

Out-of-the-box testing gets customers clicking with 3



Mobile operator 3 is the UK's leading provider of mobile broadband, giving customers access to broadband internet wherever they are without the need for a fixed-line connection. Setting up mobile broadband is easy with customers required to insert a SIM into the 'dongle' and then install software on their PC. However 3 was aware from calls to customer services that some customers had difficulty starting to use the service. 3 wished to understand how it could better support the experience and so reduce the costs of handling customer queries.

We observed potential users setting up mobile broadband for the first time

We recruited eight potential customers of 3 who expressed an interest in getting mobile broadband in the near future. We were sure to include a range of ages from people in their 20s to their 50s. We gave them a dongle pack, a SIM pack and a PC, and asked them to set it up in our usability suite just as they might at home. At the same time 3's user experience team were able to view what was going on in a room next door. Once they had set up the service we got participants to explore the control panel information and features.



Testing revealed some basic customer misconceptions about the service



It became apparent that potential customers have a limited understanding of how the service works. All but two were surprised to find a SIM card and didn't understand what it was for. Also, the design of the dongle made it hard for people to see how to insert the SIM while the user guide indicated that all users needed to do was plug and play. Another finding was that users were confused by the three available data allowances. They mixed them up with connection speeds, like they would have with fixed-line broadband. Findings like these helped 3's team identify the need for further investment in the user experience.

Implications for literature, user interface and dongle form factor

Most customers don't understand the ins and outs of mobile broadband and, quite possibly don't need to – as long as it works. But we realised it is important to give customers some basic understanding so that they have realistic expectations of the service. For example, because it works like mobile it won't work underground. We were able to come up with some simple ideas and recommendations across different elements of the user experience to ensure that customers find it easy to set up their mobile broadband irrespective of their level of understanding or interest in the technology.

What 3 had to say about the insights they gained

"Watching potential customers set up their mobile broadband was an eye opener. new experience's testing of the out-of-the-box mobile broadband experience along with their insightful analysis and recommendations will help us reduce customer queries and retain customers." *Julie Kennedy, Head of User Experience, 3*

