

opodo | Registration Repositioning

12 Dec 2002

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The importance of registration

User registration is an important mechanism that can facilitate the creation of deep customer relationships, particularly for web-based organisations. It can be a powerful tool with which to track behavior and gather data. This customer understanding can then be used to develop more valuable, sophisticated and personalised services and content.

opodo intends to make registration mandatory in 2003. To ensure this is effectively implemented, opodo commissioned Sapient to conduct a 4-week research project.

Business need for project

To enable the creation of a strategy for registration and personalisation by developing a comprehensive understanding of user's needs around registration.

This research document

This document represents opodo's first step towards mandatory registration. It also represents a starting point for the personalisation and continuous improvement of the customer relationship by those means. The document contains:

- Principles for developing a strong customer relationship through personalisation
- Recommendations for the design of the registration process
- A competitor and best practice audit
- Testing collateral and methodology

Recommendations:

1. Demonstrate opodo's value by allowing people to use the site before registering
2. Establish trust through an emphasis on security and privacy
3. Reassure users with detailed information on all aspects of online security
4. Don't be too demanding. Avoid forcing customers to store financial details. Communicate this option clearly
5. Place a universal 'basic registration' at the same point across all geographies
6. Ensure collection of email addresses. Use registered email as user ID
7. Make basic registration a quick, simple and short process
8. Keep basic registration to an absolute minimum
9. Gather further details opportunistically
10. Communicate customer benefits clearly
11. opodo will have to create new and innovative personalised services to truly differentiate itself from the competition
12. Ask for more information on an 'as-needs' or optional basis
13. Have pop-ups only when related to current task on site
14. Let customers define the frequency of contact (email)
15. Combine reminders to fill out personal details with clear benefits derived from that personalisation and make it optional
16. Explain why particular information is needed for personalisation

The way forward

Drawing on the results of this project, we have identified some next steps to help opodo achieve the best possible results from the introduction of mandatory registration.

Next steps:

- a. Initiate a project to design and implement an effective registration process
 - Plan for usability and nomenclature testing of final registration design
 - Create content for introduction of registration with its benefits articulated
 - Validate specific issues in Germany and France through user testing
- b. Create a new set of innovative personalised services to improve the user experience and encourage registration
- c. Develop a long term personalisation and customer relationship strategy
- d. Sync up these efforts with the data warehousing project and any other CRM initiatives

This document details Sapien's user research findings, research methodology and recommendations. It also includes competitive audit findings.

The primary purpose of the registration repositioning research project was to understand user issues surrounding online registration. This understanding was achieved through conceptual research and user interviews.

The team also compiled a competitive audit which looked at competitor travel sites and general registration best practice.

opodo also plan to launch a personalisation initiative on across all websites over the coming year. An effective registration process is vital for any personalisation effort to succeed. If done well, registration can form the beginning of a close customer relationship with the company. opodo will then be able to build on this relationship over time to create a large base of loyal customers.

This is an important goal for opodo, since research suggests that no European online travel brand has succeeded in capturing a loyal customer base.

Registration is the starting point for deeper customer relationship - the first step towards personalisation. An effective registration process is vital in any successful personalisation strategy. This section describes the link between registration and personalisation and suggests directions for a future strategy.

To succeed, opodo needs to answer the following questions:

1. How can opodo increase the value of its service for customers through registration and data gathering?

This is perhaps the most open ended piece of work that opodo needs to undertake. This should form a central part of the 2003 user experience work. It should be driven by Marketing and UE.

2. How can opodo structure its offerings to encourage the development of a relationship?

Users need to see an increasing 'value path'. At the beginning of the customer relationship users see registration as a step that helps them to complete a booking.

We suggest an approach that leads the customer to give more details through visibility of the benefits of moving to the 'next level' of registration. This approach provides opodo with more information about its customers and draws them into a continually evolving relationship or dialogue. (see fig 1, on page 5)

It is crucial that the right services are structured in the right way to create this 'value path'. Getting this right is not a quick or easy exercise.

3. What data should opodo gather and how is that data prioritise?

We recommend defining which pieces of customer data are most important. The data must give opodo maximum customer intelligence but also enable the creation of new services.

For example, Amazon uses stored financial details and permissions to enable One Click Buying. It uses Collaborative Filtering (mass tracking of purchase patterns) to create 'personal' recommendations.

4. What can we deduce about our customers from data?

opodo also need to understand which pieces of data are crucial for other marketing activities, e.g. postcodes to determine demographic details.

The data in the personal profiles will give opodo insight into customers' location, household composition and contact details. Site usage analysis will give wider and deeper information about purchase patterns, favourite destinations, reaction to offers and incentives.

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Benefits and incentives

It is important to distinguish between benefits and incentives. As we have defined them, benefits refer to increases in service value through speed, price, relevance, simplicity, extra functionality - a better user experience.

We have defined incentives as 'sweeteners' - one-off offers designed to galvanise the user into action - e.g. competitions, one-off price offers, etc.

Other findings from user testing

In the user testing, we talked to participants about the benefits they could imagine as reasons for registering. We then also had a conversation with them about various personalisation possibilities.

Updates about opodo offers were seen as something useful, if the content was valuable to them. "They might recommend something that I haven't thought of", one participant said. But others qualified that "getting an email is not going to sway my idea about a holiday".

But too often, users reported, this degenerated into junk mail, particularly, if they were - in their minds - inundated with mail: "I get emails every day. There is maybe one a month I look at, and that may only have some potential."

Participants also suggested other ideas; special offers just for registered users, or prepromotions that are available to registered users before the general public.

Overwhelmingly, all users were very excited by the idea of loyalty schemes, both in conjunction with existing schemes, or opodo's own.

Personalised offers, like cross-selling (e.g. "others who have gone to the same destination as you have also gone to") or up-selling ("others who have bought this flight also rented a car") were mainly viewed positive, but this is strongly dependent on the quality of the offer and whether it gave them value and savings. As one participant said: "If they come up with more options, fair enough, but it has to be up to me or it's intrusive."

His comment highlighted the importance and difficulty to get this right: he continued that: "My reaction also depends on my mood, I have to admit. That makes it difficult. But I will react negative, if offers are pushed onto me, like come, look at this.. and this!"

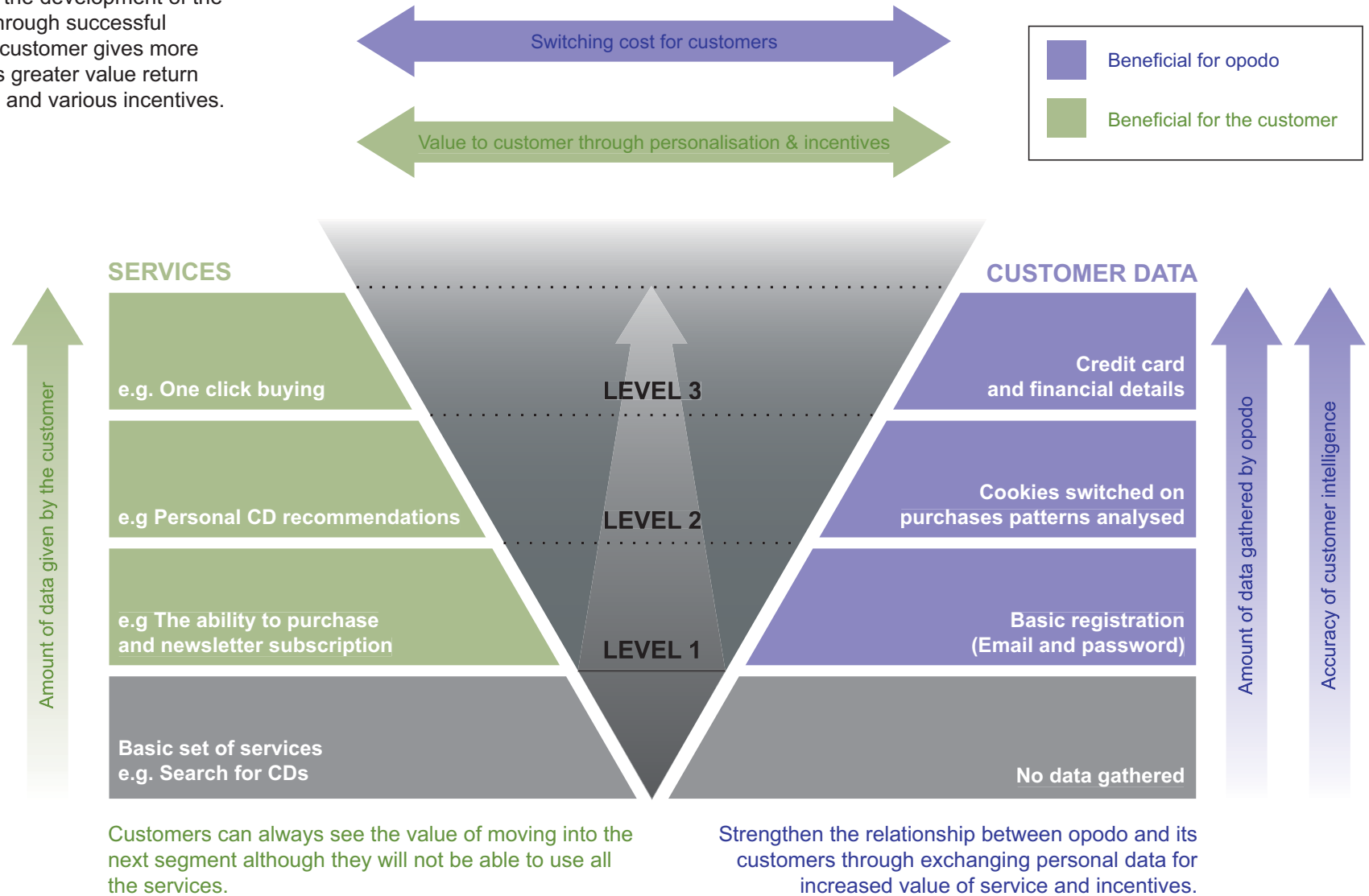
On the other hand, appropriately personalised offers really improve the the customer relationship. As one woman commented: : "It makes me feel appreciated. It's more personal!"

