



Case Studies

C3Research has conducted various strategic and web related projects over the years. Some of the more notable projects conducted in the WEBLAB are briefly described below:

Website Research and Competitive Strategy for a Credit Rating Agency: In one of the earlier research projects conducted at the Weblab, a national credit rating agency asked us to evaluate their new website aimed at educating consumers of free credit reports as well as building their website brand equity. The company suffered from poor brand salience in competition with the leading credit rating agency, and their website was considered “thin” in comparison to the other competitive sites. Our research clearly demonstrated that although their website was thin, the consumer stickiness and brand building were strongest on their website compared to the leading competitor. Consumers liked the simplicity, organization, and visual appeal of their site and a pre / post evaluation of brand equity and intention to try showed strongest gains for the client site. The study was conducted with realistic scenarios in the lab where consumers were asked to surf various credit rating sites and then fill out detailed questionnaires on each site. The C3Research I3R model (Information, Interactivity, Image, and Relationship) was used to assess the website and changes in brand equity. As a result of this study, the client made some suggested improvements to their website and promoted their website with mass media support to drive traffic to the site.

Financial Institution Website Research: A leading national financial institution specializing in sub-prime loans was not getting a high enough conversion to applications on their website. A Weblab study showed that there were four important segments of consumers that visited their website. The website, however, was currently serving the needs of only one consumer segment – those who came to the website presold and only intending to fill out the application form. Novice consumers who wanted to research various options and consumers who wanted to play with financial tools did not like the website offerings and jumped off to competitive sites. The lab study was conducted with over 100 subprime consumers and their behavior on the client website and 4 other competitive website was recorded and analyzed. The study participants also filled out a detailed questionnaire at the end of the lab tasks. The final report delivered to the client clearly showed the four segment personas, the competitive ratings of the websites, and a deep dive of the client website. Based on the findings, the client’s user centered design group conducted a complete redesign of their website. This project was conducted and completed before the sub-prime market crash.

Innovation Research for a Global Bank: A leading global bank with a strong presence in North America wanted to assess their online savings bank website. The original brief was to assess the website and its current offerings. In detailed discussions with the client, the brief was extended to conduct an innovation study to find out what types of problems consumers face in dealing with their financial lives, and how an Internet-based website could best meet their needs. The idea was to build a consumer-centric website on a relationship platform rather than serve transactional consumers who tend to switch easily to other online banks with more attractive interest rate offers. The innovation research yielded a rich portfolio of eighty-four ideas around eight strategic initiatives to guide the

redesign of the website. The website redesign, however, had to be postponed by the client due to the financial crisis in the economy.

Digital Advertising Effectiveness Guidelines for a CPG brand: A national market leader brand in a household cleaning products category wanted to test the effectiveness of their digital media ads such as banners and skyscrapers. A portfolio of five ads that ran in the previous season was given to us to study in the WebLab. The brief was to study the homemakers in the category, their use of digital media, and their response to the five ads in the context of other household category ads on the Internet. The study was conducted in the Eye Tracker Lab. Over 100 household consumers (women only) attended one-on-one sessions in the Eye Tracker lab. A blind pretest questionnaire was administered to the study participants one week before their individual lab session. The pretest questionnaire established their brand salience and knowledge of attributes for the competitive set of brands. In the lab, they were exposed to various websites that carried different ads of household products. The lab participants surfed the websites under different task instructions without being aware that it was an ad test. We inserted the client ads in a national website that ran only in the Orlando zip code where the lab is located. The study yielded a detailed understanding of the effectiveness of different formats, messaging, headline, and visual strategy of online advertising for the client. A mathematical model, based on the lab findings, is now being developed to do predictive modeling of the effectiveness of online advertising.

Web Hub Page and Video Player redesign: A leading global entertainment TV and Web brand serving teens and young adult consumers wanted to understand the video-viewing behavior of their consumers and redesign their Hub page and the video player. The study involved ethnographic research, eye tracker lab research, focus groups, and a confirmatory national online survey research to fully understand the emerging video-viewing behaviors of teens and young adults and how they watch videos on websites. This study yielded deep insights for the client to redesign the menu structure, overall page layout, and features and functionality of their Hub page that showed video clips.

Digital Advertising Processing: How do consumers process digital advertising? A detailed Eye Tracking study of 3500 ads was conducted in the lab with over 100 consumers. The findings were co-presented at the Ad Research Foundation ReThink conference in 2009 with MTV Networks, the sponsor of the study.

Green Website Study for a Utility company: A major electric and water utility wanted to evaluate their newly launched Green website that was not drawing enough consumer traffic. The website study used a mix of WebLab group, Eye Tracker Lab sessions, and focus groups to understand consumer motivations and needs for going Green, evaluation to their website and competitive green sites, and assessment of offline and online marketing material to drive traffic. The study resulted in valuable learning to add apps and functions to the website and to develop an integrated marketing strategy for the client.