

Avast digital experience redesign

When science and art combine for impact

2022 DEA Entry



For Publication



Executive Summary

In 1991, Avast was founded on the belief that a truly effective antivirus should be available to everyone. In 2020, the company entered the FTSE 100 index. Their website is the primary place from which customers download their software. Over the years, the site has been optimised to maximise conversions and growth. In early 2022, we were asked to help make it better.

In this case, making it better meant elevating the experience in line with a fresh brand personality, and supporting customers to find what they're looking for, more quickly and with even less friction. For Avast, at this time, this was a disruptive brief. The stakes were high, key stakeholders were understandably resistant to change what had been proven to be working, and it couldn't fail.

Yet, Avast leadership recognised there was an opportunity to stand out in this commoditised market, and drive growth, by engaging customers more effectively in line with their purpose: to provide internet security to all.

The initial focus was on three key pages for the US market – the Avast US homepage, the Free Antivirus Download page, and the Avast One product page — for both desktop and mobile. From the outset, we knew we would have just 40 days during which our design work would be tested. Data gathered in that time would determine whether it would be adopted permanently in this and the seven other key markets where their flagship product Avast One is currently available. Its effectiveness would also determine whether a further design stage would be commissioned.

Our work began in December 2021. The test that took place between 26 April – 5 June, 2022 resulted in a 39% increase in direct purchase revenue. This means a huge number of visitors were convinced there and then to purchase Avast One, rather than trial the free download. This is remarkable and, together with additional supporting data, demonstrates the significant impact and effectiveness of our strategic design work. Since June, Avast have gone on to roll the homepage and Avast One product pages out in all eight Avast One territories (US, UK, Canada, Australia, France, Austria, Germany, and Switzerland), and have commissioned a further phase of work with us across their digital estate.

<Data redacted>

An overview of the project

In a crowded market, it's always difficult to land your message with potential customers. But, despite being a ubiquitous claim, Avast had an important truth to tell: not all antivirus software is created equal. Avast is a company founded on the belief that digital security is a universal right, and their award-winning, free-to-download product has always set the bar.

At the same time, their business model relies on conversions to their paid products. Here, our focus was on Avast One, a consumer-ready bundle which combines antivirus software with advanced privacy protection, device optimisation and connection security, all in one product.

Our brief was to help Avast create an improved experience for three core users in the United States:

- those **ready to buy** a paid product, but are not interested in the free version
- those who **want the free product**
- those who **need convincing** about Avast and/or are new to the cyber security industry, or the Avast brand.

Avast wanted to make clear the benefits of their different options for these users, while also bringing their new brand personality to life. The intent was to elevate the experience and evolve their site, beyond being optimised for performance.

Key objectives

1. Drive direct revenue, but also enable **conversions from free product**
2. Improve the **experience for each of the three core audiences.**
 - o <Baseline data redacted>
3. Bring **brand personality to life**
 - o <Baseline data redacted>

Combining effectiveness with personality isn't straightforward

Delivering on all three objectives at once was going to be a challenge.

The existing site presented opportunities for quick wins: the product comparison table was hard to digest, the overpowering hero image was ineffective in communicating what the product was about, there was a disproportionate amount of white space, and the footer made up 20% of the page.

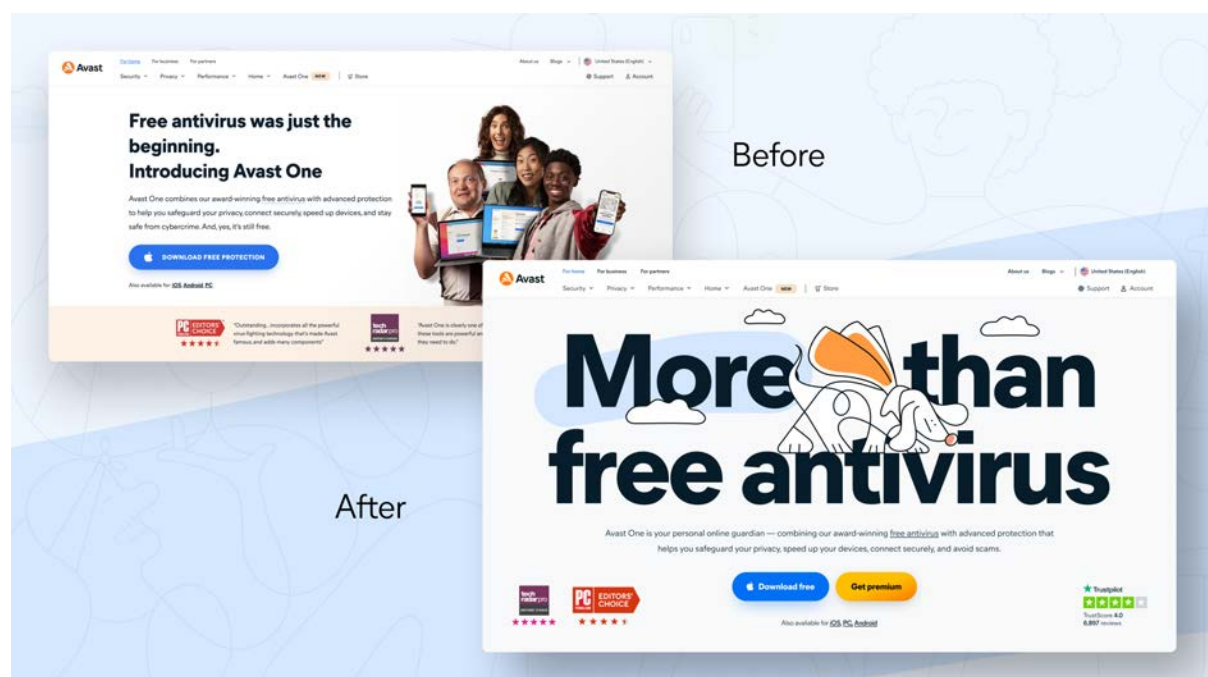
But we couldn't look at improving these in isolation. To deliver objective two—a better experience for all—the experience of each page had to be greater than the sum of its parts.