This research is extremely preliminary. It needs to be followed up with more research and conceptual development.

Personalisation Model Diagram

The Personalisation Triangle

This diagram illustrates the development of the customer relationship through successful personalisation. As the customer gives more information, he receives greater value return through personalisation and various incentives.



The current state of registration

on opodo

The current state of registration

Ineffective and underutilised

Currently opodo customers do not have to register to make a booking. Users are given the option to register but are assured that they do not have to do. Not surprisingly, few users opt to register. This situation is not helped by the fact that the benefits of registration are not apparent, nor indeed particularly compelling. Also the option not to register is strongly promoted on the page.

On the home page, there is no call to registration in the content area at all. A small, visually unobtrusive link under the opodo brand is the only indication to users that registration is even possible on the site.

The lack of visual prominence of the registration link is a problem that persists throughout the site.

The current state of registration

The registration process

The registration fields on Opodo are displayed on a single screen. Customers are asked to provide login details and personal details. Users are required to create a unique user name as well as provide their email address.

Login and personal details are separated visually into two boxes.

A third box, entitled "Travel newsletter" includes the mandatory privacy policy within it. The grouping of these two very different information groups is potentially confusing for users who may interpret the privacy policy as pertaining to the newsletter and not registration as a whole.

The benefits of registration and travel policies are stated, but these are wordy and visually unexciting. No clear explanation for seeking user's personal details, such as their date of birth, is offered.

"Fast" registration is a bit of a misnomer since the process is not especially fast compared with competitors' registration processes.

Neither instructional copy nor contextual help are offered for areas where users commonly encounter errors, such as the creation of a unique user ID and valid password. Useful tips are only somewhat helpful. They do not, however, address the importance of creating a secure password despite the fact that Opodo allows users to store potentially sensitive personal information.

Error messages do provide useful information to users about the problem they are encountering, but these errors could be avoided if more useful copy was provided on the registration page itself.

The mandatory title drop-down menu is unnecessary and potentially frustrating for users who do not find their title listed. In the case of children aged 2-11, the requirement to designate a title is quite unusual.

Security and privacy policies are not obvious to users. They have to open the Terms and Conditions pop-up window and scroll almost to the bottom of a very long page before they can learn about these policies. Security and privacy are important concerns for users and should be more accessible.

Although there are benefits to registration on the site, opodo is not currently offering unique value for the customer which might begin to create a sense of loyalty to the site. In fact, other travel sites offer users far more compelling functionality such as Travelocity's 'Fare Watcher' for example.

opodo

Recommendations for Registration

Recommendations for Registration

1.0 When to Register

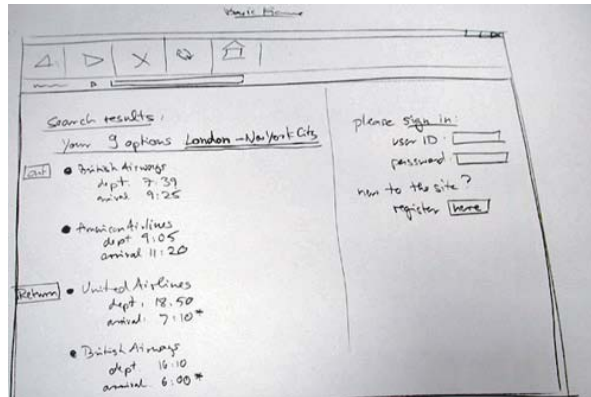


Fig. i

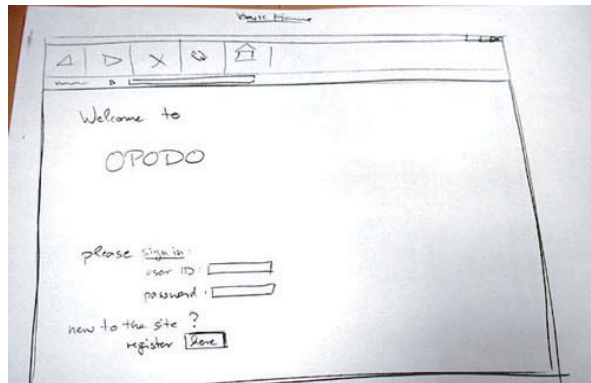


Fig. ii

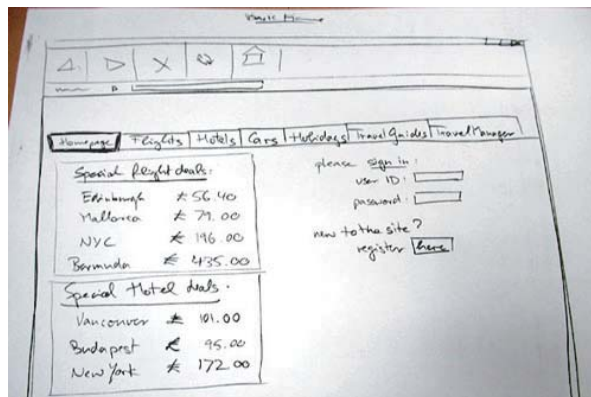


Fig. iii

1.1 Demonstrate opodo's value by allowing people to use the site before registering

Participants told us that they need insight into the site before they are ready to register. Describing it as "the tap on the shoulder to be taken aside to register", they thought the best moment to do so was after they have done a search. We showed this to them in Fig. i.

The ability to search gave participants the feeling that they were seeing "more than the pure offers", but they felt they could "go through the virtual brochures" on their own. Participants expressed a desire to browse in an undisturbed manner like the offline environment. They said they like to browse anonymously when they enter a travel shop and read the brochures.

If the prompt to register was too early, users reacted negatively. This is shown in Figure ii. One person illustrated the point with the analogy "This is as if you require me to register when I want to enter a shop on Oxford Street. No one would do that. I would go elsewhere".

We also showed them an option displaying various special offers of the site (see Fig. iii). It asked users to register if they wanted to proceed further. Participants described it as a 'shopwindow' and the option received more positive responses than Figure ii.

The fourth option (Fig. iv) asked participants to register when they were entering the booking stage. It was sometimes desired initially, but most people re-evaluated their opinion after a bit of thought. They felt that it was diverting them out of their mind frame of booking/reserving. Two participants did prefer registration to be at the booking stage, but one of them insisted that she would rather "put in [her] financial details every time, and not have them stored". She was unusual in that she preferred the experience to be interrupted, since her focus was on privacy and security over the flow of the interaction.

The majority of users felt that the best time to be asked to register is just before they begin to plan out the specifics of their journey. Most of the other commercial travel sites audited follow a similar model. Users are asked to register after they have finished their search and selected items to purchase/book. However, the successful sites make sure that they don't ask for a lot of information during registration. These sites understand that users will submit more information once they enter their payment details for purchasing.

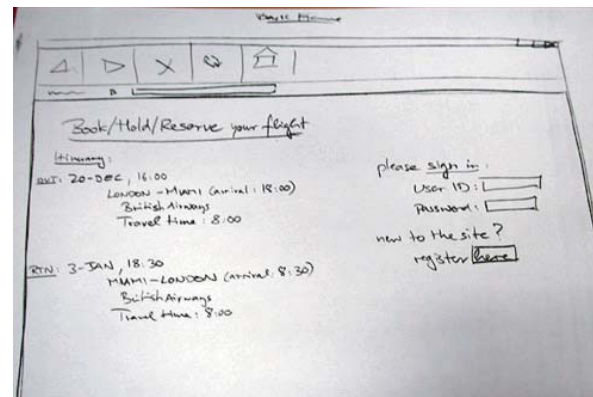


Fig. iv

Recommendations for Registration

2.0 Security and Privacy

2.1 Establish trust through an emphasis on security and privacy

Security is an important issue for people. There was a general mistrust of Internet companies and a perception that personal details are freely passed on or sold.

Users want to be confident that the websites are secure and their details are safe, before they divulge personal data. When asked, participants stated that they would only conduct online transactions if the company in question was a known and trusted brand with a good reputation. The majority of interviewees had heard of opodo and commented on TV and print. Their recollection of them was positive.

Participants who had not heard of opodo typically represented a less Internet-savvy group. Some participants hadn't seen their name before - either online or offline.

