

## Creating a unique and relevant product was safest bet for TalkTalk

As a part of its commitment to helping families make safe use of the internet TalkTalk, the leading UK phone and broadband provider, resolved to develop a parental control product that would be easy to use and fit with the way real families live their lives. TalkTalk conceived of a network-based service that would ensure safety across *all* devices connecting to the home internet connection. To ensure that it was designed around its customers TalkTalk engaged *new experience* to conduct depth interviews, then participatory design workshops around a paper-based concept, and finally usability testing of an interactive prototype.

## Navigating a minefield of sensibilities

While parents of younger children often exert quite explicit control over use of the internet we were aware from previous research that the situation is more complex with teenagers where families tend to develop systems of trust around internet use. A key challenge was to develop a product that would be accepted and adopted by different members of the family without undermining trust or appearing to unilaterally change the rules.

## Interviews with teens and workshops with parents

We started by conducting one-on-one interviews with teens to explore their attitudes towards parental control. They were naturally resistant to having new restrictions imposed on them but interestingly felt that social networking could be so addictive and distracting that they were open to some way of managing their use. We then conducted participatory design sessions with some parents where we got them to respond to the TalkTalk concept, and then, after watching clips of the teen interviews, to design their own 'ideal' control systems.



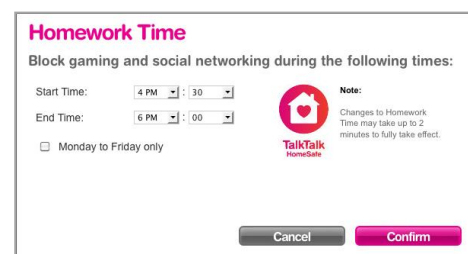
## Distilling the concept down to two understandable and compelling functions

Responses to the concept indicated that it was too complex and too feature laden to be useful. The discussions and the participant creations implied two key ways to simplify and focus the proposition: general background blocking of violent and pornographic content; and the facility to switch off social networking and online gaming for a period each day to allow homework and family interactions to occur. Both of these blocking functions united rather than divided families. In this way we distilled a complex concept down to two easily understandable and compelling functions. TalkTalk then developed a prototype for the service in line with our recommendations. Our usability testing validated the refined concept and also highlighted important changes to interaction flows and language.

## “The homework time option is ingenious”

*Charlotte Nunes, uSwitch*

TalkTalk has now launched the product as 'HomeSafe'. The response from both customers and the media has been very positive. The service is unique and provides a genuine differentiator for TalkTalk in this busy market.



## What TalkTalk had to say about our work

“*new experience*’s user-centred-design research approach was fundamental to helping us shape this great product.” *Stefan Drechsel, Senior Research Manager, The TalkTalk Group*