

Navigating the Changing Times

HFI helps overhaul Indiatimes.com to optimize user experience and establish a clear brand identity

indiatimes Indiatimes.com is the largest e-commerce site in India, having launched in 1997 with a vision of becoming the “destination portal for everything Indian.” The site gets over 400 million page views per month and is the country’s third largest online property, just behind Rediff and Yahoo.

As traffic has increased over the years, however, Indiatimes.com and its 70 key channel sites swelled with new content and features. Even savvy users were unable to easily navigate these sites—which included email, movies, astrology, blogs, dating and chat, as well as e-commerce sites for travel, shopping and mobile value-added services. Moreover, the channel sites faced steep competition from all directions. Indiatimes needed a major site overhaul to maintain its market edge, so the owners turned to HFI for user experience design expertise.

Challenge: Re-establishing a cohesive brand identity

Most Indiatimes users couldn’t recognize the 70 different websites as being connected to one another. Inconsistencies in navigation and design made it difficult to move from one to another. Within sites, the organization of content was inconsistent and often confusing. As a result, users were migrating to competitors’ sites that had fewer offerings but better usability.



“Our partnership with HFI has given us access to a vast storehouse of knowledge in the field of user design engineering. This has helped us in revisiting the brand, keeping user focus in mind, and creating a product that is not only user-friendly, but promises to set standards in the industry.”

— Dinesh Wadhawan
CEO
Times Internet Ltd.

HFI collaborated on a massive redesign effort to re-establish a cohesive Indiatimes brand identity. This effort focused on nine primary websites, each with unique business requirements that had to be met without compromising user needs. Yet while the individuality of each website needed to be maintained, consistency and overall brand identification for Indiatimes required strengthening. Early in the redesign process, the following high-level objectives emerged:

- provide seamless navigation on the home site and across various channels
- present uniform branding throughout
- offer an uncluttered presentation, with clear demarcation for advertising and content
- increase portal visitors, page views, site “stickiness,” conversion, and ad revenue
- cater to both domestic *and* international audiences

HFI’s Approach: Research, rebrand & redesign

HFI evaluated Indiatimes’ existing sites to understand the inherent issues and bottlenecks, then conducted extensive user behavior research, including over 100 face-to-face interviews in key Indian cities and remote sessions via phone. Special attention was placed on understanding the cultural issues and motivations of Indians and non-resident Indians. Based on this data and usability best practices, HFI recommended specific improvements for navigation, interaction, terminology, color, and layout.

HFI also proposed a new information architecture for each site. The process was completed by creating and implementing reusable page design templates (or standards), which provide guidelines for navigation, interaction, and detailed design.

These templates helped establish a uniform brand identity and ensured that future Web pages would be created with greater speed, less cost, and better usability.

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Benefits: Less clutter, improved user satisfaction

The redesigned Indiatimes portal now presents content and applications in an intuitive, consistent, clutter-free way. Users can easily find articles, audio-visual content, opinion-gathering tools, and special offers on redesigned sites. They can also navigate seamlessly between different Indiatimes websites, which is crucial to expanding awareness and developing brand loyalty.

An online survey showed that users greatly appreciate the new navigation, clarity of visual design, and breadth of content available. Preliminary data gathered by Indiatimes confirmed an increase in page views and visitors (20-35%), plus an increase in click-through-rates and revenue from Google ads (50%).

HFI and Indiatimes plan to move beyond traditional usability

research and launch studies using HFI's PETscan methodology. This new approach assesses how *Persuasion*, *Emotion* and *Trust* affect users' online decision making and interactions.



In the words of Times Internet Ltd. Chairman Vineet Jain, "The Internet business is no longer the domain of a company; it is the user's demand for uncluttered content that has paved the way for the evolution of usability on the Net. The new look of Indiatimes.com and its associated sites reflect this philosophy. It will redefine the way we do business and the way users can navigate with ease, get credible news at a glance, and transact with trust and confidence."

By collaborating with HFI, Indiatimes is putting users first—and successfully navigating the waves of change.

indiatimes

indiatimes
BROADBAND

indiatimes SHOPPING

indiatimes
TRAVEL

indiatimes
Cricket

indiatimes #mail

indiatimes
MOVIES

indiatimes
sms 8 8
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Unifying the brand

Before - left column

Logos appeared dated and each site had a different logo with no consistency in terms of font, graphic treatment and overall style

After - right column

HFI redesigned the logos to look more contemporary and maintain consistency across all sites

See before and after screenshots from the Indiatimes.com redesign at:

www.humanfactors.com/about/indiatimes.asp

indiatimes.com

indiatimes
Broadband

indiatimes
Shopping

indiatimes
Travel

indiatimes
Cricket

indiatimes
Mail

indiatimes
Movies

indiatimes
Mobile

Human Factors International helps customers design websites and software that are engaging and easy to use.

To learn how HFI can support your user experience initiatives, visit www.humanfactors.com.