



E-traders fail web test

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According to new research, many firms are presenting customers with faulty web sites, because they do not test them adequately. Worryingly, it was found that most firms do not remove errors until customers draw attention to them – by which time business may have been lost.

Web site testing company SciVisum interviewed web site managers at over 100 firms from a range of industries. SciVisum asked a number of questions relating to web site performance testing, and found that over 80 percent of firms relied mainly on customer feedback to reveal prob-

lems with their sites and online services. Eighty-one percent said that they would wait for customer complaints about specific problems before carrying out tests, and 48 percent said that they relied on colleagues noticing web site errors. Just 43 percent carried out live server monitoring, and only 19 percent reviewed log files in an attempt to discover problems.

SciVisum's *Web Effectiveness Report 2003* says that over a third of companies never monitor the performance of their web sites. Deri Jones, chief executive of SciVisum, warned this could lose them business as there may be countless rival sites where customers could go. But Jones said many firms were not testing, due to budgetary constraints. "Some companies had no budget of any size. We found that the allocation of resources in this area was not very good at all," he added.

Jones advised companies to test their sites during the development stage rather

SITES FAILING USERS

- Many companies do not effectively monitor the performance of their web sites, and could lose custom to other sites as a result.
- Most businesses only realise their web sites contain errors when customers complain.
- Budgetary restraints are often the main cause of this shortcoming.

than just before a site or service is about to go live. "If you do it early enough you have time to fix the problem. It costs a lot more to fix later." He added that firms should then regularly re-check their sites.

Jones said that the quality of web site testing varied from firm to firm, but the testing of retail sites was often especially poor. Here 33 percent of companies did not conduct any testing other than simple monitoring of page availability. The financial sector was better, but even in this sector 50 percent of firms said they never monitored their site performance.

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Source: SciVisum