Changing the face of The National Children's Museum

By the end of this document you will have discovered the following:

- ☑ Some of the day-to-day challenges facing The National Children's Museum

- ☑ The challenge we thought was the most important to tackle

- ☑ Why Eureka! choose Rubber Cheese over 39 other agencies

- ☑ The techniques used in the pre-planning phase of the project

- ☑ The tools and approach we took to tackle the main challenges

- ☑ What we learnt from this project and what you need from your chosen digital agency

Contents

Client story

Eureka! isn't like other museums. They are the only fully interactive museum totally dedicated to children aged 0-11 anywhere in the UK. Situated in Halifax, West Yorkshire, they have over 400 interactive, hands-on exhibits designed to inspire enquiring minds. Visitors go there to discover, imagine, experiment and above, all have fun!

www.eureka.org.uk

A fully interactive museum totally dedicated to children

The challenge

Eureka had two main challenges that needed to be tackled:

(1) Develop a brand-spanking new website, showcasing the museum at its best.

(2) Improve the clunky, manual paper-based annual pass system.
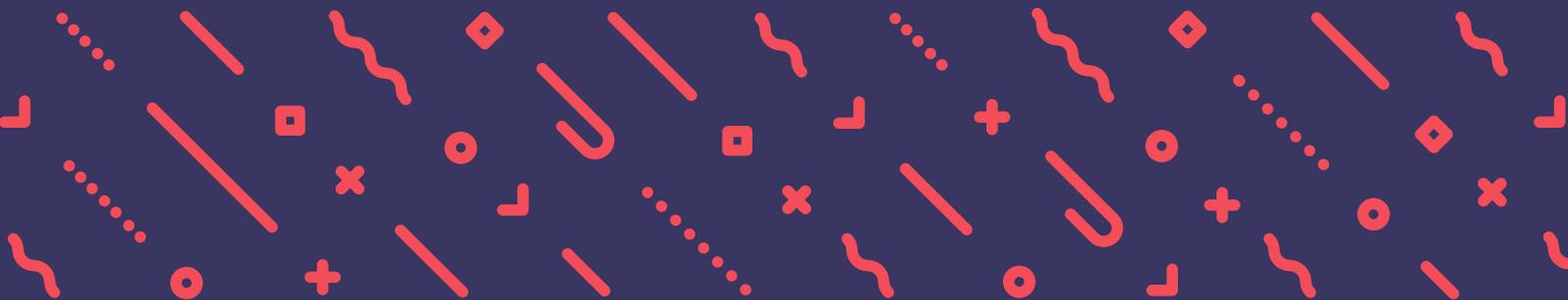
(1) Develop a brand-spanking new website, showcasing the museum at its best.

Website challenges

With over half a million visits each year, the website plays a pivotal role in how Eureka! communicates with multiple audiences - visitors to the museum, corporate clients, press sector colleges and more.

Their previous website dated back to 2012 and required a much needed refresh. Based on user testing the following challenges were identified:

What's inside

- Develop a brand new website to showcase the museum at its best – using an image-led design to breathe new life into the digital brand and show people what Eureka! looks like, rather than explaining it with lots of words.

Going mobile

- The mobile version of the website wasn't up to scratch, despite 76% of traffic coming from mobile devices.

The feel

- The website needed to bring the Eureka! experience to life.

- Like the museum, the website should be colourful and playful, retaining individuality and vibrancy.

- Help them look more "grown up" – appealing more to the older end of their age range (0-11 years) without alienating the younger visitors.

Navigation

- The structure and naming of sections throughout the website was confusing to visitors.

- The website needed to cater for all types of website visitors and allow them to easily find the content relevant to them.

Content

- Eureka! have amazing photos and videos of the museum, but they weren't being utilised to show what the museum is like.

- Information on pricing and opening times was unclear.

- The website was cluttered with too much content.

- The website needed to retain an easy to use CMS.

Online bookings

- There was a need to make the online booking process more user friendly, and increase the amount of online bookings taken.

Online merchandise

- Despite selling a high number of products in the physical gift store, there was nowhere to sell the same products online.

Annual passes

- Shout louder about the Annual Pass. Many people did not realise they have unlimited visits for 12 months after paying for their first visit.

People did not realise they have unlimited visits for 12 months!

(2) Improve the clunky, manual paper-based annual pass system.

Business challenges

Eureka! tasked us with unravelling a massive historical systems-knot: paper-based annual pass records combined with a challenging bookings system, all whilst allaying nerves around changing such an essential system.

When visitors pay for admission to the museum they can convert their ticket into an annual pass, which entitles them to 12 months of unlimited visits.

In our eyes, this was the biggest challenge as this process was still a time consuming manual task.

