

Visa boosts search listings via a step-by-step approach

Visa embarked on a project in March to redesign, restructure and rewrite its 200-page European site (www.visaeurope.com).

Ensuring access for all was central to the task, says Ian Gatherum, online editor at Visa Europe, who worked with usability specialist Webcredible. "Our aim is to communicate with everyone with payment needs in Europe, which, potentially, includes millions of people with disabilities. Right from the start, access was key."

First, a team of editorial, design and development staff looked at the guidelines. "They're complex and can be technical, so I can see why companies find them confusing. The key thing we did was to look at the guidelines and then come up with our own

The screenshot shows the Visa Europe website. At the top is the Visa logo and the text 'Visa Europe'. Below that is a navigation menu with links: Home, Cards for you (highlighted), Cards for business, Accepting Visa, Press & media, and About Visa & our technology. A secondary menu below includes: Choose a card, Find out my Visa, Shopping online, ATM locator, Safety & budgeting, Travel abroad, Special offers, and TV ads. The main content area is titled 'Cards for you' and contains a sub-header 'Cards for you' followed by a paragraph: 'A Visa card can give you an easy and safe way of paying for life's small, simple and everyday pleasures.' Below this is a list of links: 'Globally accepted, convenient and reliable - just three reasons why you should ask your bank for a Visa card today.' and 'These pages can tell you more.' The list includes: 'Choosing your Visa card' (Find the type of card that's right for you...), 'I've lost my Visa' (What to do if you've lost your Visa card...), 'Shopping online' (Find out how we're making online shopping even more secure...), 'Card safety and budgeting' (Get the latest advice on budgeting...), 'Travelling abroad' (Useful advice on using your Visa card...), 'ATM locator' (Look for your nearest cash machine...), and 'Special offers and discounts' (Choose from a wide range of special offers...).

Visaeurope.com: checklists were compiled from the guidelines, tailored to each team member

checklists, adapting them to our industry, company and customer needs," he says, adding that the team made sure everyone understood what was being discussed.

Checklists were tailored to each member of the team,

according to their job. "I had my own guidelines, different from the developers', and that was really important," says Gatherum.

One element that he was closely involved with was ensuring Visa didn't use any

phrases such as 'click here', and, instead, named links, so it is very obvious what users will see if they click on a link.

"Similarly, if there's a PDF or a Zip file, we label it clearly and explain that

users are about to download a file of a certain size," he points out.

Webcredible's manual accessibility test has proven helpful in flagging up areas that Visa could improve. "We know this is ongoing work and not a quick fix. We're always learning," he continues.

Already, Visa is reaping the benefits; its search listings improving considerably.

Although the team covered much ground during the project, it only took four months to complete due to Visa's highly organised approach. The new site went live in the first week of July.

"The thing with accessibility is that, if you integrate it into your process, it is not more work; it becomes part of your philosophy, not a hassle," adds Gatherum.

