

Understanding app shopping helps Vodafone develop its store design

In 2010 Vodafone launched its own Android app shop exclusive to Vodafone customers. The app market is very new but Vodafone was competing against established brands like Google's Android Market. A principal benefit of Vodafone's shop is that it allows users to purchase apps through their phone bill without having to enter credit card details. Vodafone wished to evaluate the effectiveness of the early shop design and gain deep insights into how people shop for apps to inform subsequent design development.

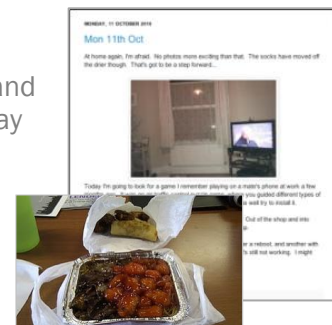


'Guerrilla' intercept interviews

We started by conducting a full day of 'guerrilla' intercept interviews in public places by approaching people who were using their smartphone. We asked them about the apps they had and to talk us through recent instances of their 'app shopping'. This day provided us with an excellent initial overview of ways people shop for apps and served to inform the design of our subsequent data collection.

Natural usage and blogging by Vodafone customers

Next we recruited Vodafone customers with Android smartphones and briefed them as a group to use the Vodafone app shop over a 10-day period while keeping a blog of their experience. We asked them to describe the situations in which they looked for apps, and to post photos of where they were at the time. The blogs gave us visibility of natural usage over time such as a quick few minutes spent browsing for new apps while waiting for a takeaway.



Follow-up depth interviews and task-based testing



Following the period of natural usage and blogging we had participants come back into our usability lab for in-depth one-on-one interviews that also involved task-based testing. We discussed their natural usage and also explored specific use cases to identify usability issues that could be addressed in future design development.

Modes and Personas to understand user needs

We analysed the data from each stage of the research to identify six different modes of app shopping and four principal user types from which we developed personas as descriptions of archetypical users. Working with an artist we created 'comic strip' style posters to illustrate the modes and personas, and also how different user types shopped in

different modes. The posters highlighted different users' needs in each mode and provided a very visual basis to inform subsequent design and development of the shop based around its customers and their needs.

case study from new experience