> *Eureka! staff would fill the passes out by hand at a separate desk. At peak times (e.g. on a rainy day February half term) visitors would find themselves in a queue outside for up to an hour.*

Finally getting to the tills to pay for admission only to be told to queue again for the annual pass. This was stressful for the customers and the Eureka! team, as well as leaving a bad first impression of the brand.

The pitch

Eureka! put out a public tender and 40 incredible digital agencies submitted proposals. Of those, 5 were chosen to pitch.

> *In our pre-proposal visit to Eureka! we identified the main problem, the queues for the annual passes.*

We realised if we could solve this problem then we'd be eliminating their biggest challenge. It was our solution to digitally transform the processing of annual passes that won us the pitch and the chance to work with the amazing group of people behind the Eureka! brand.

Sophie Ballinger

Communications Manager

"We appointed Rubber Cheese following a highly competitive tender process, where they (frankly) blew the other agencies out of the water."

"When interviewing agencies for this project I spoke to a range of clients and references. I commented at the time that Rubber Cheese had "gold standard" references, as each referee was full of enthusiasm and complements both for the individual team members and the quality of their work. Having worked with them now I fully understand and agree with all the amazing feedback, and am proud to be a member of the Rubber Cheese fan club."

What we did

The project was broken down into phases.

(1) Redesign and build the main website

(2) Digitise the annual pass solution

Redesign & build the main website

The creation of the main website was broken down into two phases;

(A) Website restructure

Firstly we planned the restructure of the website to make it easy for users to find the information they need quickly and lead them to a 'call to action'. To do this we had to understand their audience and the actions they'd likely take. There's a number of proven techniques we use to do this as detailed on the next pages.

(B) Design and development

For any project, we always take a user-centred approach and use good tried and tested design principles. Our years of experience allows us to design user interfaces, dashboards and responsive web pages that always have the 'wow-factor' and that's exactly what we did for Eureka!
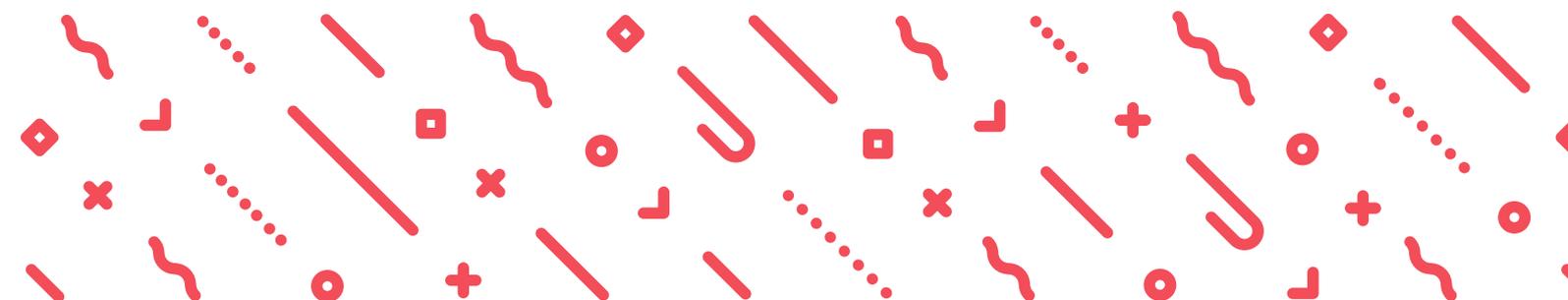
Ⓐ Website restructure

User personas

Eureka! customers and website visitors are diverse. To help us understand their needs we created user personas, behaviours and scenarios for each, including:
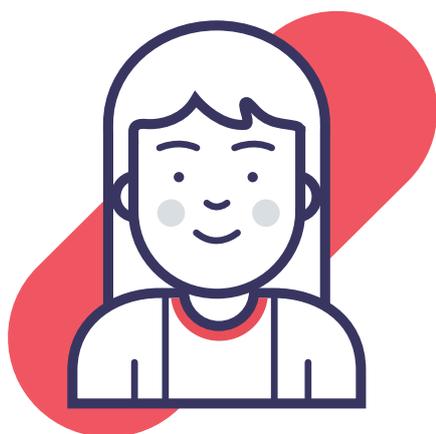
- Their goals - what do they want to do
- Needs - what do they need to complete their goals
- Location - when and where they would access the site
- Level of expertise using the web
- Devices they'll use to access the website
- General interests and behaviours

For each profile we then created a user journey to determine the actions they would take and the information they would want to consume to complete the action required. We then created a content plan, making sure each page lead the user to their required information and fulfil their journey.

Useful Tip!