The amount of money users were planning to spend on travel also had a significant impetus on the need for security. Travel can be expensive and the cost of a flight is often a large enough expenditure for people to think twice before giving their details out. People need therefore more assurance from a travel site about security and privacy than they do on sites where the amount they spend is less.

For these users only substantial benefits will justify the perceived risk of parting with personal and/or financial details. For example, one participant was looking for information on flights to India. She was not yet ready to commit this much money for her first online purchase, but she said she "would try it with a short-haul weekend trip to Europe, no more than £100 or so. Then I'd know how it works".

Most of the interviewees were reluctant to enter financial details. They tended not to save their financial details in their profile. These people were open to entering their financial details each time they make a purchase.

In summary, in order to address users security concerns it is vital that opodo can explicitly state the ways in which the information will be used and offer an assurance that people's information is securely stored.

Recommendations for Registration

2.0 Security and Privacy

2.2 Reassure users with detailed information on all aspects of online security

Most Internet users do not have deep technical knowledge. Even users who do understand technology issues, still expressed the need for reassurance and explanation.

Cookies

Cookies are a case in point. Cookies are not well understood by users in general. Precise and simple information about their function and use will ease the concerns of users. An option not to use cookies is also welcomed by many Internet users.

Click stream capture

Another important finding for opodo to consider is the fact that users don't like the idea of being observed without their knowledge. Some users may react negatively if they become aware that clickstream capture or similar technologies are being used.

Users expressed alarm at the use of clickstream capture and their relationship with the brand was immediately soured. Participants felt uneasy if they felt that their movements were monitored too closely.

The breaking point for our participants came overwhelmingly at the following scenario: "If you were searching for flights on the site", we told them, "we could send offers back to you according to what you've searched. So if you searched on Spain and Italy, but didn't book, we could show you offers around these destinations." Most users felt that this was "too close to Big Brother".

Access to personal information

Most of the participants had an underlying suspicion that giving their personal information only benefits the company. Clear statements about how access to personal data is governed will allay fears and give users the assurance that their concerns are responded to: "In the absence of a face to speak to, how can I establish this relationship of trust and acquaintance that I have with my travel agent?".

People need to establish trust before they are ready to transact. Participants who hadn't bought travel online before all claimed that they would consider it. However, the sentiment "I have to feel comfortable [i.e. secure]" was universal. opodo will find it prudent to answer three basic questions users have to help gain their confidence:

- Why does the site need the user's personal information?
- What benefit will the user receive by providing the information?
- Who will have access to their personal information?

Customers on Amazon are explicitly told that they are registering on a "secure site" and the use of cookies is clearly explained to them. This helps to improve the faith of the customer in the Amazon brand. Conversely, on travelocity.co.uk, cookies are used without users' knowledge - potentially degrading the customer experience if/when they become aware of this fact.

Recommendations for Registration

2.0 Security and Privacy

2.3 Don't be too demanding. Avoid forcing customers to store financial details. Communicate this option clearly

Some customers welcomed the option not to store their financial details at all on their profiles. One participant clearly stated that she would rather re-enter her details every time, but not have them stored. She argued that she only makes a handful of travel bookings in a year and leaving her financial details with a company makes her feel uncomfortable. She had similar concerns in the offline world and related a story when she made a repeat telephone booking and the operator had her details.

Expedia.co.uk gives users the option to store multiple financial account details. However, it is not mandatory to store any details at all.

There is obviously a need to offer users the ability to store any number of user profiles - from none to many. Interestingly, none of the sites we audited adequately explained the security of financial details. This could be a potential market differentiator for opodo with respect to transparency and the trustworthiness of the brand.

Recommendations for Registration

3.0 Process of Registration

3.1 Place a universal 'basic registration' at the same point across all geographies

Just when 'registration' is achieved differs across sites. The minimal requirement for registration is the creation of a unique user ID and a password. This definition of registration works across all geographies.

A unique user ID can be any string of text or numbers, but we recommend the use of an email address for a number of reasons:

- It is already a unique identification system
- It allows opodo to capture users email addresses
- Users do not have to go through endless repetitions to try to find a name no one else has already used
- It is memorable for users (after users have finally come up with "Bob238", many forget what is often essentially an arbitrary choice and and never bother to find out again)
- It offers a validation mechanisms for users who have forgotten their password

This approach will not create difficulties in any of opodo's markets. In the UK, asking for first name and surname is also fully acceptable. This ought to be validated for both the French and German markets, but we do not anticipate problems with this.

In Germany, many sites glean information through capture of address, but it this not made explicit. Culturally, it seems that name is defining for the UK audience, but that address is considered more private. In Germany, location is seen more practically and does not impinge privacy in the same manner as in the UK.

Overall, participants with more Internet experience stated that they were used to large and long forms as well as being asked more details at the first stage of registration. They used to view these forms as an annoying but recurrent 'evil' they encountered in too many registration processes. However, this situation is rapidly changing as more transactional sites adopt best practices.

Well-established, global consumer sites, such as Amazon, Yahoo and Expedia have a registration process that is consistent across all locales. Registration on such well-established online brand sites tends to be short.

opodo should begin their relationships with their customers on a positive note by offering a short and consistent registration experience for all its customers.

Recommendations for Registration

3.0 Process of Registration

3.2 Ensure collection of email addresses. Use registered email as user ID

Participants were reluctant to remember the "thousands of user names and passwords" that they need to access sites. Using the registered email as the user ID simplifies the process of registration and user interaction with opodo.

However, this can be a concern for certain Internet users who don't have an email address. Moreover, it should be made clear to the users that the website is not asking for the password associated with their actual email account (although many will actually use this password).

3.3 Make basic registration a quick, simple and short process

Our participants stated that they would like to take care of registration "in one go". Some participants reacted with annoyance when they need to spend much time registering. Most participants felt that about 5-10 minutes is the time limit for registration.

However, it should be noted that these estimates are not necessarily accurate. Importantly, they represent users' perception time. Five to ten minutes then characterises a "short period of time".

For example, one participant reckoned that normal registration takes her up about 20 minutes of her time. This should be taken to mean a 'noticeably long' period of time, rather than a precise measure. She reported that the questions asked did not include any special marketing information, but she was describing the "normal" stuff they ask, you know, email, address, phone, age and so on".

The experience of "time length" is very personal (as shown in the example above). Users are adamant that it has to be short, but the setting in which we tested does not allow a precise estimation. We recommend opodo test this in a later phase with usability testing.

Annoyance over lengthy forms also has to do with the fact that users feel they have to give a lot of information irrelevant to the purpose for which they are registering. This makes users impatient and suspicious. In general people dislike being distracted from tasks.

Recommendations for Registration

3.0 Process of Registration

3.4 Keep basic registration to an absolute minimum

Users expressed a clear desire to keep the registration process to an absolute minimum. In no instance, did users say they would go to a site in order to register.

3.5 Gather further details opportunistically

Users prefer registration experiences that:

- Separate registration and information gathering
- Allow quick return to task at hand
- Remind/ask for further information at a later stage

Keeping the registration process short does not mean opodo has no opportunity to gather information about their customers. Despite users' emphasis on completing registration in one go, they are not averse to being asked to give more details later, if the benefits are clearly stated. An email with a reminder to fill out more of the personal profile to enable a personalised service was acceptable for some interviewees.

On Amazon it is optional to fill in personal details during registration, however, every time a user logs in they are taken to a common user page. This page reminds the user to fill in additional user details along with the benefits they will receive. The same strategy is applied by established travel websites - Expedia, ebookers and Travelocity.

Recommendations for Registration

4.0 Communicate the value of registration to customers

4.1 Communicate customer benefits clearly

For users, clearly stating the benefits of divulging personal details is crucial. Sites that do this give participants the feeling that they are seeing value in registration and are being taken seriously. The participants felt these sites were more trustworthy.

However, there is also widespread suspicion amongst users. Participants understand that companies want to capture their details, but they were sceptical about the potential benefits. Either they could see none, or suspected that any benefits that were used to 'hook' them.

One participant could not imagine that an offer (e.g. a small discount on his holiday) would be of any benefit to him. He expected to be tied in for the next few years, forced to book with the same company. Participants stated that they often couldn't see the benefits that they might have from registering at a site.

opodo should be aware that simply stating an outcome of registration as a benefit is not enough to allay consumer mistrust. It is important that a user "benefits" really do have some value for users.

Most of the sites we audited mention the benefits offered by them to a registered user in some form. However, most sites do not do so effectively. One of the more effective example is trip.com. Trip.com displays the benefits in small snippets, which are then supported by detailed explanation. The German site Avigo takes a visually effective approach. The site labels the benefits in short bullet-point style bars at the point of registration. It is concise and well displayed, but it does not give more information than these statements. Hence, the user is unable to find out how the benefits are realised.

Recommendations for Registration

4.0 Communicate the value of registration to customers

4.2 opodo will have to create new and innovative personalised services to truly differentiate itself from the competition

Most of the participants were enthusiastic about being provided with tools to manage their travel. They found it an appealing reason to register. Most felt they should be told about the tools before registration - perhaps in the form of a demonstration, a good example of which can currently be found on Travelocity. If users can see how they benefit from the use of their personal information by such tools, they find it valuable to fill out personal details forms.

opodo should note that so many travel sites offer travel tools that users now expect them to be present on all travel sites. Tools such as 'Fare watcher' and 'travel arranger' are becoming perceived as a standard suite of offerings for a travel site.

