



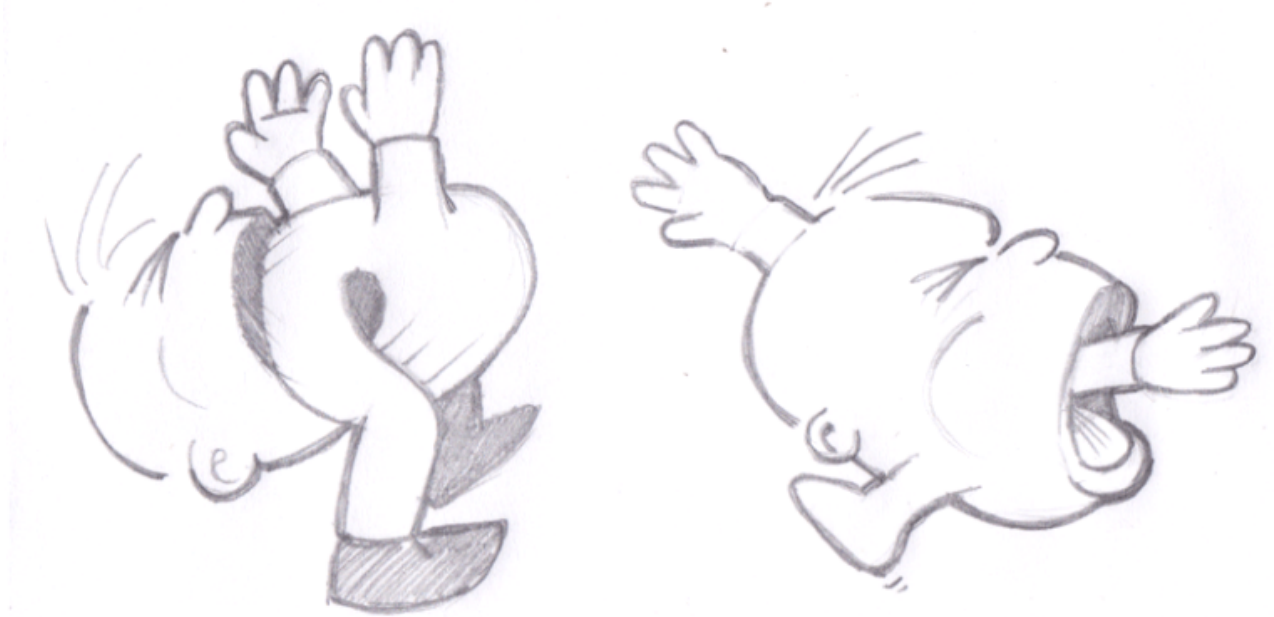
BETTER

UserExperience

BASICS

The Wonders of Isolated Online Thinking
And Designing For Personalised Internet
Awareness Bubbles.

The Importance of Collecting Data for Designing Better User Experiences



The two-way conversation between YOU, yes YOU and this interface you're interacting with right now...

A common mistake that people make when trying to design something completely foolproof is to underestimate the ingenuity of complete fools.

– Douglas Adams

The idea behind this *'blog-lett'* came about one day, just as I was in the process of completing a business related task on Facebook...

Distracted by the never ending posts and ads occupying my Timeline and peripheral vision – wink, wink. After several minutes or so, I simply couldn't remember why I was visiting the social media platform in the 1st place.

At that point I decided to ask myself 'loudly' by entering into the status **"Why did I come here in the 1st place?"**



Not really expecting a response, someone, however, did reply with a question that went something like this;

"So, you're fed up with the Island already huh?"

You see, I was on a visit abroad, and I guess my comment was misinterpreted as me being aggravated, or rather, “fed-up” with the Island I was staying at.

“Oh no!” I responded. “ I just can’t remember what I intended to do right here on Facebook... I can’t remember why I came here! ”

It was this minor instance that highlighted, not just my short term memory (lol), but how easily we often carry what we know in the real world onto the internet with misaligned context or perception.

This also highlights one of the major underlying problems with designing for the internet.



The Misconception Bubble

Of course, the type of misconceptions that occur on the Internet are also very much present in real world situations.

However, on the Internet where due to the absence of actual human contact; facial expressions and body language cues, interaction is often tainted with voids that can leave room for far too many assumptions and guesswork.



