



## Case Study

Avon and Somerset Constabulary – Usability testing April 2006  
www.avonandsomerset.police.uk

### The Brief

Avon and Somerset Constabulary (A&SC) had recently launched a new website and wished to obtain a user perspective on the site.

The objectives of the research were to assess:

- Users' attitudes to the website – what goals did they want to achieve, what were their perceptions of the A&SC
- Usability – the ease and intuitiveness of the site – how easily users could get to their goals
- The effectiveness of the personalised content on the site – users could look at information about crime and policing in their area

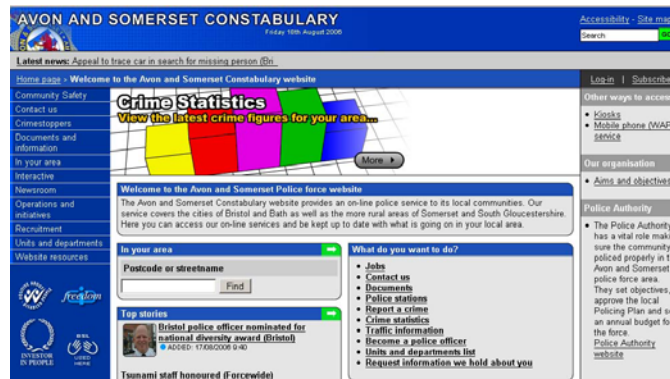
### How we responded to the brief

Because A&SC wanted quick, cost effective feedback to identify the major usability issues we proposed usability testing with three testers.

In order to ensure buy in to the research results, we felt it important that key A&SC stakeholders gained a shared understanding of the issues through active observation of users on the site. By following this with a facilitated discussion it would allow the observers to identify the key issues and agree actions in a single day.

### What we did

We recruited 3 testers who lived within the A&SC area: 1 low-usage internet user, 1 user over 60 years of age and 1 user under 20.



We conducted the testing in Bristol city centre using our mobile usability equipment (i.e. a lap top with web cam, microphone and Techsmith Morae to enable picture in picture recording). A&SC web development staff discreetly observed the testing process (the

research was undertaken in an adjacent room and the development team could observe the session 'live' via a video link). The team captured issues arising during the session on post-it notes, which were subsequently used to map the issues that had emerged. A facilitated discussion then identified the priority issues.

### The outcomes

The research identified over 40 usability and content issues. During the facilitated discussion A&SC staff gained a shared understanding of these issues, and actions were identified that could be implemented within the project scope. As a result, A&SC was able to act quickly to improve the site.

Avon & Somerset Constabulary were pleased enough with the results to commission WUP to carry out a usability study for the A&SC intranet.

*"We found the usability testing process an invaluable experience, a real eye opener in fact. A highly recommended process to go through"*  
Scott Fulton - Internet and Multimedia Manager

### Timing

The project was conducted in spring 2006, over a 2 week period.