



Case Study

Kirklees Metropolitan Council Visitor Portal – Usability testing **May 2006**
www.kirklees.gov.uk/visitorportal/index.asp

The Brief

Kirklees Metropolitan Council (KMC) had developed a site for visitors to the Kirklees area and wanted to understand how useful and usable it was.

The site is aimed at visitors from both outside the area (mainly people from the SE of England) and local people. KMC particularly wanted feedback from ethnic minorities prevalent in the Kirklees area.

How we responded to the brief

We proposed testing with 8 testers: 5 of these in advance of a day's observed usability testing with 3 testers followed by a facilitated discussion of the issues and to agree actions.

In order to ensure buy in to the research results, we felt it important that key KMC 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 in fact recruited 9 testers: 2 Kirklees residents from ethnic backgrounds; 3 older and 4 younger people, who all took holidays in the UK, booked holidays on line, and lived in the south of England.

We conducted unobserved testing with 6 testers in two locations (London and Huddersfield). The



outcomes were captured using our mobile usability equipment (i.e. a lap top with web cam, microphone and Techsmith Morae to enable picture in picture recording)

The observed testing (3 people) was conducted in specialist studios in London where KMC staff watched the testing through a one way mirror. They were 'active' observers, writing issues on post-its as they occurred. Following the

observed testing, a discussion was facilitated by a WUP consultant to agree the issues and appropriate actions.

The outcomes

The research identified c.70 usability and content issues. During the facilitated discussion KMC staff gained a shared understanding of these issues, and actions were identified that could be implemented within the project scope. As a result KMC was able to act quickly to improve the site.

"We have been very impressed with you and your team in delivering what we think has been a very successful and informative usability work package. We have also all learnt a lot personally about websites' purpose and goals which we can all take forward in our careers" Regina Nolan - Project Manager

Timing

The project was conducted in spring 2006, over a 6 week period.