

## Maplin Electronics

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Chris West, Internet Channel Manager at Maplin Electronics



**Maplin Electronics is constantly looking for ways to improve the user experience for visitors to its website. JetNEXUS increases the speed at which pages can be downloaded to customers' browsers and improves website performance. Since installing jetNEXUS, Maplin Electronics has seen an improvement in website performance of 33% and significantly enhanced customers' online shopping experience on the site.**

### Customer Challenge

- Improve the user experience for customers shopping online at Maplin by enhancing the performance of its website.
- Increase the speed at which customers can download pages and search the website to offer a better online experience.

### Solution

- Installed jetNEXUS's Web acceleration software to deliver Web pages faster to customers

### Core Benefits

- 33% improvement in website download size and speed.
- Enhanced shopping experience for online customers
- Capacity to comfortably support 250,000 users visiting the website every day.
- Maplin.co.uk availability is excellent 24 hours a day, even at peak usage times.

### Customer Background

Founded by two electronics enthusiasts disappointed by the availability of electronic components, Maplin Electronics has expanded from its original mail order business to encompass 99 retail stores and a successful online business, which generated sales of £9.6 million last year.

When Maplin launched its transactional website in 1999, it was unique in not only providing access to all the products in stock, but also checking stock availability and reserving items for customers in real time. "The website had to live up to our customers' expectations from day one, which meant we had to engineer more features into the website," recalls Chris West, Internet Channel Manager at Maplin. "The website very quickly received more than one million hits a month and now we receive up to 250,000 unique visits a day at peak times with an average of over 100,000 per day."

### The Customer is Always Right

Maplin recognises its website is a valuable sales channel and is constantly looking for ways to develop the website. "With new customer acquisition costs increasing, customers expect and demand a better quality of experience," says West. "If a site is not performing then, in many cases, a customer will find an alternative that offers a better online experience."

It is well known that consumers are more fickle shoppers in the online rather than offline world. 40% of users, for example, do not return to a website if their first visit results in a negative experience. Slow running websites are also a huge turn-off, with almost half of all customers leaving a website due to slow performance.

Maplin's West realised that optimising the customer's online shopping experience was vital if the company wanted to boost sales and build deeper customer loyalty. "I was looking at ways of improving the performance of our website from usability to navigation and ease of search," explains West. "The performance of the website was fine but I thought 'if we can make it better, why not spend some money?'"

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The application West had in mind was a Web acceleration tool, which would speed up page downloads so that customers could enjoy their online shopping experience whether surfing the Internet via a fast broadband connection or slower dial-up connection.

However, West struggled to find a suitable technology until he discovered jetNEXUS, which more than proved itself capable of satisfying Maplin's requirements. jetNEXUS works by compressing Web pages so that they are sent in fewer packets and, therefore, appear on the user's screen faster. West was pleased with the results and purchased three licences of jetNEXUS. Minimal manual configuration was required after West installed the programme from a CD. "It took a matter of minutes to install on the servers," he recalls.

The company saw a rapid return-on-investment (ROI) and West insists that the cost of the product was "tiny" compared to the benefits it has delivered both Maplin and its customers. "In relation to our overall income from the channel, it was a minimal cost," he claims.

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#### **Delivering an Improved User Experience**

JetNEXUS has significantly improved the performance of Maplin's website. "We saw a 33% reduction in bandwidth consumption, which means that the site is around 30-40% quicker and the time taken to navigate the site has reduced proportionately. It follows, therefore, that this improvement in performance has had a direct positive effect on browse-to-buy ratios and, ultimately, sales," says West.

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On a faster website consumers are more likely to browse for longer and it also means Maplin can serve more customers.

There have been several incremental benefits as well, which have improved the overall online shopping experience for customers. For example, more search results can be fitted on each page. In addition to better serving Maplin's daily website visitors, jetNEXUS supports spikes in demand at busy times of the year, such as Christmas. But one of the main benefits of jetNEXUS, according to West, is its invisibility: "Customers do not know that jetNEXUS is there. They simply know that the speed of the website is faster."

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