Create personas and scenarios

Personas are useful in helping an organisation give their users a voice and a face, this allows them to determine who their primary and secondary targets are.

The secet in understanding how a user will get from A to B is to match scenarios and the many factors that will determine their journey. So to create better user journeys you need to be good at understanding typical scenarios that face your users.

Site maps

Site maps help to form a solid page structure, which is essential in determining how people navigate through a website. Armed with the user information, we created a detailed site map showing all levels of the navigation, including main sections, sub sections and individual pages.

Home

Plan your visit
- Access information
- Car parking
- Map / Galleries
- Cafe & Eating areas
- Useful info
  - Busy Periods & quiet times
  - Max Cards
  - Childminders
- About our annual pass
  - Annual pass T&Cs
  - Lost annual pass

Explore Eureka!
- Map / Galleries
- Our Enablers
- Calderdale
- Eureka! Nursery
- About us
  - Our history
  - Awards
  - Idea united

What's on
- Events
- School events
- Disabled clubs
- Birthday parties
- Blogs

Education
- Early years visits
- Primary visits
- Education outreach
- Special schools
- Resources
- Schools what's on

Contact
- Send an enquiry
- Our team
- Jobs
- Corporate
  - Room hire
  - Team building
  - Promotions
  - Advertising
  - Car parking
- Support / charity
- Donations
- Press office
- Consultancy

Buy tickets

Useful Tip!

Keep it simple stupid (KISS)

The primary top level pages are the most important as they are present throughout every page of your website, with the secondary and tertiary pages sitting below them.

The secret to a great site map and structure is to keep it as simple and streamlined as possible, keep primary level pages to a miniumum to avoid clutter, then spend time to carefully select where secondary and tertiary pages should sit underneath.

Hierarchy lists

We then specified the placement and importance of content on each page using hierarchy lists. Each section of content is given a score from 1-10, 10 being highly important. The lists allow for the client to easily determine the priority of content and us to structure the pages knowing we've put the content in the correct place based on the clients understanding of their customers.
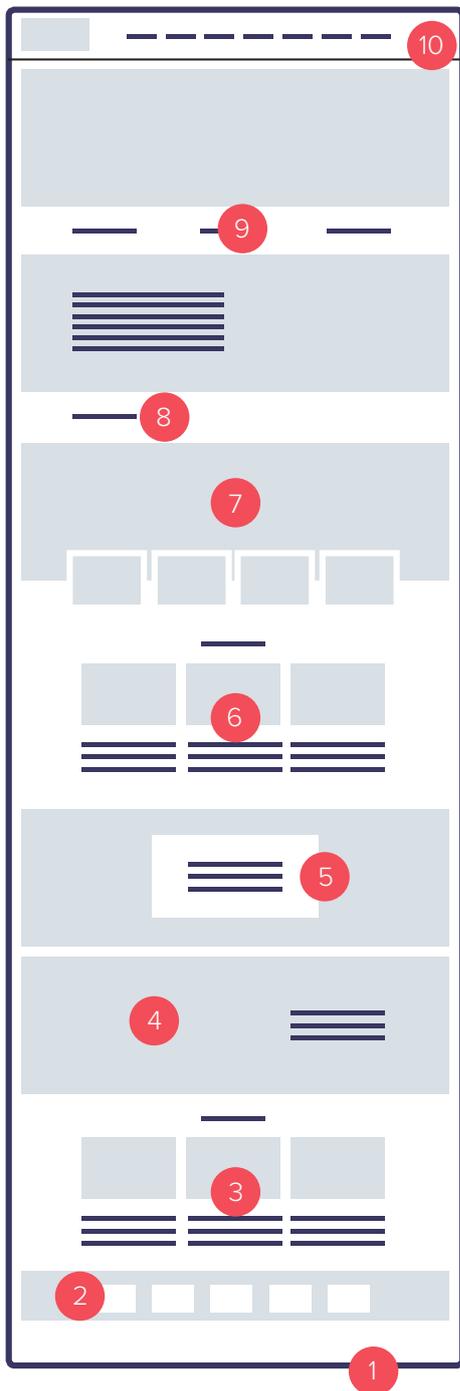
Homepage hierarchy

10. Buying tickets function

10. Search functionality

9. Prices

9. Opening times

9. Location

8. Redeem annual pass

7. About us

6. Events and news

5. Our story

4. Newsletter sign ups

4. Social media

3. Products

2. Awards

1. Footer details

The platform

As Eureka! were keen to retain an open source CMS, we built the website on the WordPress platform, allowing the in-house team flexibility and control to add, edit and delete content and pages.

To give websites administrators more variety we created a standard template made up of a series of flexible content blocks, allowing Eureka! to create dynamic new pages with completely new layouts.