4.3 Ask for more information on an 'as-needs' or optional basis

As we have mentioned previously, separating the 'basic registration' from 'data gathering' is an effective way to incrementally gather information from users. Users said, "Give us the choice to fill it out or not". Even then they were adamant that "I need to see why I should do so in the first place".

Reminders to fill out more details are acceptable, if benefits are visible and data is asked for on an 'as-needs' basis.

4.4 Have pop-ups only when related to current task on site

While most Internet users display a strong degree of scepticism and annoyance towards pop-ups, participants reacted positively to the idea of a pop-up that reminds them to sign-in when they re-enter the site. In fact, they stated that a pop-up would work better for them than a section on the page reminding them to sign-in.

Although participants expressed annoyance at the gratuitous use of pop-ups on sites, they did feel that a pop-up for sign in would be a helpful and relevant reminder and they were not averse to it. None of the sites we audited had a pop-up associated with the purpose of registration.

opodo should be aware that pop-up windows are often associated with accessibility and usability problems.

Recommendations for Registration

5.0 Benefits of Personalisation

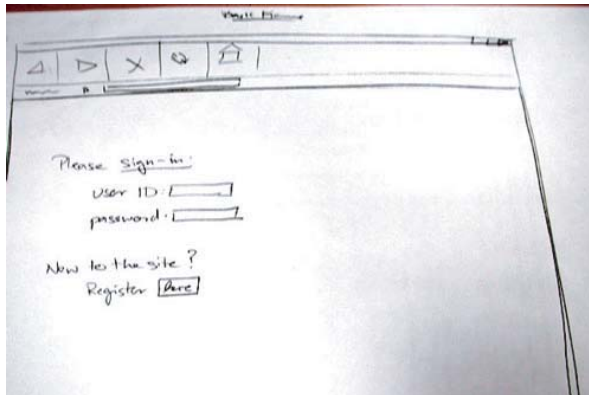


Figure i

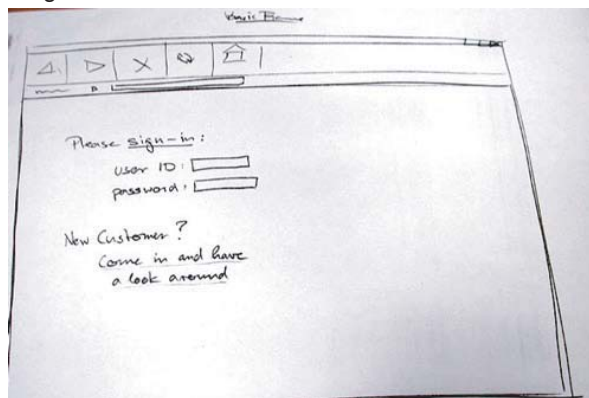


Figure ii

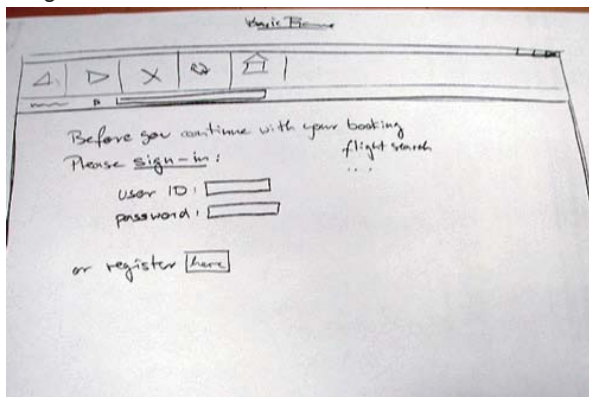


Figure iii

5.1 Let customers define the frequency of contact (email)

One of the most annoying side effects of registration for Internet users is 'junk mail'. Users feel very concerned about the amount of junk mail they are receive. The "annoyance" factor has an inverse relationship of the quality of content users receive. If the content is not satisfactory, all users classified it immediately as 'junk'.

Junk mail was also classified by the frequency of its arrival. No participant thought that information from a travel site more often than weekly could be useful to them. "I don't fly that often", remarked one person. Many thought that even the weekly email is too much for them and they would like rather a monthly, or quarterly email. Overall, acceptable frequency (presupposing the relevant quality of content for the recipient) was expressed as a range of weekly to monthly emails.

One of the ways of showing sensitivity to customers would be to allow them to choose the frequency of the emails they are getting. "I hate being sent this stuff without being able to control it. And then I don't even know how to stop it", complained one participant. Users said that if they were able to control the frequency of emails then they would feel that their needs are being listened to, and that it would feel less like a sales pitch. Lastminute and Expedia both let the user customise the type and frequency of the mails they want to receive.

5.2 Combine reminders to fill out personal details with clear benefits derived from that personalisation and make it optional

Participants reacted strongly to the style in which requests were made. They all reacted negatively when they felt they had to give information that was not directly relevant (see also Security and Privacy). A couple of people said it is because of this reason that they try avoiding registration anywhere on the web. Customers felt much more comfortable when they could choose how often they would have contact with the site. "Setting their own preferences" meant to participants that they have the option to withhold information, if they want to. We showed participants various methods of reminding them. None were rejected.

However, participants were especially positive about the second example (fig II). Here we showed them a phrasing that invited people to come in and look around. Participants said that it gave them the feeling that they were invited to browse without having to decide at this stage how committed they might be to the site. This is not a specific design or interaction recommendation yet it does emphasise the importance of choice for the customer. The phrasing of the second example (fig II) gave users the feeling of empowerment. "With this option I can choose what to do, whether I want to continue or not. It is in my hands now", said one of our participants.

Recommendations for Registration

5.0 Benefits of Personalisation

5.3 Explain why particular information is needed for personalisation

Once a user has established a trust relationship with a site they become more receptive to give more information. This relationship must make them feel that they can control how much and when to part with information, but must also be based on the value of the service to them.

We asked users what kind of information they think is useful for their personal profiles. Users selected and/or added the data entry points they thought useful and appropriate for their profiles. (Figure i is an example of the results of the exercise. The full set can be found in appendix iii.) They also ranked them in more and less essential captures.

"First name", "surname", "email", "password", "main telephone" and "address" were all acceptable and appropriate questions. Users considered them "normal". "Departure Airport" was also considered to be very useful.

However, many wanted to be able to enter several airports or a region, "like 'the Southeast' of 'All London airports'". 'Title' and 'Date of Birth' were questioned a few times, some users felt that this information would be irrelevant to the company and would not want to give it. Some thought that title is necessary because it allows the company to see whether one's name is male or female because it is not always clear. Other users mentioned that 'date of birth' is good because one will need it "when travelling with documents of identity, like a passport" and that "if they know my age, they won't send me offers for Saga holidays". The questions we presented to participants was perceived as a "single set" of questions. Users named this set 'personal details'.

(continued...)

A hand-drawn sketch of a registration form on a piece of paper. The form includes the following fields and elements:

- Navigation icons at the top: back, forward, stop, refresh, and home.
- Form fields: title (dropdown), first name, surname, main telephone, mobile (optional), email, date of birth (dropdown), password, repeat password, number of children in home (radio buttons: nil, 1, 2, 3 or more), number of holidays per year (radio buttons: nil, 1, 2, 3, 4 or more), dream places to go (text input), and a checkbox for "I'd like to receive the weekly newsletter".
- Sticky notes:
 - A yellow note with "Address" and three input lines.
 - A yellow note with "date of birth" and a dropdown arrow.
 - A yellow note with "to go business" and an input line.
 - A yellow note with "frequent destinations" and two input lines.
 - A yellow note with "special needs" and two input lines.
- Additional text: "I'd like to receive it in HTML" with a radio button, and "PLAINTEXT" with a radio button.

Figure i

Recommendations for Registration

5.0 Benefits of Personalisation

(...continued)

We found that moving beyond the set of "personal details" needed explicit explanation as to why giving that information would be useful. Nonetheless, participants also suggested items that they thought could be valuable for the company to know about them.

For example, people reacted overwhelmingly positively to "Dream places to go". Some people needed an explanation, but were then interested in providing that information. Most users then suggested on their own behalf that they would also like to see "Frequent destinations".

Several participants asked for a separation of business and leisure and/or other travel. They thought it could be helpful, if the different "modes of travel" could be specified. "I mean, I could be travelling on Business, Leisure, or go for City Breaks or something like that." Another said: "then you could send me the offers according to what I was doing at the time. If I travel on business, I will need the hotel deals in the city etc, but they will be of a different class [i.e. price] to the things I will look at for a holiday".

Users were also receptive to the idea of "type of travel" (beach, walking, adventure), but slightly unsure about "type of traveller". "Does it mean 'economy' and 'business class', or does it mean 'student' or 'family' or 'couple'", they wondered. The former does not provide a lot of value to them because that would be captured in the travel modes section, and for the latter they felt, it would apply only in certain cases.

A few people also asked to pre-set their preferences for seats on planes and options for special needs during travel, ranging from back problems to selecting, e.g. vegetarian meals.

