

Newmarket Holidays boosts web performance and product availability with SciVisum's proactive monitoring service

For trusted tour operator Newmarket, anything that adversely impacts the impetus of a customer's online journey – potentially increasing the risk of abandonment – is a threat to both business and brand. But, accurately tracking performance on a highly complex website with a bespoke back office system is a big ask.

Newmarket turned to SciVisum for a proactive monitoring service that would provide an objective, repeatable measurement of performance to ensure optimum customer experience and product availability 24/7.



Established tour operator Newmarket Holidays is well known for its popular escorted tours and event-based breaks to destinations throughout the UK and worldwide. Like most travel businesses, Newmarket's website has rapidly become pivotal to its success. But because travel booking enquiries require complex processing systems, it's critically important that all the site's components work together seamlessly to deliver a fast, consistent user experience.

Add into the mix Newmarket's ongoing re-platforming exercise, and it's easy to see why the in-house tech team needed a proactive partner to help deliver service-as-usual throughout.

Challenge

The objective truth - a reliable, repeatable measure of performance

Newmarket's website may look clean, modern and easy to use, but it's far from simple – as the company's online business has evolved to enable customers to make increasingly complex choices, so its back-end systems have had to adapt. Newmarket's re-platforming project will ultimately result in a significantly enhanced customer experience, but only if the site's many elements are working in concert.

Newmarket's Website Manager, Oliver Roberts, was keen to cut through the noise to gain a definitive and objective understanding of how the website was performing. This meant employing a monitoring solution that could be trusted to objectively measure performance based on realistic, consistent and reproducible tests.

"There were concerns that the website may have been running slow, but we couldn't be sure because we didn't have a reliable, objective way of measuring performance at that time," explains Oliver. "Until we commissioned SciVisum, we spent a lot of time and energy discussing performance without actually arriving at a resolution."

Working with only a small in-house team, and with the re-platforming project already

underway, Oliver was not only looking for the right tool but also for a partner with the best fit to support Newmarket and all at a competitive price.

Solution

The right tool and the right partner

Newmarket needed a performance monitoring solution that would repeatably return reliable data based on realistic journeys, with the flexibility to effortlessly incorporate changes as and when they arose.

SciVisum's fully managed web monitoring service offers a realistic approach to tracking performance that delivers objective, consistent performance measurements. And as a fully managed service Newmarket has ongoing access to SciVisum's team of experts with a strong hands-on approach.

Results

Informing development and wider business decisions

Thanks to SciVisum's monitoring, Newmarket now has an ongoing objective measurement of performance that helps inform development and structural changes to the website. SciVisum's data also helps track issues with wider business implications – issues that could be impacting conversions or partnership effectiveness.



"The objective truth is very useful to have especially in such a graphical and visual way. I can categorically tell people the website is not slow – which has saved many hours of time and salaries in meetings!"

Oliver particularly likes the clear representation of website performance with graphs that can be interrogated visually, making it quick and easy to dig down into the data as required.

During re-platforming the Newmarket team has also been able to create bespoke reports, directly comparing two sets of booking data on the same monitoring journey side by side - one for the old reservation system and one for the new. This data has given them objective answers to performance questions informing development decisions.

Resolving problems before they impact the customer experience

Newmarket has seen rapid improvements to the customer experience, but one of the biggest advantages from working with SciVisum has been the swift interception of component-related performance issues.

In Oliver's words: "It's improved my ability to investigate potential issues and flag them for a solution. Even where we can't pre-empt problems, we can deal with them swiftly because they've been highlighted so quickly."

"SciVisum repeatedly picks up on issues such as failing third-party components and asks us what we'd like to do about them."

Oliver continues "We're enjoying the flexibility and proactivity that SciVisum's managed solution brings, which means we've been able to resolve issues before they become a problem to our customers."

Maximising product availability

Having instant access to actionable data also means that inventory is managed more effectively - something that's a big deal in the travel sector, where accurate information about product availability is paramount.

"When an error alert comes through I can tell the product team that we've run out of space and ask whether we're expecting more

availability or if we need to take a date off sale," continues Oliver. "That's incredibly useful intelligence in terms of inventory-management."



A hands-off vantage point

Because the team is fully occupied - not least on account of the re-platforming project - it relies heavily on SciVisum's highly proactive involvement. As the re-platforming progressed, the Newmarket team could rely on a quick turnaround for re-scripted journeys, even when cruise booking journeys were changed multiple times to ensure accurate monitoring throughout.

Oliver comments: "It was when I was most deeply embedded in the day-to-day activities that SciVisum's proactivity saved my bacon on a number of occasions. They would rescript the journey and turn it back on when it was working again; it was an ideal solution for me as I barely had to get involved."

"We needed a partner organisation with the right fit. We (like so many teams in so many businesses) are always busy, and so rely on the proactivity of the team at SciVisum. I consider this a real strength and a clear differentiator."

“SciVisum’s flexibility, alongside their proactivity, is their stand-out feature. For a technical solutions company focusing on a web monitoring service, it’s the human factor that in my opinion does SciVisum most credit.”

Expertise that effortlessly extends the in-house team

As Newmarket was looking for a long-term collaboration, they needed to find a best-fit solution – getting the partnering right was a crucial part of the process.

SciVisum’s collaborative approach is one of its biggest strengths. Because the monitoring solution is fully managed, it doesn’t require any capital outlay and won’t tie up in-house resources, while the level of support offered is second-to-none. With SciVisum’s help, Newmarket’s re-platforming project is progressing well, with the reassurance that the customer experience is being continually enhanced, rather than disrupted, and that system errors and capacity issues are being tackled before they impact on site availability – and the bottom line.

Looking forwards

Oliver believes that Newmarket hasn’t yet fully exploited all the benefits of SciVisum’s monitoring service. As well as re-platforming, Newmarket plans to change the website design and structure in the coming months. Oliver believes that the data he’ll be able to acquire from performance comparisons during these changes will be invaluable – all of which will contribute to creating a better, more intuitive experience for the customer.

“We believe there’s more upside to come as we complete the re-platforming, and continue to evolve the design and structure of the website, using SciVisum to review and improve the site’s performance. We’ll be able to judge the effectiveness of changes as we go, objectively and accurately.”



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If you would like to schedule a free consultation regarding your website performance concerns, learn more about our performance testing services or arrange a free trial then please contact us.

About SciVisum

Measuring realistic user experience for peak digital performance

SciVisum’s cloud-based website performance monitoring and load testing services provide unparalleled insight into your customers’ digital experience by behaving exactly as end users would. A unique combination of realism – delivered by an intelligent test engine, and expert human insight provides the most accurate, actionable data enabling you to take control of today’s performance challenges.

For over ten years, SciVisum has helped leading UK brands such as Transport for London, Cineworld, Dixons Carphone, Channel 4 and Debenhams optimise user experience and deliver peak performance.



WEBSITE MONITORING



MOBILE MONITORING



LOAD TESTING



PERFORMANCE OPTIMISATION