We built the website on the WordPress platform, allowing the Eureka! team flexibility

WooCommerce was integrated for the booking function, (purchasing entrance tickets) and the purchasing of products in the online shop. WordPress and WooCommerce work together seamlessly and provided all the functionality required.

The Gamma ePos system was integrated with the online booking function using their API.

14
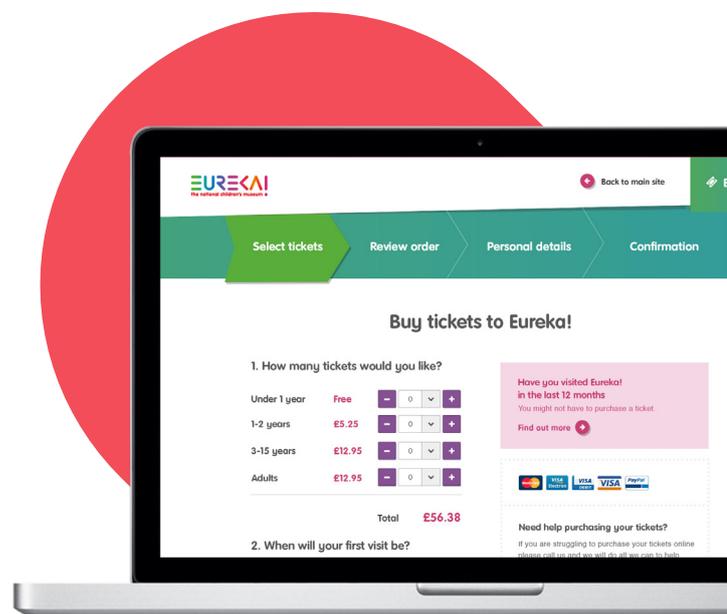
(B) Design and development

The design

Our immersive design process meant that we could really get under the skin of the Eureka! brand and ethos. We created a vibrant, unique website design, setting the bar for how Eureka! present themselves visually.

> *The design incorporates architectural characteristics of the museum and elements of the vibrant brand, without making them look too 'childish'.*


We wanted to incorporate the highly-visual approach to web design that is prevalent currently, without simply replicating the square, boxy approach used too widely. The site had to have impact but also a design that would age well.

There were challenges making these elements work across the CMS and responsively on different devices, browsers and screen widths, but the challenge was worth the end result.

Mobile first approach

With 76% of website traffic coming from mobiles devices, we took a mobile first approach for design and development. Browsing and online bookings would be made on the move so it was key we used functions that could utilise mobile features including:

- Allowing the customer to save their booking reference number as an image in the phone's image library for it to be shown at the front desk when they arrive.

- Saving the date of their booking directly to their iCal or Google Calendar.

- Using a mobile friendly payment provider like Stripe to make payments easy.

- Major design and content changes specifically for mobile devices
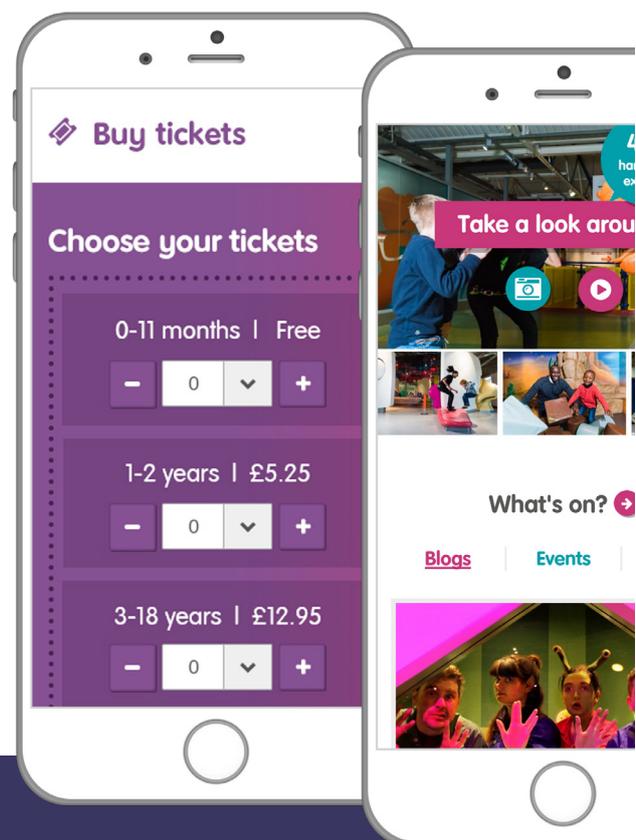
Transitions and animations

Subtle, playful animations and transitions help to set the site apart. As you explore the sections and pages, icons, links and call-outs are animated using different styles and behaviours. These small touches give the web visitors a smooth but playful experience, bringing the design to life and setting the tone for a visit to Eureka!