Users had mixed feelings about the request for receiving news and emails. It will inevitably be there, said users. Some said that they always unclick the option and consider even not registering, if you cannot do so. The conclusion is that users accept being offered emails but need the choice to opt out of receiving them. Importantly, this is also a legal requirement. Participants said they found it easier to accept, when the company gave them a choice for the frequency of email contact.

What does it all mean for France & Germany?

The current research project was conducted with an UK audience because of time and other practical constraints. In most instances we feel confident that the results will work across multiple geographies.

All three markets, UK, France and Germany, have sites that do not require registration for booking. In the UK, Lastminute.com is the only serious contender without mandatory registration.

Sapient worked with opodo country managers to define competitor's sites in both France and Germany. In Germany, the sites identified were Expedia, Travelchannel, Travelocity, and T-Online-Travel. Except for the T-Online-Travel, all sites require registration before a booking can be made.

In France, the biggest contenders are GoVoyages, Anyway, and Lastminute.fr. None of these sites require registration for booking.

There are slight differences in how the various countries perceive registration. Continental Europe seems to be sceptical of an 'Anglo-American influence' and issues of privacy.

However, in all cases, there are sites on the market that require registration. We highly recommend opodo is culturally sensitive to the perceptions of the countries. Targeted research on these issues will help opodo make any minor changes necessary for France and Germany.

Proposed Next Steps

This document represents the first step for opodo to introduce mandatory registration. We have identified some recommended next steps for opodo to achieve this:

- a. Initiate a project to design and implement an effective registration process
 - Plan for usability and nomenclature testing of final registration design
 - Create content for introduction of registration with its benefits articulated
 - Validate specific issues in Germany and France through user testing
- b. Create a new set of innovative personalised services to improve the user experience and encourage registration
- c. Develop a long term personalisation and customer relationship strategy
- d. Sync up these efforts with the data warehousing project and any other CRM initiatives

Appendix I

Competitive Audit

We conducted a competitive audit of seven sites that feature registration.

Two sites, Amazon and MyYahoo, were selected because they are well established online brands featuring many best practices. The other sites are all online travel sites with good brand recognition.

We audited these sites for best of breed features in four main areas:

1. Communication of Benefits
2. Security of Information
3. Personalisation and Customisation
4. Form Field Features

Below is the list of sites audited:



The following matrices document the questions we asked each sites and our findings.

Competitive Audit

Communication of Benefits



Summary

- 1 Display of personalised tools and sections acts as an incentive to register with Amazon.
- 2 Personalised navigation, which can be used by registered users, is a effective way to showcase the benefits offered.
- 3 A brief and warm welcome message to the users on the homepage asking them to register with Amazon.
- 4 Short and to the point listing of benefits offered with the option to tour the benefits and features in detail.
- 5 Animated demonstration of the tools offered, give an essential initial glimpse of the features and attracts users to register and use the tools.

	amazon.com	myYahoo!	trip.com	lastminute.com	expedia.co.uk	travelocity.co.uk	ebookers.com
Are there benefit of registering? Does it act as an incentive to register?	Communication of benefits like "Make Your Store just for you! It's free and easy and requires no credit card or personal information." invite users to register.	The benefits of registration are communicated on the MyYahoo homepage. For example: "My Yahoo! is everything you need on one page. Check your stocks, mail, weather, sports scores, and movie listings on one page. Take a tour of My Yahoo!" This gives the user incentives to register.	The benefits of registration are not explained to the user until they are on the registration screen. Example of one such explanation is "With My Trips, you can: Save your purchased travel itineraries, as well as your travel research. Print or e-mail itineraries to travel companions, friends, or family. Access your purchased trip info for up to a year. Personalize My Trips with trip names, travel resources, and more! "	There are no mentioned benefits of registering. The reason offered to a user to register is stated as "you need to register so we can identify you and the products you want to buy ", which is sounds more like a benefit to Lastminute.	Benefits of registration are not mentioned or communicated on the homepage. Its not until the registration screen that the incentives to register are mentioned.	The site does not offer many benefits on registration. However, the few benefits offered are displayed on the homepage followed by a link to register: " Select up to five favorite destinations Each day; we check the prices - so you don't have to; Book the fare that's right for you"	The benefits of registration are mentioned in the registration screen. The explanation is long and wordy. Important points are not highlighted.
Any use of incremental registration, asking user for more info when needed?	Initially users are asked to enter their name, email, date of birth and password for registration. All additional details can be entered at a later stage.	Incremental registration is not used and users have to fill in most of their personal information during registration.	The registration process is not incremental. Most personal details are to be filled during registration	Registration is incremental. A user is registered with their email Id and password and they can fill in additional details separately.	The registration process seeks a member Id, email address and password from the user. All additional personal details can be entered later.	Registration is not incremental. A lot of personal information has to be entered during the registration process.	Registration is not incremental. It seeks most personal information from the user during registration.

Competitive Audit

Communication of Benefits

	amazon.com	myYahoo!	trip.com	lastminute.com	expedia.co.uk	travelocity.co.uk	ebookers.com
Is there any marketing done to attract the users to register?	Marketing messages and special offers, as well as Amazon's excellent personalisation features encourage users to sign up.	Very proactive marketing is done to inform the users about benefits of registration.	On the registration screen there are catchy messages like "Enjoy all the member benefits and join now!" and "Register now to receive special travel offers and use personalised Travel-Planning Tools. Its easy and its true."	Registration and its benefits is not at all marketed on the site.	There is a call to register only on the homepage of the site. It says "Welcome to Expedia: Sign in - Sign up - Sign out". The message is here slightly confusing - suggests both navigation and marketing message	There is active marketing done to sell the registration and its benefits. Apart from the homepage, the pre-registration/sign-in screen also lists the benefits to register and invites users to "join now". Users are given the option to know more and tryout the benefits/tools from the homepage.	There is no explicit marketing done to attract users to register. However, the "My Ebooker" section on the lefthand column on the homepage with links "login", "register", "newsletter" is a strong visual call to register.
Are the benefits of registration clearly stated?	The benefits of registration communicated to the users are:- • Personalize Amazon.com, By telling us your interests, we'll remember them and personalize the site just for you. • It's free and easy! Creating a new account requires NO credit card or personal information until you decide to buy.	All features, benefits and tools available to a registered users are communicated clearly at the homepage as well as other pages like the registration page. Demonstration of the tools for registered user on the home acts as an incentive to register.	Benefits are well written - short, catchy and to the point. However, the site does not offer many benefits.	There is no explicit display of the benefits of registration on the site.	The benefits are clearly stated, for example "Start enjoying the same great deals, personal service, and secure purchases that millions of other savvy travelers have discovered. Learn more about Expedia.co.uk."	Benefits are clear and to the point: "Membership is FREE! We guarantee the safety of your purchases Your privacy is our top concern 24/7 friendly Customer Service Information on hundreds of destinations More than 400 airlines, 50,000 hotels and 50 car rental companies".	Benefits are stated clearly, in a friendly and informal manner "- A weekly ebookers.com Newsletter to keep you up to date with our latest specials. - Access to our fantastic services such Flight Watch and Fare Alert. And it's completely free...so, no excuses - fill in the form below to become an ebooker today! It could change your life".
Are users required to register in order to purchase?	Users have to register in order to purchase. The registration process is quick.	Not Applicable	Registration is not mandatory	User are required to register in order to purchase, but the registration process is very quick.	Registration is mandatory on the site in order to purchase.	Registration is not mandatory for making a purchase.	Registration is not mandatory for purchasing.
When in the flow of a transaction is sign-in/registration asked?	During Checkout and homepage	Whenever the user wishes to personalize the site for themselves	During checkout but its optional	During Checkout	During Checkout	During Checkout	Registration not mandatory to purchase or book a flight
Is the registration process broken up, or is it a one-time process?	Broken up - providing additional personal details is a separate process.	One step - all details to be filled on the registration screen.	Broken up - providing additional personal details is a separate process.	Broken up - providing additional personal details is a separate process.	Broken up - providing additional personal details is a separate process.	One step - all details to be filled on the registration screen.	One step - all details to be filled on the registration screen.
Do logged-in and non-logged in users view/use the site differently?	A logged in user's name is displayed at different locations on the site, like "X's gold box", "X's Store".	Logged in users can customise the site according to their preference.	Either users view the site similarly.	The site is not displayed differently for a logged in user.	Logged in users are addressed by their name "Welcome X", on the homepage. Unregistered users are addressed	Site has the same visual treatment for both logged in and not logged in users.	Logged in users are addressed by their first name.

Competitive Audit

Security of Information

What is your e-mail address? **3**

My e-mail address is

Do you have an Amazon.com password? **4**

☐ No, I am a new customer.

☒ Yes, I have a password:

1 Sign in using our secure server

2 - [Forgot your password? Click here](#)

- [Has your e-mail address changed since your last order?](#)

The secure server will encrypt your information. If you received an error message when you tried to use our secure server, sign in using our [standard server](#).

Please enter your security information below. **5**

(E-mail address is recommended.)

