the product, and prioritising the components that would need most change.

Our task was to conduct user tests and advise on the information architecture, testing the effectiveness of alternative designs in presenting a lot of travel booking related information and options, all within a small area of screen real estate. We also needed to deliver insights on different users' level of knowledge of tablet specific gestures and features, and the implications for the e-Retail bookings process.





What we did

We undertook multiple rounds of user testing of different tablet designs. Each round included the initial briefing, recruitment of participants, testing, and reporting results, before Amadeus undertook iterative design changes and re-briefed us for the next round.

Tight deadlines

Amadeus used prototyping software for the design iterations, so new designs were produced very quickly, with very fast turnaround between testing cycles. We had to deliver successive rounds of research against these challenging timescales.

Marina Castejón Ramírez comments, “System Concepts work very quickly and get back to you really fast. That’s helpful where you have super tight deadlines.”

Methodologies

The testing focused on 6 key pages, addressing a series of user scenarios. On the last round of testing, the fact that one of the designs being tested was fully interactive while the other was not, added a further challenge. We were able

to draw on our experience to come up with workarounds and different methodologies to keep the research on track.

“If we are not sure what task to give a user or how to approach functionality for testing, System Concepts’ consultants will always offer really good insights. Their knowledge is so valuable,” says Marina.

Amadeus provided a high level script, but a critical part of our role was to help create accurate scenarios, and then to synthesise issues into straightforward questions for participants. Marina comments, “System Concepts always raises the quality of the testing with their suggestions.”

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Marina Castejón Ramírez, Usability Specialist for e-Retail, Amadeus



Benefits

Usability specialist Marina Castejón Ramírez sees widespread benefits of the usability research we provided – for the designers, developers and product marketing teams at Amadeus, as well as the company’s airline clients and the end users of the e-Retail product.

For designers, the data provides a solid, evidence-based foundation on which to proceed. For developers, this data makes it easier to understand the need to develop something that may be more technically challenging, in order to enhance the user experience.

Creating a big impression

The work really benefits product marketing, too: it means Amadeus can showcase the best possible product interface to clients and prospects, reducing the customisation task for them, and speeding their implementation.

“The first airline we presented the product to was delighted. It gives such a good impression: airlines see that Amadeus considers and values innovative, cool, easy to use interfaces,” enthuses Marina, “Knowing that our products are based on expert user tests and research, and that we’re working on tablet interfaces, makes a big impact.

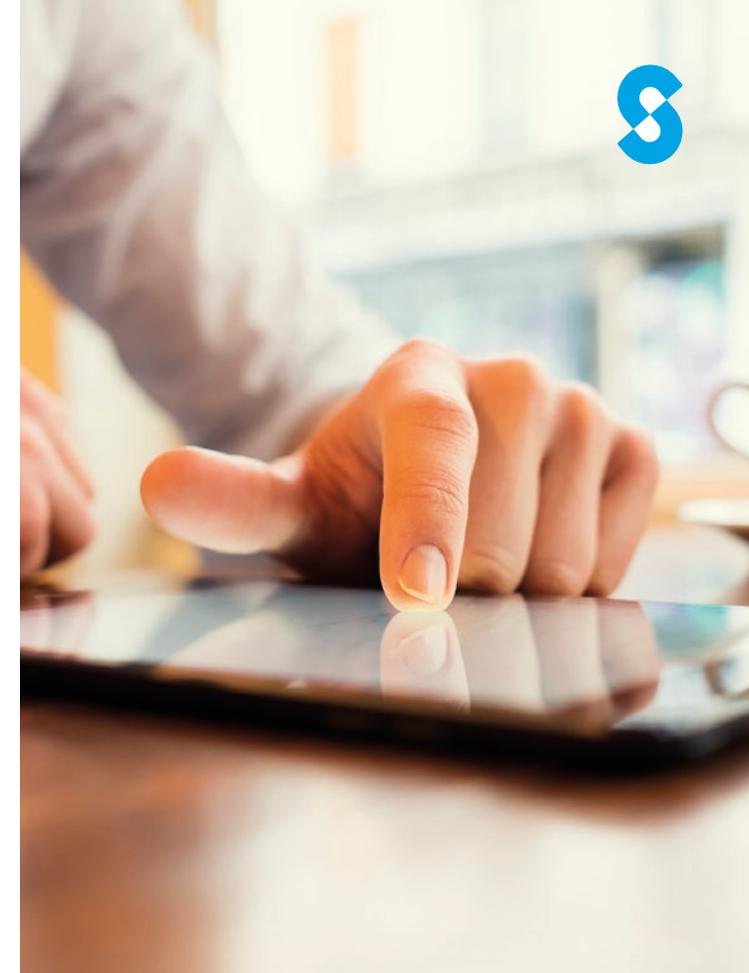
Airlines value our effort to be an innovative and technically advanced partner.”

Strong collaborative relationship

The working relationship between Amadeus and our UX consultants has been excellent for both parties. The System Concepts team respects Amadeus’s commitment to multiple rounds of usability research and iterative design, when time to market is always so important, while Marina says that, “You have the feeling that System Concepts are ‘there’ for you. I trust their professional opinion and know that they’re after the most unbiased, objective research data.”

Marina’s advice

For teams just setting out on the design of a user interface, Marina advises, “Starting with users’ feedback, observations and high quality research is the best way to start building any new screen. User testing delivers valuable insights and is the right starting point for any UI design.”



“We have validated everything, got actionable items, and established a solid basis on which to develop the final design for tablet.”

Marina Castejón Ramírez, Usability Specialist for e-Retail, Amadeus

Could your business benefit from expert UX insights?

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

Call us on +44 (0)20 7240 3388

Email us info@system-concepts.com

Visit our website: www.system-concepts.com

2 Savoy Court, Strand, London WC2R 0EZ