Quiet day
There are no schools or groups here today. Lots of room to play!

Rainy day
It's a very rainy day. We'll be busy so please expect queues.

Message
A generic message here to explain the message.

Sunny day!
We're quiet, a great time to pop along & miss the queues!

Capacity Graphics

Interactive map and gallery

We created a colour coded, fully responsive interactive map, allowing access to information and a gallery of images and videos for each of the key areas of the museum.
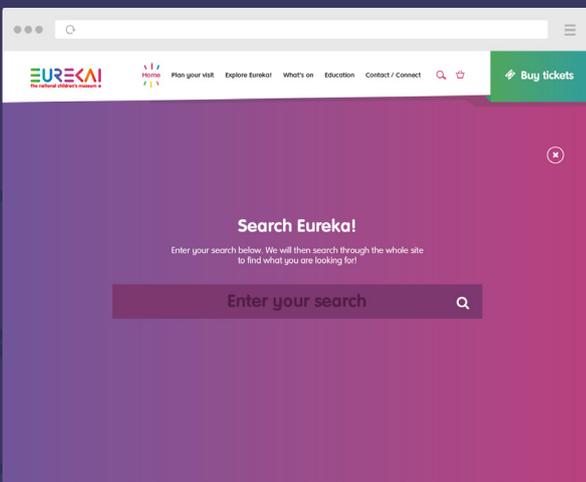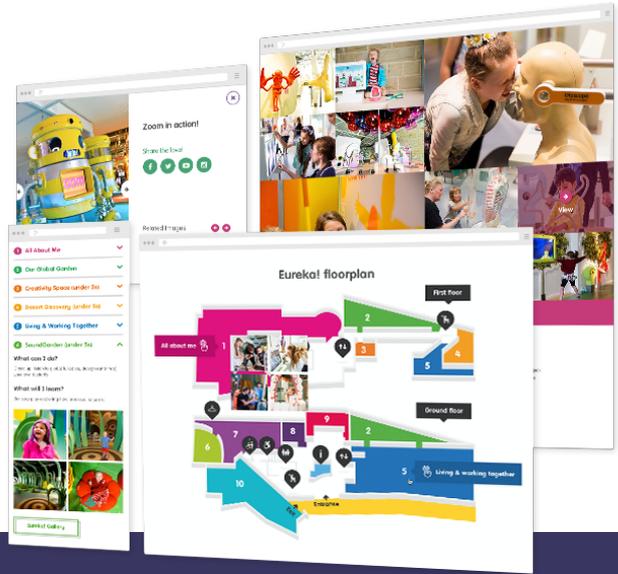
Website search

We used Google Custom Search bringing the same search technology that powers Google.com to the website, including spell check, auto complete, and lightning fast, categorised results.

E-commerce

An e-commerce function was added to the website using the WooCommerce platform. This allows Eureka! to sell and manage products online for the very first time. Stripe was the chosen payment provider as it's mobile friendly and the ongoing fees are reasonable compared to the likes of PayPal or WorldPay.
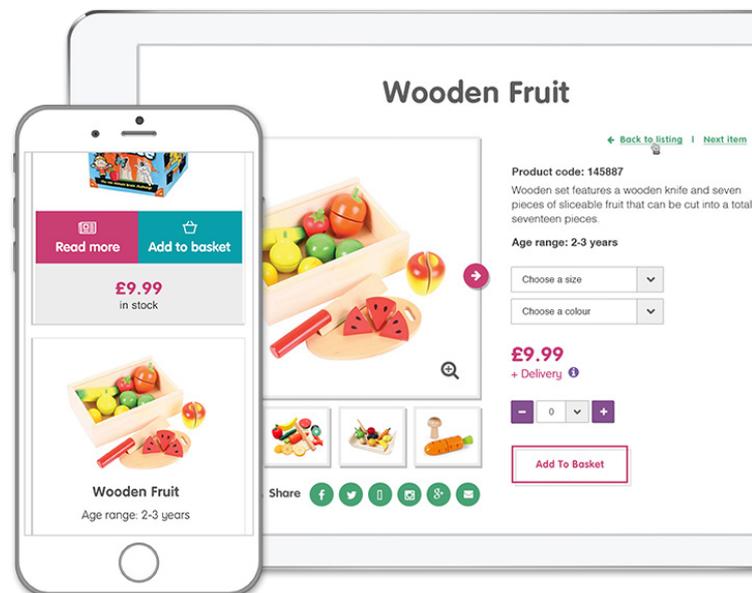
Digitise the annual pass solution

This was our biggest challenge and something we were really excited about tackling.