*Create a Member ID: ☒ Remember My Member ID

*Create a Password: (between 5 and 32 characters)

*Verify Password:

*Security Question: [Learn More](#)

*Security Answer: (maximum 32 characters)

Please enter your personal information below.

Title: *First Name: MI: *Last Name: Suffix (Jr., Sr.):

*ZIP/Postal Code: **2** [No ZIP/Postal Code?](#)

*Home Airport: [Airport Look-up](#)

Summary:

- 1 Emphasis on the fact that users are registering using a secure server and their personal details are safe.
- 2 Providing relevant help and assistance to users based on the page content.
- 3 Use of email ID as the log-in ID make it easier for users to remember.
- 4 Emphasize that users should enter their Amazon password and not their email password.
- 5 Link to a pop-up explaining the use of cookies during registration and sign-in process.

	amazon.com	myYahoo!	trip.com	lastminute.com	expedia.co.uk	travelocity.co.uk	ebookers.com
How is security communicated on the site?	The link says 'Sign In Using Secure Server'	Not Applicable	There is no indication about use of a secure password, although it's a secure site .	The link says 'Continue (using secure server)'.	Although registration happens on a secure site this is not effectively communicated to the user	Ste moves into a secure mode.	Users are not informed about creating a secure password. The registration process doesn't happen on a secure site.
Are cookies required to register? If so, is it made clear to the user?	Cookies are required to register.	Cookies are not required to register.	Cookies are required and explanation is given about their use	Cookies are required to register. There is an attempt to explain the result of using the cookies like "Sign in using Fast Buy - this means you won't need to enter all your details again " .	Cookies are required to register. However, the users are not made aware of it.	Yes, but their use is not clarified.	Yes, but their use is not clarified.
Are privacy policies clearly stated? Do users understand how their personal information will be collected and shared?	Privacy policy is mentioned at the bottom the registration screen and due to its location it is not particularly visible to users	Yahoo offers an explanation for why personal information is collected from users, "Customizing Yahoo! Yahoo! will try to provide more relevant content and advertising based on the information collected on this page and on the Yahoo! products and services you use."	The privacy policy is clearly stated at the beginning - "Your personal information is protected by our Privacy Policy. Rest assured -- you're in control at Trip.com. " .	The privacy policies are not displayed on the registration screen.	Yes, this information is shared with the users. "We'll use this address to confirm your travel purchases or notify you of a reservation change. You may change this email address at any time."	The users are made aware that their information is secure with the site; "As always, your security and privacy are of the utmost importance to us, and are backed by our <Shop Safe Guarantee> and <Privacy Policy>. We do not sell or rent our members' personal information, and have no intention of doing so in the future. "	They are not stated on the registration screen. For those who want to know more about the privacy of their information, link "Concerned about privacy?" is displayed before the registration form.

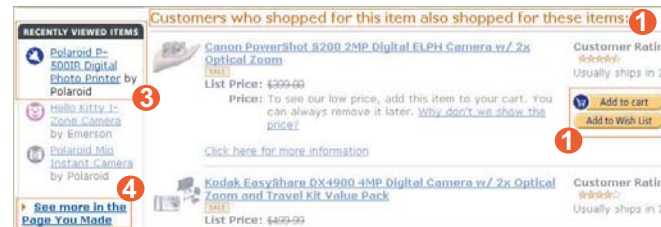
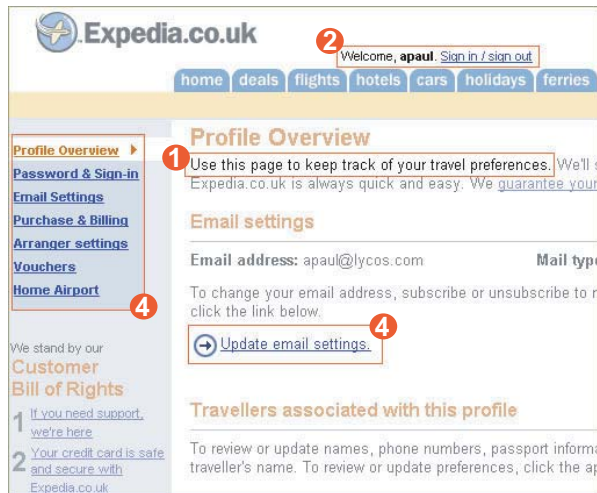
Competitive Audit

Security of Information

	amazon.com	myYahoo!	trip.com	lastminute.com	expedia.co.uk	travelocity.co.uk	ebookers.com
Is personal information saved and reused for future sessions?	Personal information is saved. when the user returns they get better personalised features, like Great Deals etc.	Users' personal informations and preferences are saved and the site is customised accordingly.	Information is reused in future sessions like pre-populating the form fields with personal information.	Personal information is saved but it is not used to personalise the site. They are used to pre-populate some search fields.	Personal information is reused in later sessions, like pre-filled forms.	All the personal info entered is used to pre-populate certain form-fields.	Profile information entered by the user is reused, for example to pre-fill search form fields.
Is the user given the option of filling in their profile details later?	Users can register with some personal details and fill in the rest of it later.	Users have to fill in most of their personal details during registration except those which are related to the customisation of the features of the site.	The registration form is long and seeks a lot of mandatory personal information.	Users can register by providing their email and password. They can provide other personal details later.	Users can register entering very little personal information. They can enter the rest of their personal details whenever they wish. To make a purchase however, they will have to enter their personal details.	Users have to fill in most of their personal information during registration. Few other information can be filled later to use the tools offered to registered user. Registration is not mandatory for making a purchase.	Users are to filling their profile details during registration.
Do users have to use a log in name other than an email?	No	Login name is different from email.	Login name is different from email	No email Id is used as login Id.	Users have to create a member id along with submitting their email id.	Login name is different from email.	Login name is different from email.
Are alternatives provided for users who do not have email?	No alternatives are provided.	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Alternative s are not given to people without an email id.	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
If login and password are required, is it clear that it is the site password, not the user's email password that is being requested?	By information like ' This will be your only Amazon.com password.'	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Its not explained that the password is for lastminute.com and not the user's email password.	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Is detailed help/assistance provided for each step in the process?	Assistance is provided to fill the registration form with links like "Forgot your password? Click here" and "Has your e-mail address changed since your last ordered? "	Site provides helpful tips such as "Choosing your ID -You will use this information to access Yahoo! each time. Capitalization matters for your password!"	Contextual instructional copy helps users through the registration process,e.g password (between 5 and 32 characters), security answer (maximum 32 characters)	The site provides help during the updating of the profile details. For example ' Here you can change your personal and billing details. By supplying us with your billing details, you can speed up the buying process as you will not have to re-supply them each time you make a purchase'	Offers some instructional text like "Password: (6-30 characters)".	Yes, For example help with a form field looks like this "Any combination of 4 to 16 letters and numbers. Hints for selecting a password".	There is no help or assistance provided to the users during registration process for filling in the registration form.

Competitive Audit

Personalisation and Customisation



Summary:

- 1 The site content and features are customised for individual registered users.
- 2 Once registered and logged in the users are addressed by their name.
- 3 Recommendation are based on the preferences of the user and their behaviour on the site.
- 4 Users are provided with a set of customisable tools which enhances their experience with the site.

	amazon.com	myYahoo!	trip.com	lastminute.com	expedia.co.uk	travelocity.co.uk	ebookers.com
Is the site content customized for individual users?	Yes, for example: recently visited places by the user are shown, recommendations around items searched by the users is displayed.	Lot of customisation options are given to the users and they are able to customise the site for themselves.	Users have the option to customize the site and features to the extent they want and when they want.	Some customisation features are provided in the site but these are not very efficient.	Site gives registered users options to plan travel for other users.	There is no clear customisation of the site for a user, however, the 'my account' links is placed in such way that it stands out of the rest.	No particular customisation option for registered users. However, user can set certain flight preferences.
Addresses user by name; addresses past patterns of site usage?	Users are addressed by their first name entered during registration	Users are addressed by their first name.	Users are addressed by their first name.	Logged in users are not addressed on the site.	Users are addressed by their first name.	Users are not addressed by their name. As a distinction, the "My Account" Tab on the top navigation stands out of the rest of navigation.	Users are addressed by their first name; "Welcome X."
Site offers value-adding customisable tools?	- Pre-populated form fields - Message centre - Favorite stores - Wish List - People search - Recently visited items - My Stuff	- Yahoo calendar - Vacation specials - Weather watch - News headlines - Horoscopes - Portfolio creator - Special travel fares watch	- Saving flight searched - Lodging and car preferences - Pre-populated search queries - Wireless service - Trip status and history - Save & email travel itineraries	- Email/alert receipt preferences - Personalised offers	- Travel Arranger - Fare Tracker - Save Home Airport - Vouchers - Add Account - Trip Tracker	- Fare Watcher - Travel Preferences	Flight Watch
Pre-populated search queries, or transaction order forms?	Order forms, address details are pre-populated based on the personal information filled by the users.	Not Applicable	Search fields are pre-populated with the personal information entered by the user.	Some search fields are pre-populated.	Based on the personal information entered by the user the form fields on the site are pre-populated.	Search fields are pre-populated based on the information entered.	Search queries pre-populated with profile information entered by the user.