After all, let's face it, the two-way conversation that typically takes place between YOU (I'm speaking directly to you again...), yes YOU and the interface you're interacting with right now, often come with a default expectation...

– Your way, or the highway!

If the interaction is cumbersome or doesn't sit well with your expectations, you leave... Right?

It should then come as no surprise that optimising and designing content for the Internet requires at least some degree of consideration for predicting behaviour and user expectation. At least in order to develop a product or content that is intuitive for its audience.

What you know or think you know may be what determines your ability to effectively translate what you communicate, into action...

During any form of interaction, in order to absorb, process and place any information into context, it is typical of humans to start by asking questions internally.

Yes, just like the nonverbal communication that occurs in face-to-face situations.

With the internet, there's a slightly different nonverbal communication that occurs. Alongside an interface that aims at being intuitive enough to meet most user's expectations and hence provide a smooth user experience.



A Call for Anticipatory and Intuitively Heuristic Design? (say what!)

I would say that the best online experiences are the ones that also allow you to jump straight in and start using the product almost immediately, all because the navigation is self-explanatory or have simple aids to guide you along.

Just for reference, when I use the term 'product' I refer to any form of online content.

Anyway, the best online experiences are the ones where as a user, you can basically guess how to accomplish an action. Think of the simplicity that mostly Apple Computers introduced with its visual interface in the early days.

No longer such a big deal today, however, it was Apple's visual interface that provided very simple and intuitive ways of doing things on a computer; to delete a document, for example, is the simple case of dragging items into a wastebasket, or if you want to include an image with the layout of a document, a simple case of dragging the image right from the desktop or a folder, directly onto the page of an opened document. Today, this type of operation has now crept into becoming a common feature on the internet.

Designing in anticipatory mode is a complicated task, especially with so many variables to consider. This can be as complex as predicting an individual's health status to as basic as what steps to take next in an online course.

However, let me start by stating the obvious; Without testing, you have no real evidence that what you think or believe is actually true, or even works. You need data that is applicable to your unique and personal circumstance.

Measuring your performance through collecting data is vital for honing your marketing efforts and ensuring that your intentions are met. Plus, at least when measuring you have data to contrast with what you believe and what is actually taking place.

After all, as hinted earlier, everything you know is something you've heard from someone else; a book, newspaper, tv, radio, a history lesson from since primary school, the internet... So, you work with the best that you have.



So Where Do I Start?

The mistake with trying to predict how your audience will interact with your content or product is to make assumptions based just on your own understanding.

You need reference external to yourself...

Even though your sensibilities on consuming digital content and products within your industry may well be sufficient for you to provide an adequate experience for your audience. Your discoveries through testing, however, will equip you with additional data for enhancing your marketing and the usability of your product.

The ways in which you might use the data you collect is numerous. So, for example, let's imagine you notice a declining pattern in the number of subscribers you receive without one of those annoying pop-up forms installed on a specific website page you are promoting.

Now, let's say you have reason to believe that installing a form will increase the number of subscribers you will receive, plus you have an in demand bonus gift to give away to your new subscribers as an incentive or 'bribe'.

The simple solution would be; is to try promoting your website page with a pop-up form installed – right?

Now, because you are aware that pop-up forms can be annoying to visitors you introduce a form that uses [conditional logic](#).

However, even with the use of a lead system that employs [conditional logic](#) you continue to see a decline in subscribers. What then?

Well, with the history of data you may have or should have collected. You will now be able to at least check and decipher;

- the country and location of your most successful conversions...
- the browser most commonly used by your audience....
- from where your audience are mostly referred from, eg. social media, email, other websites etc.

Unravel The Confusion

From this simple information, you may be able to determine which countries and channels you should consider concentrating your marketing and advertising spend, whether your website page displays correctly across different browsers or whether you have some other issue...



If you have an existing mailing list, you can also access data that will help you understand which of your marketing and advertising efforts are most effective.

Which is why you ought to read the next related post, which will take you through a typical scenario and the blind spots that may be thwarting your current efforts.

Next: [Taking Care of the Typical Blind Spots When marketing Your Product](#)

What are your most annoying things about the internet? [comment](#)

Software for Your Business & Lifestyle



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