Traditionally team members would manage and create annual passes by hand. Having to manually write each individual pass took a lot of resources and time which could cause lengthy queues in busy periods.

We digitised the entire process by developing a completely bespoke annual pass system that worked in conjunction with their existing ePos system - Gamma. This was broken down into two phases;

(A) Planning and research

Firstly we created User Scenarios to understand how customers used the booking system and the problems they encountered.

(B) Design and development

We designed and developed a new interface for the till along with an online booking system to help customers buy tickets and create annual passes online.

(A) Planning and research

User scenarios

Our first task was to understand the typical day to day customer type scenarios that would or could occur when managing annual passes.

We spoke to the entire front-house team who revealed what could potentially happen. There were a lot - some we would have never of thought of without going through this process (e.g. foster carers who need to bring different children but don't know their names).

Armed with the list of scenarios, we knew we could build something that could tackle each situation.

The new annual pass user flow

Book online in the queue
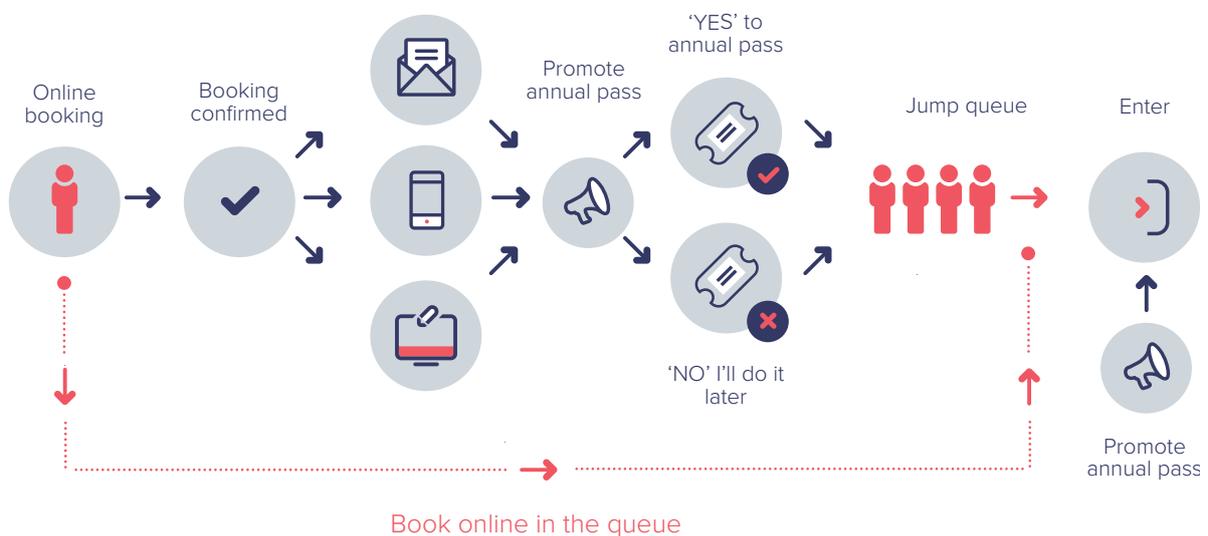
Our goal was to make it as easy as possible for the front-of-house staff to manage the annual passes.

(B) Design and development

Front desk dashboard

We built a simple, responsive, touch optimised interface for the front-of-house team to use on iPads and the tills to manage annual pass requests, including:

- Creating new passes
- Advanced customer search
- Validating existing annual passes
- Add additional children to the pass
- FAQ's section
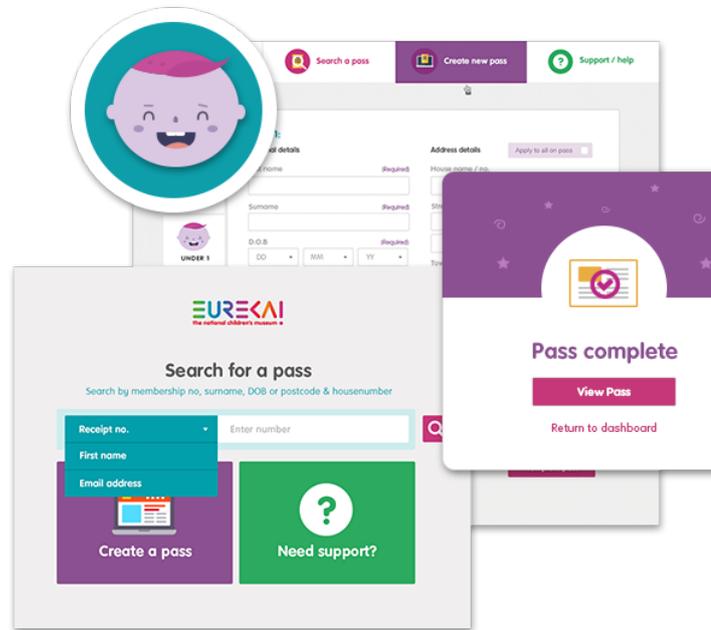
Self activation