Competitive Audit

Personalisation and Customisation

	amazon.com	myYahoo!	trip.com	lastminute.com	expedia.co.uk	travelocity.co.uk	ebookers.com
Site offers personalized user page?	Yes, For e.g."X's Store", "X's Gold Box".	The user pages can be personalised by the user based on their preferences. Users can choose what they want to display on their page.	"My Trips" and "My Profile": These sections has personalised sub sections like: My Trips - Status & History, Member ID & Password, Contact Information, Subscriptions, Payment Information, Wireless Services, Flight Preferences, Car Preferences, Lodging Preferences.	This feature is not offered	The site offers the user the chance to personalise the pages based on their needs. For example, if there is an airport which one can isolate as his/her home airport then this information can be saved and reused for future sessions of flight searches.	The site offers a tool: fare watcher, which can be personalised.	This feature is not offered.
Ability to save, email or capture results or task?	Feature to email information about a product from the product's detail information page.	Not Applicable	There are option to save one flight search result at a time.	This feature is not available on this site.	Email, print, save options.	Users can save their search options. They can also hold flights.	The save feature is not efficient as it just bookmarks the page.
Site offers Personalized Offer Pages (POP)? What triggers them?	Registration and submitting personal details and preferences.	Not Applicable	This feature is not supported.	This feature is not available on this site.	This feature is not available on this site.	Users have a personalised fare watcher summary screen. This screen is posted with the results of the fare watcher.	This feature is not available on this site.
Do smartads, emails, and POPs seem like a service, or like pushy ads?	They are beneficial and useful.	There are a lot of options given to the users. Also users can remove the features permanently from their customised homepage.	Pop up adds are pushy.	The weekly emails and ads are not pushy and users can customize the emails they receive.	These are not present on the site.	There are very few popup or advertisements on the site.	This feature is not available on this site.
Site makes recommendations? How targeted? What do they contain?	Recommendations are made throughout the site. As a user provides more information this feature becomes personalised and useful.	Recommendation are not targeted, however they are customisable.	Recommendations are not user specific however they are useful sometimes as they contain cheap and discounted offers.	This feature is not available on this site.	The initial recommendations are not personalized, however, if a registered user is interested in the recommendation then personalized results are displayed.	The recommendations are based on the details entered by the users.	Recommendations are made by the flight watcher tool. User can customise the recommendation to be sms to their mobile phones.

Competitive Audit

Form Field Features

The screenshot shows the 'Sign up for your Yahoo! ID' form. Annotations include:

- 1**: A red box around the 'Recalling your password' section, which states: 'This is our only way to verify your identity. To protect your account, make sure "your answer" is memorable for you but hard for others to guess!'.
- 2**: A red box around the 'Choosing your ID' section, which states: 'You will use this information to access Yahoo! each time. Capitalization matters for your password!'.

The screenshot shows the 'Registration' form. Annotations include:

- 3**: A red box around the password field with the hint '(between 5 and 32 characters)'.
- 4**: A red box around the 'Learn More' link.
- 5**: A red box around the 'Please verify your password.' instruction.
- 5**: A red box around the error message: 'Please provide additional or corrected information to complete your request. See the marked section(s) below.'

	amazon.com	myYahoo!	trip.com	lastminute.com	expedia.co.uk	travelocity.co.uk	ebookers.com
Are examples of relevant field information provided?	Such examples are not provided.	Examples like "Yahoo ID - (examples: "dairyman88" or "free2rhyme")" is displayed on the registration screen.	There no examples shown.	Not Applicable	Examples are not provided.	Examples are not provided. Relevant hints are given, such as "Enter your contact information: As it appears on your ID, Driver's license, passport, etc. "	Examples are not provided.
Does the size of the field indicate the length of the expected in put?	There is no indication of the size and the length of the field. However, this information is not necessary for the users.	Expected length of the form fields is not mentioned.	The size of the fields are indicated like "password - (between 5 and 32 characters)".	Size of the fields is not indicated in with the form fields.	Length of the fields are indicated on the registration form, for example "Member ID: (4-30 characters)".	Length of field is shown, wherever necessary, like "Any combination of 4 to 16 letters and numbers. <Hints for selecting a password>".	Length of the field is indicated at some fields. For example, " *Password :(case insensitive / more than 5 characters) ".
Are required fields clearly flagged and is the flag explained?	Required fields are not flagged and all the fields are mandatory.	There are no flags for mandatory fields. If all the fields are mandatory is not clear.	Required fields are clearly flagged with a *. There is no explanation about why they are mandatory.	As very few fields are there during registration, all are required.	Required fields are not flagged. All the fields are mandatory and it is not communicated.	Required fields are highlighted by red *, but there is no explanation form their being mandatory.	Required fields are flagged, there is no explanation form their being mandatory.

Summary:

- 1 Explain reasons for asking personal details and the ways it will be used for the benefit of the user.
- 2 Examples of the acceptable form field entries help users in entering appropriate information.
- 3 Examples of the acceptable length of the entries in the form fields.
- 4 Link to help and assistance for filling the field.
- 5 Simple and clear error messages explaining the errors in the form fields and ways to correct it.

Competitive Audit

Form Field Features

	amazon.com	myYahoo!	trip.com	lastminute.com	expedia.co.uk	travelocity.co.uk	ebookers.com
Is how information will be used clearly stated?	It is not stated	There is a clear communication of the reason for filling of personal information.	This information is not present	Not applicable	Site does provide this information, for example "Supply email address: We'll use this address to confirm your travel purchases or notify you of a reservation change. You may change this email address at any time.	The use of information is not stated. Its made clear that the information will not be mis-used by various call outs, like "Travelocity.co.uk does not sell or rent customer names or other private account information to third parties, and we have no intention of doing so in the future. "	This is not explained to the users.
Is collecting non-essential data a separate process, and is there an incentive to provide the information?	Non-essential data is collected separately and the benefits of entering them is communicated to the users.	All personal information is collected in during registration and the incentives of providing the information is communicated clearly	All data is collected at the same time, and there are no incentive to provide non-essential personal data.	Registration only requires email and password and all other personal information can be filled by the user.	All non-essential personal information are collected as a separate process different from registration process.	Most of the non-essential personal are provided during the registration process.	It's part of the registration process
Are error messages visible?	Error messages are clearly visible at the top of all the forms	Error messages are visible and located on the top the registration form.	Error messages are clear	The error messages are clear and visible	Error messages are visible and clearly highlighted.	Error messages are displayed in two ways, one as a pop-up and the other as an call-outs on the screen.	Error message are clear and they point out the no. of errors.
Do error messages explain what information was expected or how to fix the error?	The error messages explain what went wrong in the form.	When an error occurs in filling of the form only that part of the form is displayed, the error is highlighted and ways to correct the error is mentioned.	Message clearly explains the error in each form field and also points out the ways to correct the error associated with a form field.	Error messages explain the state of the error clearly, e.g. "Passwords must be at least five characters long".	Error messages explain the type of error and at the location of the error, it explains ways to correct the error.	Errors are captured while filling in the form and shown in a pop-up, pointing out one error per pop-up. Once all the fields are filled in appropriately and the form is submitted, additional error messages are displayed on above the form field.	Error messages explain the error that has occurred. Only one or two errors are displayed at a time, even if other error exist in the form. They are pointed out only once the previous error are corrected.

Appendix II

Registration Process Research Methodology

Registration Process Research

Methodology

We held eight interview sessions with participants at the Sapient London office between November 26th and 28th, 2002. These sessions were conducted as a one-to-one interview session. They included scenario work and a paper cutout requirement gathering exercise.

The sessions lasted for about an hour. They were video-recorded to facilitate analysis and some notes were manually captured by a remote observer (Amit Paul) as well as by the interviewer (Martin Ortlieb). These notes were used as a starting point for analysis. Both opodo and Sapient team members were invited to observe all testing sessions via a remote observation room.

The sessions consisted of four parts. In the first section, we asked participants about their general ideas concerning registration in an online environment. In the second section, we asked them about their interaction with travel sites in general, and their behavior when visiting them.

In the third section, we put the two topics together and asked them about registration in relation to online travel. We discussed when is the best time to be asked to register and we showed them low-fidelity sketches. We also talked about the benefits they expect, and/or could imagine from registering at a travel site. A participatory design session with paper cutouts asked participants to collect all the points for data gathering. We took digital photographs of their results (see appendix iii).

In the fourth section, we discussed how the data gathering should or could be structured and how opodo should interact with the customer in terms

Registration Process Research

Protocol of Registration Research

Introduction

Hello, my name is _____. I work for Sapient, a business and technology-consulting firm based out of the US. Apart from London, we also have offices in Germany, Italy, and India. I am working in the User Experience domain and we do usability testing and customer research. We are attentive to how User Needs might impact the customer's experience and satisfaction. We appreciate that you have agreed to participate in our research, especially with the short notice. [Go over consent/NDA forms. Have them sign two copies. Go over incentive arrangements.]

The interview should take about an hour. Your feedback is very important to us. We would encourage you to just speak what is on your mind as we go through.

Think aloud, so to speak, your reactions to things that we show you. Where you look at first, and secondly, how you like it, your first impressions, and your overall assessment etc. Feel free to ask questions at any time.

