

Usability and Performance Improvement Statistics

The following compiled statistics and quotes, supporting the usability argument for website redesign, are grouped into these benefit categories:

- * Meets business goals
- * Increases membership
- * Improves organizational performance
- * Decreases training time
- * Saves money
- * Improves member/customer satisfaction

Meets Business Goals

Usability goals are business goals. Websites that are hard to use frustrate customers, forfeit revenue and erode brands.

- * Executives can apply a disciplined approach to improve all aspects of ease-of-use.
- * Start with usability reviews to assess specific flaws and understand their causes.
- * Fix the right problems through action-driven design practices.
- * Maintain usability with changes in business processes.

—Forrester Research, *Why Most Websites Fail*

Increases Membership

In the spring of 1999, Ameritrade ran one of the slowest brokerage sites on the web. Today, the company consistently ranks among the five fastest websites for executing stock trades. What happened 18 months ago was Ameritrade made website performance a focal point for its IT department, investing "substantial" sums in infrastructure and testing tools. As a result, Ameritrade's user base has soared from 400,000 to 1.4 million.

—Ameritrade

Improves Organizational Performance

Improving the information used by workers raises their measured performance substantially—never less than a 20% improvement, sometimes as high as 600%.

—Thomas Gilbert, *Engineering Human Performance*

Telephone companies regularly report savings in the millions for shaving seconds off usage times.

—Karlin and Klemmer, 1989, *Wayne D. Gray, et al 1992*

Poor user interface design can have a significant effect on user productivity. Consider a very simple transaction, such as filling in an on-line data entry form. Suppose an organization has 20 users, who perform this transaction approximately 80 times a day (quite typical for data entry clerks or other high frequency users). This adds up to 368,000 transactions per year (20 users working 230 days a year, performing 80 transactions per day). If a screen could be redesigned to reduce the transaction time per screen by 10 seconds, a savings of 1022 hours, or 25.5 person-weeks could be realized. If improvement on a single screen of the system could increase productivity by 1/2 of a person-year, clearly improvements across the whole system will have a very dramatic effect on productivity.

—Deborah Mayhew, *Cost-Justifying Usability*

Improves Organizational Performance (cont)

In a three-year survey of UK businesses, the Design Council of Britain collected information on the measures of effectiveness by focusing on information design:

- * Improved product/service quality 73%
- * Improved image 69%
- * Increased profit/turnover 65%
- * Developed new markets 65%
- * Improved customer communication 65%
- * Increased market share 56%
- * Cut costs 41%
- * Improved internal communication 36%

—Design Council research by PACEC, June 2000

Decreases Training Time

Training courses for new systems typically run between 3 days and 2 weeks. Suppose a company has 20 users, and each one must learn to use two new systems a year. If the training time per user could be reduced by 1.5 days through easier-to-learn user interfaces and/or better user documentation, then a savings of 60 days, or 12 person weeks would be realized.

—Deborah Mayhew, *Cost-Justifying Usability*

Saves Money

For each dollar a company invests in developing the usability of a product, the company receives \$10-\$100 in benefits and wins customer satisfaction and continued business. Furthermore, industry data shows that for each dollar spent to fix a problem during product design, \$10 are spent to fix the same problem in product development, and \$100 or more are spent to fix the same problem after product release.

—Compuware Corporation

A major computer company saved \$41,700 the first day the system was in use by making sign-on attempts faster for a security application.

—Karat 1990

IBM recently reported that sales went up 400 percent with an easier to navigate site.

Improves member/customer/user satisfaction

Usability methods can raise user satisfaction for a system by 40%. Poorly designed user interfaces carry a cost not only in customer satisfaction, but also in real overhead in customer support. Supporting customers with trouble-shooting and data recovery can be very expensive. Designing a less confusing and less error-prone interface can reduce the need for customer support. Supposing a vendor has 600 customer organizations, whose users call in for help and need an average of 15 minutes per call to solve their problems. And, suppose 4 calls per customer per year could be eliminated by engineering a more usable interface. This represents a savings in customer support time of 15 weeks per year.

—Deborah Mayhew, *Cost-Justifying Usability*

An Australian insurance company had annual savings of A\$536,023 from redesigning its application forms to make customer errors less likely.

—Fisher and Sless, 1990

"As part of the redesign, we brought a lot of features to the home page that had been buried three clicks in," Ruddy says. "Our carrier site was two to three clicks down. Now it's on the home page, and we've seen a 300% increase in its usage."

—FedEx