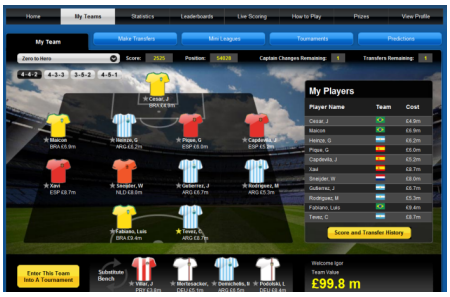
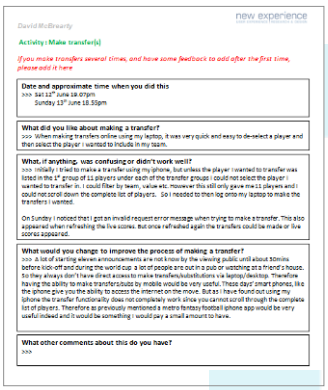
www.new-experience.com
simon.rubens@new-experience.com

# 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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David McBreearty

Activity : Make transfer(s)

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

**Date and approximate time when you did this**
>>> Sat 12th June 18.07pm
Sunday 13th June 18.30pm

**What did you like about making a transfer?**
>>> When making transfers online using my laptop, it was very quick and easy to de-select a player and then select the player I wanted to include in my team.

**What, if anything, was confusing or didn't work well?**
>>> Initially I tried to make a transfer using my iphone, 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 select the player I wanted to transfer in. I could filter by team, value etc. However this still 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 transfers I wanted.

On Sunday I noticed that I got an invalid request error 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 appeared.

**What would you change to improve the process of making a transfer?**
>>> A list of starting eleven announcements are not 8 now by the viewing public until about 30mins before kick-off and during the world cup a lot of people are out in a pub or watching at a friend's house. So they always don't have direct access to make transfers/substitutions via laptop/desktop. Therefore having the ability to make transfers/subs by mobile would be very useful. These days' smart phones, like the iphone give you the ability to access the internet on the move. But as I have found out using my Iphone the transfer functionality does not completely work since you cannot scroll through the complete list of players. Therefore as previously mentioned a metro fantasy football iphone 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?**
>>>

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 discussed these when participants returned for one-to-one interviews and 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)*

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