



ExperienceLab

Design guidelines | Registration processes
for online gaming

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Email: info@experience-lab.co.uk

Tel: 020 7421 6499

RESTRICTED COMMERCIAL

Summary

In an independent study, Serco ExperienceLab evaluated the process of registering to play online gaming. The process was evaluation on the two most popular online games consoles.

The following guidelines are based on the study, and are intended to support those who may be developing or commissioning a process for online gaming registration. They also have important implications for other online registration processes.

Design guidelines

Layout and design

- Resist the use of web-like metaphors. Base information display models on those developed for interactive TV rather than the web. See the SUS pullout on “Usability guidelines for interactive TV and electronic programme guides” for further details.
- Ensure the design, layout and navigation of the registration screens are consistent with the gaming platform they originate from.
- Provide a unique screen each stage of the process. For example, when asking users to enter personal details, display the on-screen keyboard in its own screen rather than placing it on top of another.
- Ensure text displayed on screen is large enough to be legible. Whilst viewing distance should remain reasonably constant at around 1 – 3 metres from the screen, the size of the screens on which the text will be displayed is likely to be highly variable, e.g. from 12” TV’s to 60” displays. Televisions will have less detailed resolution than a computer monitor. See ISO 9241/3 for further guidelines on character sizes.
- When designing the colour scheme, ensure that there is sufficient contrast between the text colours and the background colours.

Navigation and orientation

- Keep navigation cues and on-screen button designs consistent throughout the registration process.
- Match software and hardware designs. For example, use the button conventions on the game pad, so for example, on the PS2, the options onscreen refer to the triangle, square, circle and cross on the controller.
- Ensure the process guides the user through each of the compulsory steps to finish the registration. Do not tempt the user to navigate away from the process until it is completed.
- Automate as many parts of the registration process as possible. Only require user intervention when the details are necessary. Some registration processes require the user to click into a stage where there is only one option to choose. These stages could simply be removed.
- Make sensible use of defaults, ensuring that the default choice is the most likely to be the correct one.
- Simplify the use of on-screen keyboards: use alphabetical key layouts rather than QWERTY layouts.

Stages of the process

- Strive to provide a seamless, consistent transition throughout the various stages of the registration process. Streamline the set-up process, ensuring that each step is necessary and relevant.
- Clearly title each screen in the registration process. Match links and labels from the previous screen to the title of the next screen.
- Provide users with immediate access to games once the registration process is completed. For example, if there is a CD used to install the online experience, consider including an online game as part of it.
- Provide clear feedback on how far through the set-up the user is at each stage of the process.

Content

Language and terminology

- Avoid the use of technical jargon. Ensure the language used is understood by as wide an audience as possible.

Personal details

- Make it clear why the registration process is requesting personal information. Ensure that users are required to type in as little personal information as possible.
- Tell the user which pieces of information they will require to complete registration at the beginning of the process.

Help

- Provide the user with clear, concise, context-sensitive help. Leave more generic help, such as how to navigate through the process, to the initial stages of the set-up.
- When the set-up process fails or reports an error, provide users with clear directions as to how they might resolve the problem.

Overall Process

- Do not require users to remember obscure text and serial numbers. Automate the gathering of serial numbers whenever possible.
- Utilise the full audiovisual facilities of the console to explain the set-up process to the user. For example, provide instructional diagrams or videos, using sound and visual highlighting to reinforce the selection.
- Ensure that the user has to create only one username or account to participate in all online titles. Do not require a different account for each game.
- Give the users everything they need to connect to the online service in the setup package, for example manuals and network cable.
- The set-up process (from turning on the console to playing the first game) should be as quick as possible.

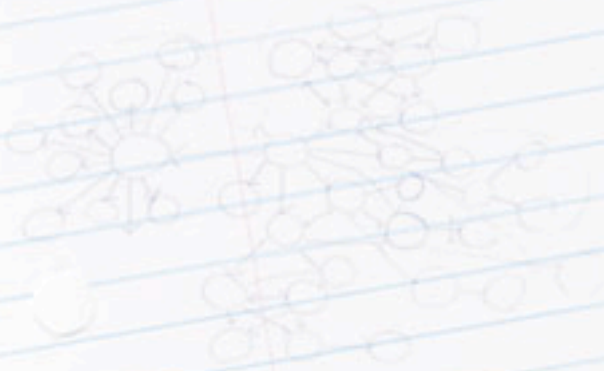
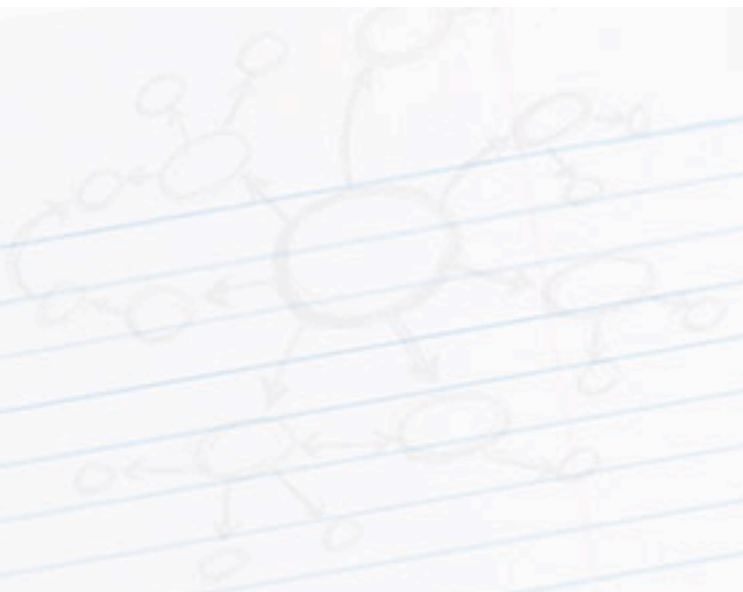
- Thoroughly test the set-up process with end users before releasing the set-up software onto the market.

About ExperienceLab

ExperienceLab (formerly Serco Usability Services), are a global experience design research agency. They help organisations optimise their customer experiences, from web to TV and mobile, from advertising to physical environments. They've been doing this for a while, pretty much since the first computers and networks were created, so they know a thing or two about how to make people, processes and technologies work in harmony.

ExperienceLab use a wide range of techniques to tailor a research solution that fits your business objective, including ideation sessions, proposition analysis, customer needs mapping, usability testing, benchmarking and touch point integration studies. As a co-founder of the UXalliance we also provide research on a global scale.

Why not visit the ExperienceLab blog (www.experiencelab.info), which features the latest thinking on experience design issues.



Serco ExperienceLab

22 Hand Court
London
WC1V 6JF

+44 (0)20 7421 6499

info@experience-lab.co.uk

www.serco.com/experiencelab

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