On busy days, team members can instruct customers to complete their annual pass online in their own time. Each booking produces a till receipt with a unique reference number at the top of it. The customer can visit the website and simply activate their annual pass using the unique number.
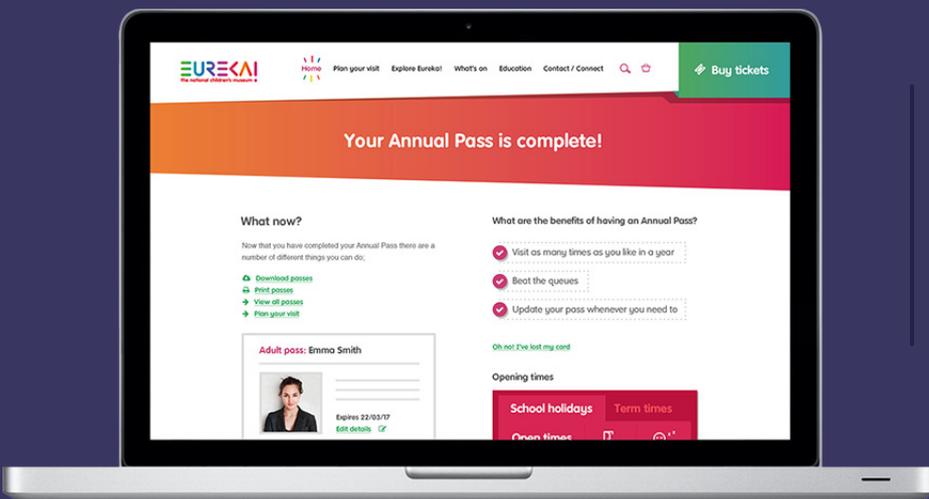
"This has saved the team members countless hours of resource and made a huge impact to queue times."

Customer awareness

On the previous website the majority of online customers didn't realise the benefits of the annual pass and so weren't activating it. We've made them more aware by changing the messaging - 'Pay once, play for a year' and by creating additional areas to promote it, including on the confirmation page emails.

Online activation

The online activation process is simple and quick if carried out after purchasing a ticket online. If not completed straight away the system then encourages them to via email reminders, listing the benefits for doing so.

The system encourages users to activate their passes with email reminders
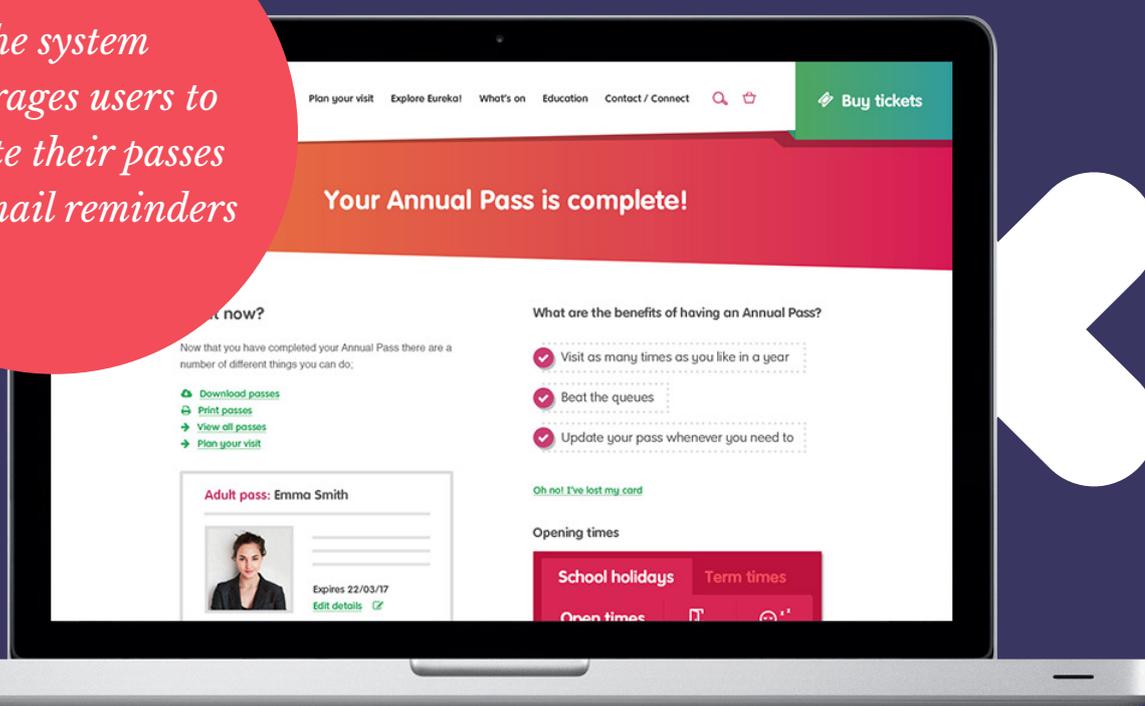
The impact

