CASE STUDY
Photobox Group

CAPACITAS ENSURES THE PHOTOBOX GROUP CAN HANDLE ITS CHRISTMAS PEAK

THE CLIENT

The Photobox Group is Europe's leading digital consumer service for personalised products and gifts and parent of the Photobox, Moonpig, Hofmann and posterXXL brands.

The Group has 8 physical locations in 4 countries across Europe, employs 1,200 people and generated turnover of £288.5m in the fiscal year ending 30 April 2016.

SITUATION

With huge customer demand during the Christmas shopping season continuing to grow year on year, Photobox made a series of enhancements to their platforms throughout 2016 in anticipation of their biggest, month-long trading peak yet. These individual architectural changes had been tested, but the effect of cumulative change had not, leaving uncertainty as to how the site would perform under load.

With three weeks to go until Black Friday, the start of the peak business period, Photobox engaged Capacitas to assist in their peak preparation programme. With the tight timescale, Capacitas proposed that its Service Assurance capability was used to test the production platform.

It is not always possible to test performance within the development lifecycle. And in this tight timescale, testing performance of the production site – a tactic that many customers rely upon – was the logical option.

The challenge was considerable as the previous year's Black Friday/Cyber Monday had been "incredible and a little chaotic", in the words of Richard Orme, Group CTO at Photobox.

> "CAPACITAS WAS ABLE TO WORK COLLABORATIVELY WITH OUR TEAM IN LONDON AND PARIS, QUICKLY BUILDING GOOD RELATIONSHIPS WITH OUR STAFF."

Richard Orme,
Group CTO at Photobox

HOW CAPACITAS HELPED

A small Capacitas team worked with Photobox, collaborating with staff in London and Paris, to swiftly develop appropriate test scripts representing the most common user journeys on the website.

Using our cloud-based performance testing platform, Capacitas delivered significant load onto the Photobox production site. Once the tests were proven effective, they were run several times over a week while the Photobox team made configuration changes to optimise performance.

CAPACITAS PROVED THAT THE PHOTOBOX PLATFORM WAS CAPABLE OF PROCESSING THE EXPECTED DEMAND ACROSS BLACK FRIDAY, CYBER MONDAY AND ALL THE WAY UP TO CHRISTMAS.

RESULTS AND CLIENT FEEDBACK

Pleased with the result of the project Richard Orme, Group CTO at Photobox commented:

"They were able to drive a high load of realistic user demand onto our production platform in an intelligent way, within the constraints that testing on a live platform brings. Utilising their performance testing tools and cloud platform meant we were able to get accurate and robust results quickly. A huge amount of assurance was achieved in just eight days."

A member of Photobox's marketing team reported:

"Awesome system performance last night. I bought three photo books at 11pm (the busiest time) and everything ran superfast. I announced this in the team meeting – it's a massive year-on-year improvement."

"THIS DEMONSTRATES THE BENEFIT OF TESTING PERFORMANCE IN PRODUCTION AND USING A COMPANY WITH A RELIABLE PERFORMANCE CAPABILITY. WE HAVE ALREADY ENGAGED CAPACITAS TO DO THE SAME ON OUR MOONPIG.COM PLATFORM."
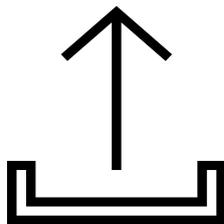
**Richard Orme,
Group CTO at Photobox**

9 Million
Photo Uploads
Processed

"THE CHRISTMAS PERIOD IS OUR BUSIEST TIME OF YEAR AND FROM A SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE, WE WERE ABLE TO SEAMLESSLY DELIVER FOR OUR CUSTOMERS AND FOR THE BUSINESS. DURING THE BUSIEST TIMES, THE PLATFORM WAS ABLE TO PROCESS UP TO NINE MILLION PHOTO UPLOADS, AND TWO ORDERS A SECOND."

**Richard Orme,
Group CTO at Photobox**