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Ceonex Case Study

NetworkWorld

Created new site design for the leading IT magazine NetworkWorld . The new design was based on a detailed Quantemo usability study that analyzed how IT executives interacted with the site.

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Ceonex, Inc., 189 Beaver St., Suite #204, North Adams, MA 01247

Client Quote

"Our award-winning web site has enjoyed a loyal following for the last 10 years. It is in our best interest to do whatever we can to assure it continues to be the 'go to' site for our audience of network IT executives. [Ceonex and their research division] Quantemo helped us achieve this."

Evilee Thibeault,
CEO & Publisher,
[NetworkWorld, Inc.](#)

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Project Overview

Network World, the leading online resource for network IT executives, launched its new online look and structure, designed by Ceonex and based on an intensive and unique usability study by Ceonex's research division, [Quantemo](#).

Quantemo is a state-of-the-art research method that moves beyond traditional usability studies to provide an understanding of the emotional responses, positive or negative, that a site provokes in a user as well as the mental effort required to interact with that site.

"This methodology allows for the observation of what the viewer actually 'does' in conjunction with what the viewer feels and with what is actually being reported when surveyed," said Theodore Agranat, CEO of Ceonex. "By utilizing Quantemo, a researcher is able to compensate for the research bias experienced with most methodologies when participants try to be nice or helpful. The result is that you get information you can actually count on to deliver a better web site."

Ceonex took its findings from the Quantemo study to help develop a site for NetworkWorld that aids in engaging its target audience, enticing visitors to stay longer and read more, and providing a positive user experience that encourages readers to visit again and again.

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Purpose

Network World approached Ceonex to redesign their online publication with the purpose of providing a richer and more engaging user experience. To discover what changes were needed to accomplish this, Ceonex performed a [Quantemo](#) study with selected participants from Network World's target audience.

Quantemo, Ceonex's in-house research lab, did a thorough study of the Network World site to gain an understanding of how visitors interact with the online publication, locate potential pitfalls, and provide specific recommendations to enhance the target audience's online experience. Ceonex then implemented design changes based on the findings of the Quantemo usability analysis.

"Leveraging this advanced usability testing enables us to build the most useful network IT resource," said Kevin Normandeau, vice president of online, Network World. "By focusing on the visitor, we build affinity and a better environment for our advertisers to deliver their message. We are pleased to see that the time and expense of utilizing Quantemo will pay itself back as we deliver the best online experience possible for both our advertisers and our audience."

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Process

The Quantemo study for NetworkWorld was based on a proprietary process developed by Ceonex. Methods of data collection, data analysis and participant selection were developed to maximize the study results. After Quantemo completed the study and provided specific observations and recommendations, Ceonex implemented those recommendations with a new and focused layout, navigation and design strategy.

Participants

Quantemo recruited 12 members of NetworkWorld's target audience IT managers and executives who were also habitual visitors of NetworkWorld's online publication to participate in the study. These participants were carefully chosen to fit the profile of a NetworkWorld.com reader, based on the company's previous market research, in order to bring the true NetworkWorld readership experience to the study.

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Observation Methods

To analyze how visitors navigate the NetworkWorld.com interface, Quantemo used several qualitative methods of observation. By applying scientific observation techniques, Quantemo is able to provide an objective view of the mental effort and emotional response produced when interacting with a web site. The NetworkWorld.com study included four distinct types of data channels:

■ Physiological responses

Sensitive equipment monitored a variety of physiological reactions that measure emotional responses to stimuli. Several channels were monitored to gain information about each subject's emotional state throughout the study.

■ Eye movements

Using specialized cameras to record eye movements on a screen, Quantemo gathered a great deal of information about what the participants saw on the NetworkWorld.com site, including areas of concentrated attention, what was noticed first, what objects required prolonged gazes to understand, how users visually search for items on a page, and much more.

■ Video

Video cameras captured the facial expressions and body language of each participant throughout the study, which were cross-correlated with data from the eye recordings and physiological channels to provide a cohesive, point-by-point depiction of the user experience.

■ Interview

Spontaneous and solicited verbal responses were recorded to provide additional information about each participant's experience. Feedback from participants augmented objective findings, allowing NetworkWorld and its visitors to benefit from Quantemo's comprehensive study methods and conclusions.

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Data Analysis

After collecting enormous amounts of significant data, Quantemo analyzed each channel using a variety of methods. The goal was to examine this information from several perspectives getting a mile-high view as well as putting it under a microscope to gain a full understanding of the user experience with NetworkWorld.com. Once this understanding was achieved, Quantemo was able to make specific observations and recommendations to improve the NetworkWorld site for all users.

Data mining provided a statistical overview of the participants' experiences and allowed us to quickly pinpoint patterns of navigation and scanning choices as well as identifying points of frustration.

Quantemo does not rely exclusively on the analysis of computers, however. Interacting with a web site is a human experience, and this experience requires a human to understand habits and motivations, and especially to bring a true understanding of the causes of any frustration.

Therefore, Quantemo also manually reviewed physiological data, videotapes and eye movements, then cross-correlated them with the subjects' verbal comments and written questionnaire responses. With this degree of detailed analysis, the research lab was able to find even subtle patterns of behavior and could then determine their underlying causes. Additionally, while Quantemo seeks findings of statistical significance, at the same time observations for improvements based on even a single subject's experience are given appropriate weight.

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Insights and Solution

Ceonex's Quantemo study findings offered a large number of insights about how visitors interact with the Network World site and how they wanted to interact with it. With these insights, Ceonex created a design that helped Network World engage its target audience more than ever before.

The observations gleaned from the collected study data allowed Ceonex and NetworkWorld to craft a user experience that addressed the needs and preferences of busy IT executives and managers. Just a few of the site aspects that were improved included:

■ Navigation

Small updates to take the work out of finding certain topic groups without forcing loyal readers to relearn a new structure were applied to help visitors spend more time reading and less time searching.

■ Information grouping

The page architecture was honed to increase relevancy of content within the context of the page to encourage visitors to stay longer and read more about topics of particular interest.

■ Sponsored content

Participants appreciated sponsored content when it met certain criteria. The Quantemo study helped to identify those criteria to assist NetworkWorld in providing vendor content that meets the needs and preferences of readers.

Ultimately the insights made way for a solution that improves the user experience across the board helping to increase time spent on site, encourage visitors to look around for additional relevant resources and read more, as well as provide an interface for positive and pleasant interactions with NetworkWorld and its partners and vendors.

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Results

Immediately after launching the new NetworkWorld.com design, the IT publisher reported receiving a large amount of positive feedback from users. NetworkWorld is currently collecting data to quantify the results of the new interface.

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About Ceonex

Established in the USA in 1998, Ceonex is a proven global Internet consulting and development company helping clients to create and implement fullservice digital business solutions. Combining diverse expertise in business strategy, technology, usability and design, Ceonex produces highly scalable business solutions and online user experiences.

Enabling businesses to heighten brand awareness, Ceonex strengthens customers' competitive advantage and provides them with opportunities to increase revenues and enhance productivity

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Client Quote

"...outstanding design work and timely implementation... a fabulous website that accurately captures both our mission and spirit..."

W. Michael Draper, CTO,
NetworkWorld, Inc.