

All.Net Analyst Report and Newsletter

Welcome to our Analyst Report and Newsletter

Cyberspace vs. COVID-19 - COVID is no excuse for poor service (i.e., experience)

Poor service for online operations, poor decision-making and refusal to revert to better previous version, poor user interfaces getting worse, and unwillingness to listen to customers and address their needs... all of these things should not only not be made worse by COVID-19, they should all be fixed and improved.

Now I don't really want to spend my time trying to solve problems created by stupidity at big companies, or even complaining about it, and if I did, I could easily become a critic and have plenty of fodder for my cannon. But this week, I figured customer dissatisfaction would be worthy of my time – while waiting on hold to talk to a supervisor at...

GoDaddy

It's 6:52 Pacific time on a Friday morning, and I have been on the line with GoDaddy for almost an hour, most of it by now waiting for the (according to the representative) one and only supervisor available at 10 AM on a weekday (if you are in New York).

My experiences over the years with GoDaddy have been generally very good. They are honestly helpful except, again only in my experience, when it's technical enough that the standard service rep cannot solve it (which is rare), or worse yet, when they fail to recognize that they need to fix something or they will negatively impact many more of their customers.

After an hour PLUS of waiting, I wasn't finally gotten in email touch with the supervisor, and s/he is now trying to be helpful as well... which I appreciate. But it should never take this much to get this job done. Here are some trivial fixes:

- When you send me a bounce, you have the email that bounced (at least for some time period), and since you sent me a reference number, you should be able to look it up without my having to send it to you.
- When I send and receive scores of emails a week back and forth with the same user, and you flag one every once in a while as spam, (a) you should not flag it as spam when we are in an ongoing business (or personal) relationship and (2) you should provide a very easy way to say, in effect, yes this was me...
- When you send me an email telling me to call number to fix the problem, the person on the other side of the call should be able to fix the problem. And they should be able to do so without my being one of your customers. If you don't want me to call, or cannot handle the thing I am calling about, don't tell me to call! Better to say "too bad" than "let us help you" and then don't actually have the ability to help me.
- Pay enough people to get the job done and, if you must, increase my price by \$1/year to pay for the additional people. Long wait times and inadequate supervision is not the solution to customer satisfaction.
- Don't blame it on COVID and don't blame it on your service representative! They are doing their job, it's you, their management and executives who are not doing yours.

Chase Bank

Talk about ridiculous user interfaces only getting worse... Chase Bank is perhaps the worst ever at making beautiful interfaces that reduce the quality of service, slow the user down, and provide less and less of the more and more important information as they make changes.

I think they need to fire the top executive in charge of the person who hired the people who are doing this inane user interface redesign (again and again making it worse and worse) and make it clear that that's why they were fired. Then put someone else in place who is old, busy, and half blind, and have them do QC on the results. And of course, require top management (in fact everyone working at Chase) to do all of their work through the same interface. As Chase then goes out of business because everything takes 10 times as long and keeps interrupting them and providing them with too little information that they cannot read and gets blurred out as they try to read it, and has windows show up on top of what they are reading for no discernible reason, perhaps someone will wake up and realize that this is stupidity at its height. It may bring some fools in for a bit, but then it will put the rest of us off again and again. I haven't yet moved my several accounts from Chase, but that's because it is sticky... but not sticky enough to make me stick much longer.

Of course, they just removed the last less bad interface so you can no longer use it, and now only allow the even worse version. But have no fear, they will have an even worse version coming out soon – they always do. Someone at Chase should wake up. But then if you try to get in touch with them on this, they are even worse than GoDaddy, because they have bad customer service across the board, and try to avoid having folks get in touch with them at all. But eventually you can get through... to someone who cannot help you.

Zoom

However, zoom wins the stupidity prize this month. Now that they added forced waiting rooms and/or passwords, they don't bother to tell people about the password, and the integration with 3rd party apps is unfathomably ridiculous. So now, you have to go through an unknown number of obscure steps in the zoom unusable two separate and different and inconsistent user interfaces (Web and app) to ... not actually fix the problem. At this point, it adds passwords to meetings without me knowing what the passwords are, so I cannot even update my users. And of course the waiting rooms that trigger volume changes on the receiving end without notice or a way to lock them out makes it so I cannot hear the bell for arriving people, so unless I spend my life watching the display for new arrivals in the waiting room, ...

So I wrote a little shell scrip to fix the problem which I now loop every few seconds to fix the volume control problem... (while true; do Zoomfix 100;sleep 3;done):

```
if test "$Z$1" == Z
then
echo "List-Sink-Inputs";pacmd list-sink-inputs| grep -e index -e application.name
echo "ZoomFix [volume]"
else
pacmd list-sink-inputs| grep index | while read a b; do pactl set-sink-input-volume $b $1% 2>/dev/null; done
fi
```

Of course this does not address the many other problems created by their changes to make things work worse – some in the name of “security”. But then Zoom also has a lot of other bad interfaces. Like the minimum window sizes on some parts of their interface that require large quantities of wasted empty space on the desktop so they can show their meaningless icons instead of the text they ALSO need in order to explain the iconography.