Please remember that at no time we are testing you or your abilities, but we are testing our concept and prototypes. Anything you do/ask, will help us to improve our thinking and design, so don't feel that there is minimum level or anything like that...

[turn on cameras].

Ok, then, then let's start.

Let me tell you shortly about the project.

We are looking at registration and the issues surrounding that. We are interested how you understand registrations online and how you deal with them in various circumstances.

Our client is in the travel industry and so we want to understand how you look at travel sites.

Later we will look at how registration can be structured and how we can best capture information in a way that makes it helpful to the customer.

Finally, we want to look at, perhaps we can say, style. We are interested how you like to be approached, what feels comfortable to you and what not, what do you find annoying and what do you find friendly and nice.

So. Let's start with registration as such. What is registration?

What is registration?

- What is registration for?
- When do you give you email out? Do you have different strategies?
- How does 'a registration' look like? I mean what are they asking of you? How are they asking you?
- What information are you comfortable in giving?
- When do you think it is getting 'personal'?
- Is there a difference for you registering for different types of products, e.g. news, financial services, books, CDs, travel, search engines?

Why do you register?

- Why do you register at a site?
- At any site - at a travel site?
- Why do you think they want you to register?
- Can there be mutual benefits? What would they be?
- Is there a difference for you whether you register for a newsletter or for a site?

Interacting with travel sites?

- When you visit travel sites, what is your overall feeling?
- When you do stuff on these sites, do you have special strategies?
- Do you have different objectives at different visits?

What is your searching strategy?

- If you come to the site wanting to find out either where to go or how to get there best, do you work with the site differently than at other times?

What is your booking strategy?

- For example, when you come with the clear task of booking a flight to Milan, do you work with the site differently than at other times?

Where in the process should registration be placed?

- When you arrive at the site?
- When you make a search?
- When you make a reservation?
- When you make a booking?
- Never?
- Why?

What benefits do you envisage from registration?

- Security of data
- Price advantages
- Exclusivity
- Special pre-promotions
- Special deals for me
- Personalised suggestions
- Loyalty schemes
- Frequent flyer deals

What basic information should you have to provide?

- Name
- Email
- Financial details
- Departure airport
- Most likely trips
- Dream trips
- Where you heard of opodo
- Newsletter acceptance
- Html/plain text emails
- Product interest (flight/hotel/holiday/etc)
- Number of holidays per year
- Number of trips per year
- Number of children in household

What is personalisation?

- Would it be beneficial to you, if you'd give more information than that at registration? Why?
- How do you feel about other information being collected about you? For example, your clickstream on the site, past bookings, etc?
- Do you think this information can be used in a way that is beneficial for you? Why, why not?
- How should the information that is collected about you be treated?

What is 'pushiness'?

- Do you remember instances when you felt being harassed and hassled by sites trying to glean more information? If so, what were they doing?
- What made you feel that way?
- If you've not felt that way, could you imagine whether this could be the case, and when that case would arise?

How to remind people?

- If the process would be staggered in order to make the initial registration as easy and simple as possible, how would you like to be reminded?
- Should there be a permanent visual reminder on the site?
- Should there be one reminder per visit, per new page, per month? When does it become too much? When is it too little?
- How do you remind people who are already registered to sign in when they visit the site?

Pop-ups

- Would it be appropriate to have the reminder to appear in a little pop-up window at some stage during the visit? Or at a particular place?
- Would a pop-up be good for signing in general? At the beginning, the HP? When you return to a booking?

Structuring the process of registration

- When you register, how would you like this process to happen?
 - Simple
 - Fast
 - Secure
 - Other?
- If more information is needed eventually, would you rather 'do it in one go' or answer those questions when required on a needs basis?
- Do you answer questions that are marked as optional information?
- How do you react, if you're approached for such information at a later stage of your dealings with the site?

Registration Process Research

Protocol of Registration Research

We interviewed four men and four women. All participants received an incentive of £50 in return for their time. A short profile of the participants, the NDA and consent form are included below.

Interviewees profiles:

David Hamilton (35-45 years of age): Using the Internet every day - Has bought travel online before (Ethnic minority)

Shriti Chauhan (25-35 years of age): Using the Internet 1-2 times a week - Has not bought travel online but not adverse to it (Ethnic minority)

Greg Simmons (25-35 years of age): Using the Internet 3-4 times a week - Bought travel online for family leisure

Maxine Collins (45-55 years of age): Using the Internet every day - Has bought travel online

Dianne Goldsmith (45-55 years of age): Using the Internet 3-4 times a week - Has not bought travel online

David Cohen (45-55 years of age): Using the Internet 3-4 times a week - Has bought travel online before, also for business travel

Daniel Brown (25-35 years of age): Using the Internet 1-2 times a week - Has not bought travel online before

Sarah Callman (25-35 years of age): Using the Internet every day - Has bought travel online. Business travel

Appendix III

Collateral

These screens are the results of the participatory design session with the test participants. We gathered the ideas around collecting information for their personal details. In these screens they assembled the topics they thought acceptable or beneficial.

These images are not a finished design, but represent a brainstorming of opportunities by users. They are a first pass and should not be taken as final.

dream places to go

name

number of trips per year
1-4 • 5-8 • 9-12 • more •

date of birth

I'd like to receive the weekly newsletter ☐
I'd like to receive it in HTML • PLAINTEXT •

number of children in home
nil • 1 • 2 • 3 or more •

mobile (optional)

first name title

surname

email

main telephone

optional email

number of holidays per year
nil • 1 • 2 • 3 • 4 or more •

traveller type

password

departure airport

repeat password

7 named details

card type

number

For Debit Cards, enter the number across the middle of the card

Security number

Valid from

Expiry date

Card holders name as on card

Billing address

address

city/town

Post code

1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 • 6 • 7 • 8 • 9 • 10 • 11 • 12 • All •

Basic Form

Navigation: [Back] [Forward] [Cancel] [Refresh] [Home]

title

first name

surname

date of birth

number of children in home
 nil • 1 • 2 • 3 or more •

mobile (optional)

main telephone

email

password

repeat password

dream places to go

I'd like to receive the weekly news letter ☐

I'd like to receive it ☐

HTML • PLAINTEXT •

Address

Occupation

types of travel
 business ☐
 leisure ☐
 citybreaks ☐

traveller type

departure airport

Financial details
 card type

Number

name

password

repeat password

title

first name

surname

date of birth

email

main telephone

mobile (optional)

departure airport

traveller type

number of trips per year
1-4 • 5-8 • 9-12 • more •

number of children in home
nil • 1 • 2 • 3 or more •

number of holidays per year
nil • 1 • 2 • 3 • 4 or more •

Financial details

card type

number

For Debit cards, enter the number across the middle of the card What is this?

Security number

Valid from

Expiry date

Card holders name as on card

Billing address

address

city/town

Post code

Default • All •

I'd like to receive the weekly news letter ☐

I'd like to receive it in HTML • PLAINTEXT •

dream places to go

Basic Form

△
▷
✕
↺
🏠

name

main telephone

mobile (optional)

email

departure airport

traveller type

regular destinations

dream places to go

repeat password

password

number of trips per year
1-4 • 5-8 • 9-12 • more •

number of children in home
nil • 1 • 2 • 3 or more •

number of holidays per year
nil • 1 • 2 • 3 • 4 or more •

I'd like to receive the weekly newsletter ☐

I'd like to receive it in HTML • PLAINTEXT •

address (optional)

Basic Home

name

title

date of birth

mobile (optional)

Surname

first name

main telephone

password

repeat password

email

address

departure airport

number of trips per year
1-4 • 5-8 • 9-12 • more •

number of holidays per year
nil • 1 • 2 • 3 • 4 or more •

number of children in home
nil • 1 • 2 • 3 or more •

traveller type

most frequent destinations

special requests:
vegetarian meals ☐
...
and back ☐

dream places to go

I'd like to receive the weekly news letter ☐

I'd like to receive it in HTML • PLAINTEXT •

Financial details

card type

number

For Debit cards, enter the number across the middle of the card What is this?

Security number

card term

Basic Home

△
▷
×
↺
🏠

title

first name

surname

main telephone

mobile (optional)

email

date of birth

password

repeat password

number of children in home
 nil • 1 • 2 • 3 or more •

number of holidays per year
 nil • 1 • 2 • 3 • 4 or more •

dream places to go

I'd like to receive the weekly newsletter ☐

I'd like to receive it in HTML • PLAINTEXT •

no. of business trips

frequent destinations

special needs

Financial details

card type

number

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Basic Form

△
▷
×
↺
🏠

title

first name

surname

password

repeat password

main telephone

number of children in home
nil • 1 • 2 • 3 or more •

traveller type

email

date of birth

departure airport

I'd like to receive the weekly newsletter ☐

I'd like to receive it in HTML • PLAINTEXT •

mobile (optional)

dream places to go

passing on email for promotions tick ☐

time of year of holiday

frequent destinations

usual price range

Basic Home

△ | ▷ | × | ↻ | 🏠 |

title

first name

surname

email

main telephone

password

repeat password

departure airport

number of children in home
nil • 1 • 2 • 3 or more •

date of birth

mobile (optional)

traveller type

dream places to go

address

frequent destinations