SciVisum

Prepare for Peak Traffic
Top 5 load testing mistakes and how to avoid them

Executive Summary

Most online businesses experience a peak in traffic, be that sales led or general seasonality, and need to have a preparation plan for the big day. But why do some strategies simply not work as planned and cause lost sales and bad customer experiences?

SciVisum lay out the top 5 mistakes to avoid when preparing for peak traffic.

Common Mistakes and How to Avoid Them

Load testing can have a transformative impact on business – we see some amazing results from our work with clients. A thorough and comprehensive programme of testing will return accurate, valuable and actionable data that will enable you to deliver a smooth and responsive experience to your web users, even in times of high demand. It needs to be approached with consistency, however, and is no longer solely the domain of the technical team, ideally requiring input from many other departments. The same issues crop up time and again, though, and often prevent companies from getting optimum benefits from their load testing activities.

It's the last thing on your list

While other processes are often considered during the earliest stages of site development, load testing is generally more of an afterthought – something that can easily be delayed until nearer sale season, for instance. In our experience, it's always more productive to take a longer-term view of testing, especially if it's part of a properly planned process that builds in some time to effect changes based on a cycle of outcomes and retesting. Leaving load testing till the eleventh hour puts a squeeze on the time available to fix problems and allows no margin for retesting to ensure the fix has worked or to evaluate its impact on performance. It's worth bearing in mind that it's often much more expensive to make changes at the last minute than if they're implemented in a more orderly fashion

You don't have a specific outcome in mind

As with any testing mechanism, it's always helpful to have a list of specific outcomes in mind before you begin the process. If you can work with a load testing service provider to compile a series of KPIs in advance of the test, you'll be able to measure performance in a more targeted way. Naturally, this is likely to involve discussions with other departments and will require consensus on how the site needs to perform to meet business expectations. That said, your efforts will be repaid if you can check test data to demonstrate how performance figures stack up against your targets.

You don't fully understand how visitors use your site

Before testing begins, it's crucial to understand how users interact with your site. From a technical perspective, a web server simply needs to stand up. But, while this is a perfectly valid point of view, it doesn't explore the customer experience, which may mean that user glitches go unnoticed, even though they're potentially damaging the bottom line. We believe load testing should be modelled on the most realistic traffic – if, that is, you're determined to return the most accurate and commercially valuable results. As a load testing supplier, that means reviewing web analytics and examining data from the marketing department on visitors, campaigns and conversions before tailoring any load testing project.

Load testing is viewed as a standalone technical issue

Increasingly, our most successful clients are those who involve multiple departments in load testing, including business, marketing and technical teams. Each team has its own perspective on desired outcomes and only by analysing these inputs 'in the round' can we create a truly effective response. By beginning with business expectations, incorporating the data from marketing exercises and using the expertise of the technical team, we are able to build a load testing series that will enable you to build a more agile and resilient website with a significantly better user experience.

You believe one load test is probably enough

Load testing should never be considered as a one-off process. Even when testing is confined to a specific pre-sales period, retests are essential to ensure that your changes have been successful. When you move from a staging environment to a live production environment, it's vital to explore how performance will be impacted when it goes live. In our experience, it's virtually impossible to predict production performance solely based on load tests during staging. If you can perform a more in-depth load-testing analysis at this crucial transition point, you'll gain valuable insights about how robust your final stage is, knowing that everything else already works in the way it's intended.

Top 5 Load Testing Mistakes

1   **It's the last thing on your to-do list**

2   **You don't have a specific outcome in mind**

3   **You don't fully understand how visitors use your site**

4   **Load testing is viewed as a standalone technical issue**

5   **You believe one load test is probably enough**

Follow this Tip:

Test early and often, with a clear load testing strategy, to ensure you're really prepared for peak traffic.

About SciVisum

Our portfolio of "dynamic user journey" based emulation, monitoring and analysis services enable business wide understanding of the impact of online performance on the bottomline.

With over 10 years performance testing experience, helping clients such as Debenhams, Boden, Joules and Dixons to maximise user experience and protect their brand, our highly experienced team of test professionals help clients implement monitoring programmes and proactively oversee testing; automatically updating journeys as a website changes, highlighting performance issues and helping clients quickly pinpoint root causes - saving time and money.

Monitor

Test

Optimise
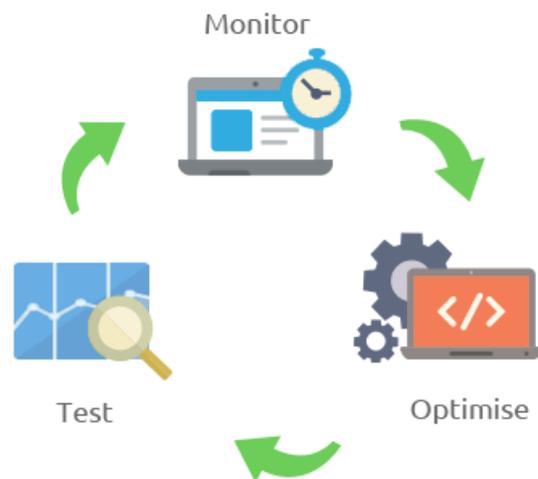
To find out how SciVisum can help you implement the best monitoring programme to suit your organisation please contact us on 01227 768276 or visit our website at www. scivisum.co.uk

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Peace of mind with realistic load testing

SciVisum provides a fully managed load testing service precisely tailored to each client's business and designed to optimise web performance.

If you'd like more information about how taking a more realistic approach to load testing could help improve your customer experience, **download our white paper <u>here</u>.**

Realistic User Journeys

SV-Load emulates realistic journeys. Performs tasks, checks page content and makes choices just like real users

Accurate and reliable results

Provides the most accurate results on which to base decisions and deliver the best customer experience

Fully managed service

Independent Load Testing makes it possible to manage the complexities of a load test with minimum disruption.

Test your anticipated

Initiate thousands of journeys and scales them up to - or even beyond - anticipated peak traffic levels

<u>Read more on our website</u>

Pushing web performance to the limit

We've helped our clients achieve:

260%
Increase in sales

183%
Sales conversion

210%
Visitor sign ups

Client Case Studies

We work with some of the UKs largest retailers and brands. Protecting your online reputation is at the heart of everything we do.

SciVisum provides much needed visibility into the performance of 3rd party site components for Jigsaw.

Read More

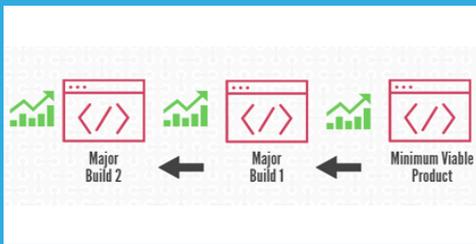Tesco uses iPhone Application Monitor to ensure the best performance for its customers.

Read More

SciVisum help Thomas Cook manage the many complexities of Load Testing faced by travel operators.

Read More

Resources & Insight

Want to read more? Follow the links below to read more about web performance from our blogs and whitepapers.

Load testing is often an afterthought for many projects, but it makes commercial sense to be integrated.

Read Blog

What is a User Journey? In the simplest terms it is the path that a visitor takes through your site.

Read FAQ

SciVisum Black Friday 2015 UK mCommerce performance report

With Black Friday breaking records for online sales, the stakes were high and several high profile failures hit.

Read Whitepaper

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