The website was launched as part of the museum's 25th birthday celebrations and the feedback from both sets of users - the Eureka! team and customers, has been amazing.

Mobile purchasing has dramtically improved due to the new mobile friendly website. We've digitally transformed a time consuming manual process giving team members more time back. Queues times have reduced allowing customers to enjoy more time inside the museum.

We've also achieved the following:

- ☑ Completely fresh and vibrant look and feel
- ☑ Created a much clearer message
- ☑ Navigating and search is much easier
- ☑ Highly visual with amazing images
- ☑ Condensed, easier to digest content
- ☑ Friendlier towards mobile users
- ☑ Allowed Eureka! to sell their products online
- ☑ Automated a time consuming process - saving time and resources
- ☑ Allowed visitors to activate and manage their own annual passes
- ☑ Created a user friendly pass management dashboard

94%

Bounce rate
down by 94%
(on the year previous)

‹ 24.5%

Online booking conversion rate
up by 24.5%

"I looked at the Eureka! website when planning a day out for February half term. The website looked a bit dated so I thought the museum would be a bit dated too. I've since looked at the new website and will be visiting this Easter"

Visitor feedback, April 2017

‹ 80+%

Gift Aid Donations
are up, with 80+% of users giving to Gift Aid

Sophie Ballinger

Communications
Manager at Eureka!

Client testimonial

"As a Communications Manager, it's a pleasure to work with a team whose advice, opinions and knowledge I can depend on."

"In 15 years of working with websites and communications, I've never worked with an agency quite like Rubber Cheese. We view them as an extension of the Eureka! team — they genuinely want to produce the best possible work for us, and that translates into the quality of our website and annual pass system.

They welcome honest, open communications and I've been able to talk candidly with them about the challenges we've faced, knowing that we're all working towards a shared goal.

Developing a large website - let alone one with online bookings AND launching a new pass system - can be very stressful, but I've never had a project run as smoothly or as quickly as this.

"Our front-of-house team have been incredibly enthusiastic about the changes, and have quickly seen the benefits to both us AND our visitors"

It also kinda helps that they are a bunch of intelligent, talented, funny people. It makes working with them a genuine pleasure and I hope I get to work with them for many more years (we already have a few more projects in the pipeline with them)."

What we've learnt

With the help from the Eureka! team, we've been able to deliver a beautiful new website that is converting more online bookings and product sales. The annual pass system has reduced queues and given staff members more time and resource - making everyone a little bit happier!

Reduced queues and given staff members more time and resource

Working as a team

The Eureka! team have been a dream to work with. Without their shared focus, understanding and dedication towards the project, we wouldn't have been able to deliver it on-time or on budget.

It's confirmed our belief that to conquer the most toughest of challenges, teams need to:

- Share the same values
- Discuss the most urgent business problems
- Respect each other

- Constantly communicate
- Make each other laugh

We've also realised that digital transformation can make real-world situations a lot more pleasant and people a little bit happier

Next steps

Via customer feedback and user testing, we're constantly reviewing the website and annual pass system to refine and improve to make more conversions.

Later this year we will embark on the development of a digital guide for visitors with sensory conditions such as autism, which we feel privileged to be part of.

We can help you too

If you'd like to discuss your business challenge, call us and ask for Kelly or email us and we'll get right back to you

📞 **01279 883119**

✉ info@rubbercheese.com

Why Rubber Cheese?

Rubber Cheese is an award-winning web design and development agency with studios in Herts/Essex and Cambridge. We're experts at creating bespoke systems, engaging websites and digital applications that improve conversions, save resources and increase sales.

Since 2003, we've helped propel local start-ups, national companies and global organisations to new digital heights.

Whether it's reducing museum queue times or increasing distillery tour sales, we transform organisations by creating digital solutions to complex problems. No matter the requirement, we come through with results that have a positive and measurable impact.

Whatever the project, we create innovative, user-friendly solutions that make a positive, measurable impact on your business.