

Making economic data usable

Customers unanimously say *ISI Emerging Markets'* redesigned product much easier to use

Challenge: user interface was hard to use

ISI Emerging Markets provides financial information for governments, economists, and institutional clients worldwide. The company offers a number of sophisticated data analysis tools, including the popular *CEIC Data Manager* application, which focuses on global economic measures.

Though ISI is an industry leader, some of its clients complained that CEIC Data Manager was hard to use—and these people are expert users!

Approach: expert evaluation

Human Factors International (HFI) was brought in to assess the CEIC Data Manager application through an expert review. This type of usability “reality check” offers immediate, concrete fixes to improve user experience. HFI-India conducted the expert review in just one week, making it very timely and cost-effective.



“We are extremely happy with HFI and their review. We evaluated a number of groups, but they applied theory and considerable expertise and proved their value. HFI’s independent, analytical and direct answers (not just nice pictures but constructive and actionable recommendations) are being utilized already. I recommend them to anyone who is serious about adding significant value to user experience, which translates to reduced calls, simpler roll outs and ultimately more use and thus more revenue.”

—Matthew Hird
Senior Project Director
ISI Emerging Markets
www.ceicdata.com
www.securities.com

Outcome: prioritized list of improvements

HFI’s expert review focused on several main aspects of CEIC Data Manager and provided specific recommendations for each. For example:

- *Browse and search capabilities* – CEIC Data Manager’s various databases were not clearly categorized. Each one was presented at the same level in the information architecture, even though some were actually subsets of others. The topics within each database were difficult to scan and remember. Furthermore, search results were presented awkwardly, making it difficult for users to make selections. HFI recommended cues to help users browse and identify databases more easily, supported by contextual search capabilities.
- *Personalized workspace* – HFI found that CEIC Data Manager’s customizable workspace could be improved by allowing users to receive updates to their saved databases, without having to leave this section. HFI suggested an automatic alert box to trigger this action and make it more efficient.
- *Detailed design* – HFI’s expert review found there weren’t enough keyboard shortcuts for experienced users, icons lacked self-evidency, date formats were inconsistent, and some important functions had no status indicator.

Results: 100% customer approval

ISI incorporated HFI’s feedback into a new release of its CEIC Data Manager product.

ISI’s customers unanimously reported it was easier to use than previous versions. In addition, four out of five customers considered the improved usability a dramatic advancement. They said the redesigned product “only required a few minutes of training to be productive.”

Human Factors International helps customers design Web sites, applications, and intranets that are intuitive and easy to use. To learn how HFI can support your usability initiatives, visit www.humanfactors.com.