

Eggplant Services Ensures Successful New Website Launch

New website launch for Funky Pigeon through its performance as a service solution

Overview

Funky Pigeon, founded in 2009 is a market leading online personalised greeting cards and gift business, based in the UK. They specialise in helping customers create a memorable and keepsake present or card for any occasion.

We spoke to Brett King, Head of Tech Ops who has overall responsibility for ensuring that Funky Pigeon's website can cope with the high demands that it's placed under at peak times of the year such as the lead-up to Christmas and Valentine's Day. The responsibility rests on him and his team to get make sure the site always runs as quickly as possible to ensure customers get a seamless and efficient online experience.



Challenges

Funky Pigeon has been used to high seasonal demand since its inception, though was now facing a new challenge as it was building a completely new website that would revolutionise the way that shoppers customise their purchases.

Customers will now be able to upload their own images to the site that appear on cards, mugs, T-shirts and more. Brett knew this improved functionality itself would significantly increase the load on their website, and with Christmas less than three months away, it was also critical to ensure that this increased load, coupled with the inevitable spike in usage, wouldn't cause disruption and annoyance to their customers.

Ensuring operational demands would be met under peak loads

Brett explained that they were able to functionally test the usual journeys that their users make on the website but had no way to know what would happen if several thousand people decided to visit all at the same time: exactly the scenario that would soon play out in the run-up to high season.

“To be confident to launch our new site, we needed to answer critical questions such as how many people would be able to upload images to the website at any one time, how large could these images be and how long would they have to wait on each page. This was where Eggplant Services came in to help get the outcome we needed”.

Testing in a live environment and around the clock

Brett told us that due to the infrastructure of the staging and UAT environments, load testing would need to be performed in their production environment. Therefore, to minimise disruption to customers, most of the testing was performed overnight when visits to the website were much lower than during daylight hours. There was also a short time frame to get the website ready for Christmas so all test scripts needed to be written and signed off in just three weeks to give them sufficient time to complete the required testing.

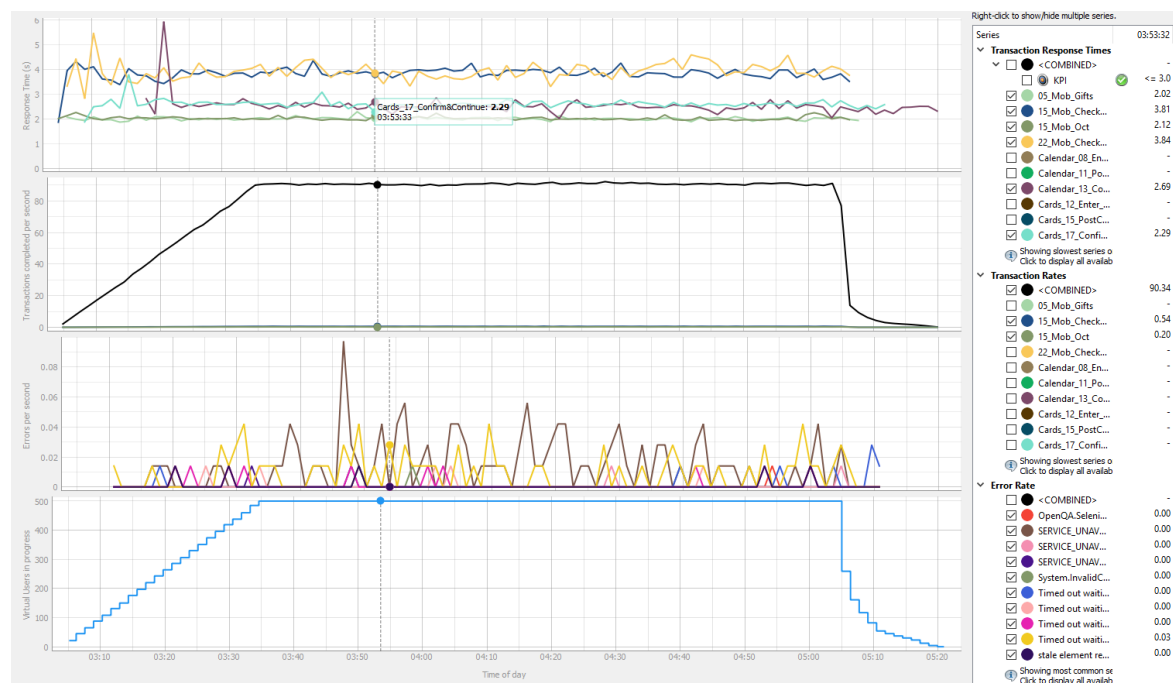


Figure 1. Performance as a Service gives companies a view of how their application performs by ramping up the number of virtual users and correspondingly analysing factors such as response time and errors

The Eggplant Experience

Due to the requirement to perform this load testing with little lead time, Brett decided to work with Eggplant Services – specifically their Performance as a Service (PaaS) solution. Using PaaS enabled Brett to completely outsource the load testing process to the Eggplant team.

Calling in help when required

When load testing is required for specific key projects or spikes in seasonal demand, it makes sense to outsource this requirement as and when needed rather than employ and train additional testers who would only be required at very specific times of the year.

“In scoping the project out with the Eggplant team, we were delighted to establish they would be able to complete this work in less than a month. We don’t do load testing every day, so being able to outsource to the Eggplant team just for the specific time and work required made perfect sense.”

Follow-the-Sun testing

This team, consisting of three Eggplant Implementation Architects located across three different time zones (in the UK, USA and Malaysia) enabled Funky Pigeon to have the tests running 24/7 for the three weeks needed to get it to completion.

“Trying to do this work ourselves wouldn’t have been easy or cost-effective. Using the Eggplant Services team enabled us to complete the project far quicker and for a much lower cost than if we’d tried to do it in-house.”

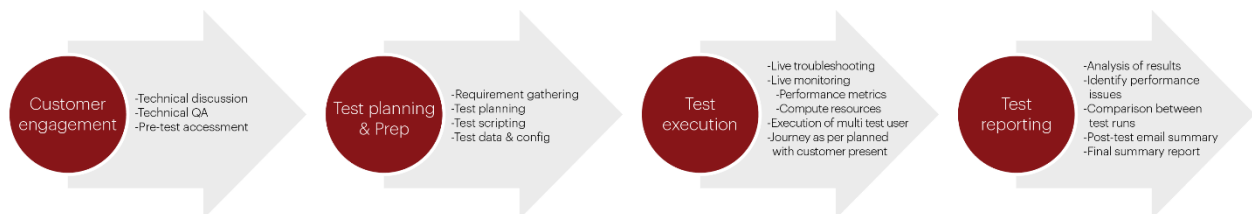


Figure 2. Performance as a Service enables companies to outsource the demanding and time-consuming process to ensure applications can meet their operational demands at peak loads.

Key Outcomes

Brett told us that the most important benefits his team got from working with Eggplant Services were:

- Faster project turnaround without hiring additional testers.
- Real-time feedback from the Eggplant Services team outside regular office hours (global team coverage).
- Able to find and resolve issues that would have gone otherwise unnoticed.
- 3x faster completion of project with Eggplant Services Follow-the-Sun model.
- Established trust among internal stakeholders upon launch of new website.
- Positive impact on holiday revenue numbers