

User research helps Metro win in online Fantasy Football game

Metro is one of the top UK providers of online Fantasy Football gaming. In late 2009 it decided to redevelop the game to improve user experience and increase take-up of paid-for game features. Metro designed a first iteration of the new game for the 2010 World Cup, with novel Fantasy Football features such as 'wager' mini leagues, group tournaments and live scoring. Metro engaged *new experience* to conduct user research on this World Cup game to provide feedback for incorporation into the upcoming 2010-2011 season Premier League Fantasy Football game.



Live trial and self reporting

David McBeatty new experience

Activity (Make transfer)

If you make transfers several times, and have some feedback to add after the first one, please add it here

Date and approximate time when you did this

Sun 13 Jun 18:00pm
Sunday 13th June 18:55pm

What did you like about making a transfer?

You often making transfers online using my laptop, it was very quick and easy to deselect a player and then select the player I wanted to include in my team.

What, if anything, was confusing or didn't work well?

On Sunday, I had to make a transfer using my phone, but unless the player I wanted to transfer was listed in the 1st group of 11 players under each of the transfer groups I could not see the player I wanted to transfer in. I used the filter to search, which the browser then only gave me 11 players and I could not scroll down the complete list of players. So I needed to then log onto my laptop to make the transfer I wanted.

On Sunday I noticed that I got an invalid request or message when trying to make a transfer. This also appeared when refreshing the live scores, but once refreshed again the transfers could be made or live scores updated.

What would you change to improve the process of making a transfer?

You a lot of starting when announcements are not known by the viewing public, until about 30mins before kick-off and during the world cup, a lot of pages are out of date or outdated or a mixed 2 pages. So they always don't have direct access to make transfers/substitutions via laptop/desktop. Therefore, having the ability to make a transfer to be made would be very useful. These days I use my phone and the phone give you the ability to access the internet on the move. But as I have found out using my phone the transfer function does not completely work since you cannot scroll through the complete list of players. Therefore as previously mentioned a metro fantasy football phone app would be very useful indeed and it would be something I would pay a small amount to have.

What other comments about this do you have?

xxx

We recruited eight avid Fantasy Football players who had used a variety of games in the past, so as to benefit from their extensive experience. We began with a briefing session at our offices where we explained how participants should play and report back to us. In an interesting twist, we asked them to enrol into a 'participant mini-league' for a £5 wager each – as well as their normal incentive, everyone was playing for the additional pot. Participants trialled the game for three weeks through a mix of naturalistic usage and specified tasks, and wrote about their experiences in feedback forms which we monitored daily. We stayed in close contact with the players via email to ensure that feedback was of high quality and on-time, so we could carry out simultaneous analysis.

Post-trial in-depth discussions

The level of participants' engagement and quality of reporting were excellent. We picked up many common themes affecting usability, enjoyment and understanding of gameplay during the trial. We were especially able to concentrate on exploring areas of particular significance to Metro: increasing the appeal of playing against others for money, novel gameplay ideas, and engaging friends to play.

Research findings quickly implemented into the next version of the game

Our research methods combined real-life use and remote reporting with focussed lab-based discussion. This was effective in drawing out relatively straightforward usability improvements, and in establishing how players felt about more complex elements of the game – something only possible when a person incorporates a service into their daily life. Following our quick analysis, Metro was able to implement a significant number of recommendations into the Premier League game which was released two weeks later.



What Metro had to say about working with us

"*new experience* designed and executed an interesting and highly actionable project, most importantly on time and on budget. The *new experience* team was highly engaged with the project and definitely a team we'd be happy to work with again." *Andrew Murphy, Senior Insight Executive, Metro (Associated Newspapers)*

case study from new experience