

Title

Uniting The Tribes: Bringing IT and Business Together Through Testing

Speaker(s)

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To whom is the presentation addressed?

In eCommerce organisations: Test Managers wanting to lead their organisations to a unifying common language of how software delivery and Customer Experience.

Keywords

eRetailing, live-system testing, user-journeys, interdisciplinary, collaboration

Abstract

Mostly, within online retailers, the IT teams are responsible for Software Development and Testing; but the Customer Experience belongs elsewhere, to Business Teams.

Increasingly, a journey of progress has led to getting the IT tribe also being responsible for the real-time Customer Experience.

The trend is for the testing and managing the performance of online properties to move away from being centred around the typical "Business As Usual" approach. Questions such as **'is it working?'** and **'is it fast enough?'** are quickly being replaced with the concept of 'customer experience monitoring' and questions such as **'what does each customer want?'** and **'have we served each individual's requirements?'**

As customers become ever more demanding, the world becomes ever more connected and online properties ever more complex, "usual" is no longer enough.

Using SciVisum's work with Dixon's Retail Group this paper explores the results of Dixons focus is to improve the 'Shopping Trip' - in the multi-channel world to allow customers to 'buy what I want, where I want'.

With a continuous testing approach but that is applied to the live website store; and a Common Language of performance based on measurement 24/7 of agreed User Journeys which are dynamically varying, multi-page routes across the various Brand stores - there's a practical intent to actionable steps to improve against corporate aim. The common language User Journey metrics are published live on Big TV WallBoards in various rooms within Dixons - they are reported on, agreed, discussed and analysed by marketers, merchandisers, software developers and IT operations teams - all tribes united.

The real-time User Journey testing, ticks boxes from UAT to regression to non-functional to performance - but having Customer Experience at it's core becomes the central KPI metric for both Business and IT teams, satisfying top-level business needs to know that things are getting better, as well as providing the deepest drill-in details of any specific or sporadic failure so that the IT teams can identify and resolve code and other bugs.

The challenge is to agree and create the dynamic User Journeys that can exercise the complex, AJAX rich, pages that modern web sites deliver, with the dynamically shifting site (eg must handle the case that if there are no 'delivery slots' available within the first delivery page, the journey must click back a day until it finds a free slot)

The process also encourages inter-team / inter-disciplinary working: Chris Howell IT Director of Dixons's Group quotes: *"Jack of all trades, master of none, though oftentimes better than master of one"*

Biography

Den Fitzpatrick

Den leads the Service Delivery team for Commercial, eCommerce and Head Office business processes at Dixons Retail.

Over the last 3 years, as part of the Dixons Retail transformation he has step changed the IT Support teams into a customer focused Service Delivery function, which includes the definition and delivery of the eCommerce service model.

Den has been with Dixons Retail for 15 years, working his way up from his first role in Customer Support, providing technical and procedural support to Dixons Retail customers.

Deri Jones has been involved in the world of software testing for over a decade, having spent 5 years creating a 30 person security testing practise, and for the last 7 years running eCommerce testing at SciVisum

An Electronics Engineering graduate of Cambridge University, Deri's early career was in circuit design of thick-film microcircuits. Moving into Marketing roles, he was Product Manager for Mitel Semiconductor's ISDN and digital PBX chip-set range.

His start-up experience began in 1988 as Marketing Manager for a new division of STC (now Nortel), providing turn-key fibre-optic campus-wide network systems, beating the planned turnover by 100% within the first two years, and positioning the division for its continued rapid growth.

His Internet experience began in 1992, when he took the helm of the UK's first ISP, the fledgling EUnet which was at the time 3 technical staff from the Computer laboratory at the University of Kent. Responsible for both strategy and delivery, he developed the Business Plan, and built the sales and marketing operation from scratch; being Sales & Marketing Director and then the first Managing Director. EUnet was sold to the USA-based ISP PSInet in 1995.

In 1997 Deri founded NTA Monitor, a specialist Internet Security testing house, building it to be the largest test house in Europe, with a large blue chip client base across the UK, France and Germany. UK customers ranged from the wellknown high street stores to clearing banks, building societies and insurance companies. The Paris Stock Exchange and SAP were customers in Europe.

In 2002, Deri sold the company, and in 2003 founded SciVisum.

Being a pioneer of the UK Internet, Deri has spoken widely at conferences and seminars, and has appeared on BBC TV and Channel 4 TV News on Internet and Web Security issues.
