



Headquarters: San Jose, CA
Founded: 1982
Industry: Consumer technology

Adobe takes a customer-centric approach to innovating Photoshop, a longtime customer favorite

Launches solution that matches the needs of all users, from novice to expert

The challenge

Newly launched feature sees low adoption and critical comments on user forums

The solution

Secured feedback from a wider spectrum of users to better understand pain points

The outcome

Relaunch of feature with more intuitive naming, interface and navigation

The challenge

Adobe launched Photoshop in the late 1980s. Three decades later, it remains the de facto industry standard in graphics editing software, maintaining the relevance and high quality of its flagship product by listening to customers and making constant improvements.

The team launched an image extraction feature frequently requested by Photoshop users. However, usage data following the launch as well as posts on user forums revealed that customers were confused and struggling to use the new feature.

The excitement of releasing the high priority feature wore off as the team realized they had to make some major revisions. To maintain customer happiness, minimize in-product disruption and also maximize efficiency of their 10-week development cycle, they had to get it right and as quickly as possible.

The team knew that getting customer feedback would be critical to developing a feature that Photoshop users would use and love. They recruited Photoshop customers from online forums and met with them weekly. However, while the feedback they received was helpful, it didn't tell the fuller story of why customers were struggling with the newly launched feature.

One issue was that the users who typically participated in forums were experienced users. They did not represent the skill level or needs of the average Photoshop user. Without insight from less experienced customers, the best they could do was make incremental improvements, which were unlikely to have much impact on the overall experience for the majority of users.

Getting feedback from a wide range of users enabled Adobe to launch improved, easy-to-use features for all customers.

The solution

To get additional perspective, the Photoshop team leaned on the UserTesting customer insights platform. By sharing their study with the UserTesting on-demand panel, they were able to connect with new Photoshop users representing a wide variety of skills and levels of expertise.

The team wanted to understand the causes of customer challenges. They first shared mockups and then interactive prototypes to pinpoint exactly where difficulties existed. They continued to solicit feedback throughout the development cycle, iterating quickly according to the real-time feedback that they received.

The outcome

Based on the feedback, they made a number of updates, including giving the feature a clearer name, better interface, and menu navigation. By securing feedback from a more diverse group of customers, the Photoshop team was ultimately able to launch an improved feature that is helpful and easy-to-use for the wide spectrum of users—from novice to expert.

About Adobe

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