But this is not even close to the worst part of their interfaces. If you go to share screen while another user is sharing theirs, as moderator, you can force the change of sharing. But if you do, and if they close their screen before you share yours, your application will crash. The session continues without a moderator, and the exit buttons in the GUI no longer work, so now you have to find and kill the process... (killall -9 zoom as root will do it). Once you kill it, you then have to login again and take control – otherwise it will die off after a point. And did I mention that if you assigned someone else to moderate, you may not know it crashed... because you aren't in the room. And they cannot go back in so the meeting runs indefinitely without any controls at all available to the users.

And then there is the list of potential meetings you have set up. Besides the deceptive placement of spacing within an item and not between items, which cause the selection of the wrong item time and again, there is the fact that you don't have access to your meeting IDs or invitations whenever you are in a meeting – which means you cannot setup a follow-on meeting while in a meeting or even get the details to invite to a follow-on meeting already scheduled. Why is this? Nobody knows – I think it's just designers who don't actually have to use this crap.

Email list automation companies (I have changed a few times lately – greener grass?)

These folks have decided that new interfaces that take more steps to get less information in a less usable form and prevent efficient import, export, changes, etc. are better. They are wrong. Here's the thing. I need to be able to simply, easily, from wherever I am:

- Add recipients to my lists.
- Change the categories of recipients.
- Send them emails (including updated versions of older emails).
- Track their receptions and responses.

Those are core functions. They should not be 4 levels deep in menus that pop up in different ways from different screens with different looks and feels, and worse yet, without the ability to go back and fix something. If YOU provide a URL for clicks to go to and through, your URL redirect should be changeable by ME. In case I discover a mistake later on. Or if I need to change the thing they click through to over time. Of if I just want to try something else after 15 minutes. Let ME fix things that go wrong fairly often.

And then there is the spam response process. Spam responses allow one person who is an asshole and doesn't like one of your users to disrupt their legitimate emails with their clients and others they communicate with. The way this works, an individual link between a message and the recipient would allow the removal of people who complain (and don't do the email list removal thing to get off the list). Then when you get their complaint, you can remove them instead of creating massive hassle for your customers who are, for the most part, just sending legitimate commercial emails.

Also, as a note, thank you for connecting with my social media. It allows the same messaging and appearance to be provided to all. However...

- DO NOT ASK ME FOR ACCESS TO MY EMAIL ACCOUNT AND THEM SPAM ALL MY CONNECTIONS!!! You are becoming a spammer, which nobody likes!

So what?

All these complaints – so what? Who am I to complain about their UX when mine are so ...

I am not the world's leading expert in user experience. (UX – because UE was taken?) But I do know a little bit about faults that cause failures, efficiency and effectiveness, decision-making, and cognitive issues. And one of the things I know is that there are too few people writing software who are apparently aware of these things. So here are some basic rules about how to not make stupid user interfaces or bad user experiences:

1. If you send me something that tells me to do something, make sure that if I do what you told me to do, it does what its supposed to.
2. Don't show me something I cannot do anything with or about and that I didn't ask for.
3. Don't show me things that are out of focus, unreadable, too low contrast to use, too small to read, too big to fit, in a color scheme that makes it hard to understand, that overlaps something else I am trying to see, or that distracts me from what I am trying to do.
4. The first time user is important, but the power user is also important. Don't favor one over the other, and at least provide the power user with a powerful way to do things.
5. Don't keep changing the way it looks, works, where things appear relative to each other, the words or icons you use, or anything else that I can learn to make me more efficient, and assume that I don't know that you mean by the piece of abstract art you chose as an icon where you didn't bother to put the relevant text version and that I can only get more information on by putting my mouse over it.
6. Count the time it takes and never make it slower and call it an improvement. Do this for every class of user, and only implement it if it is at least an improvement for some and not a reduction in speed, quality, or usability for anyone else.
7. Before deploying it to customers, deploy it to your top management, then the rest of your company. Make them use it and nothing else for a few months, encourage their feedback, measure their performance, and if it isn't a substantial improvement for them (and meet all the other criteria here), undo it and don't send it to us users.
8. I am your customer. Stop putting advertisements in front of me that block me from doing what I logged in to do. It slows me down which makes me NOT LIKE YOU and want to avoid doing more things with you. If you want to advertise to me, that's fine, but don't make your services LESS VALUABLE with your advertisements.
9. Stop trying to "monetize me". I actually PAY YOU ALREADY for your services. If you are charging me less than it costs, stop doing loss leaders, charge me what it costs with a reasonable profit, and serve me – your customer!

Conclusions

I have some more suggestions, but this is a good starting point for better user service (and user experience). I know your business model is to take advantage of me for your money. But be reasonable and try a model that actually serves your paying customers (like me). And **CEO**: engage someone like me for your company (engage us directly – not working for someone in your company who will cover it up). Please help yourself by helping us!