From workshops to wireframes, we created personas from our core audiences to inform the experience design, looked at what Avast's new brand principles meant for the site experience, and brought everything together in our final designs. At every stage, we asked ourselves: Are we improving the speed to download—objective one—and does it bring the brand's new identity to life—objective three—in a creative way?

Getting the balance right was not straightforward. We knew that nothing should get in the way of downloading. In fact, we had to design to increase downloads. We knew from experience, and from data held by our client, that the real estate above the fold was of critical importance. Here, we introduced Avast through with a fuss-free market-leading message that leads to download.

Previously, it was felt that placing download buttons for both the free and paid product downloads would be problematic. But we knew this top area could and had to serve both audiences. This design decision in this top area of the home screen would prove key to meeting our objectives.

We employed illustration for the first time—replacing editorial photography that lacked impact—to support the 'feeling' of the headline and to speak to the unique personality of Avast. This immediately helped the brand stand out in a very dull, blue grey market.

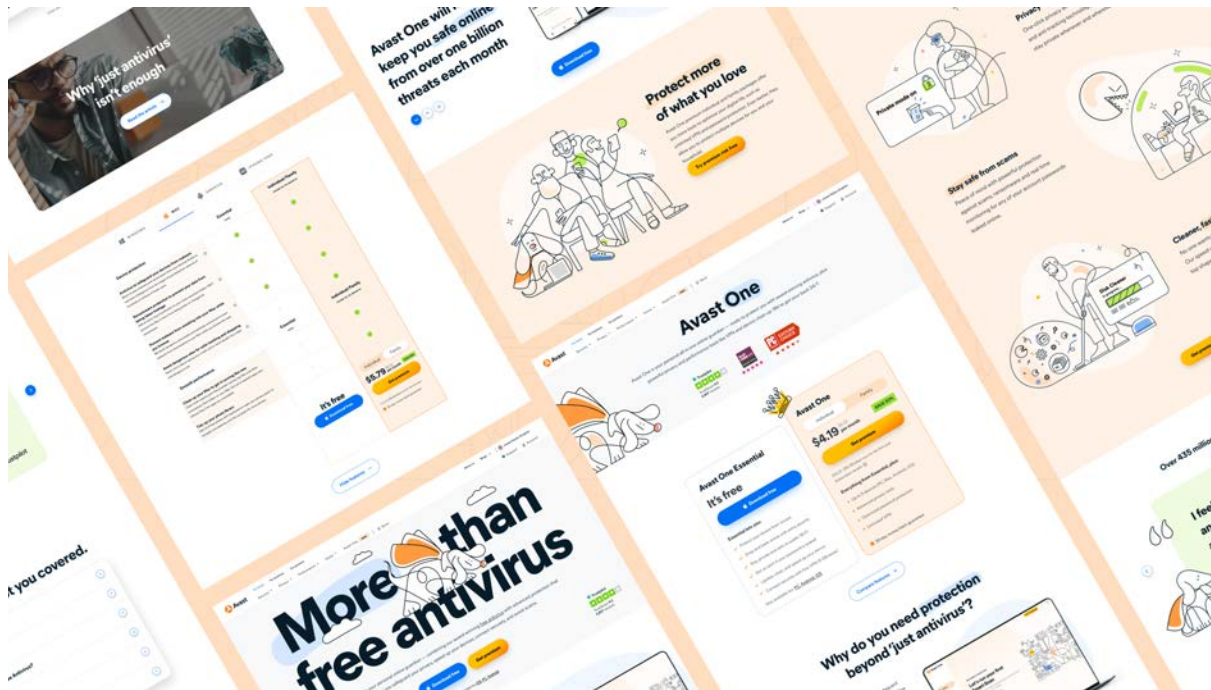


Building trust in Avast

With so many ubiquitous claims in the market, and a risk of product snow-blindness for customers, we wanted to find a confident way to communicate the stand-out benefits of the Avast product range across the three verticals: privacy, security and performance. Rather than lead with comparison tables, we elevated key data, coupled with more visually arresting illustrations to compliment the copy.

We also took the opportunity to showcase Avast's excellent customer ratings and awards within the initial view of the site load, but didn't allow these important trust-building elements to create any friction for a customer looking for a download or more product information.

Earn trust, drive downloads, build a connection with the brand — from top to bottom of the pages, every design decision was informed by the key objectives. We considered page structure, clarity of message, quantity and quality of content, the balance of flagship product vs featured product, storytelling, pace and reasons to believe.



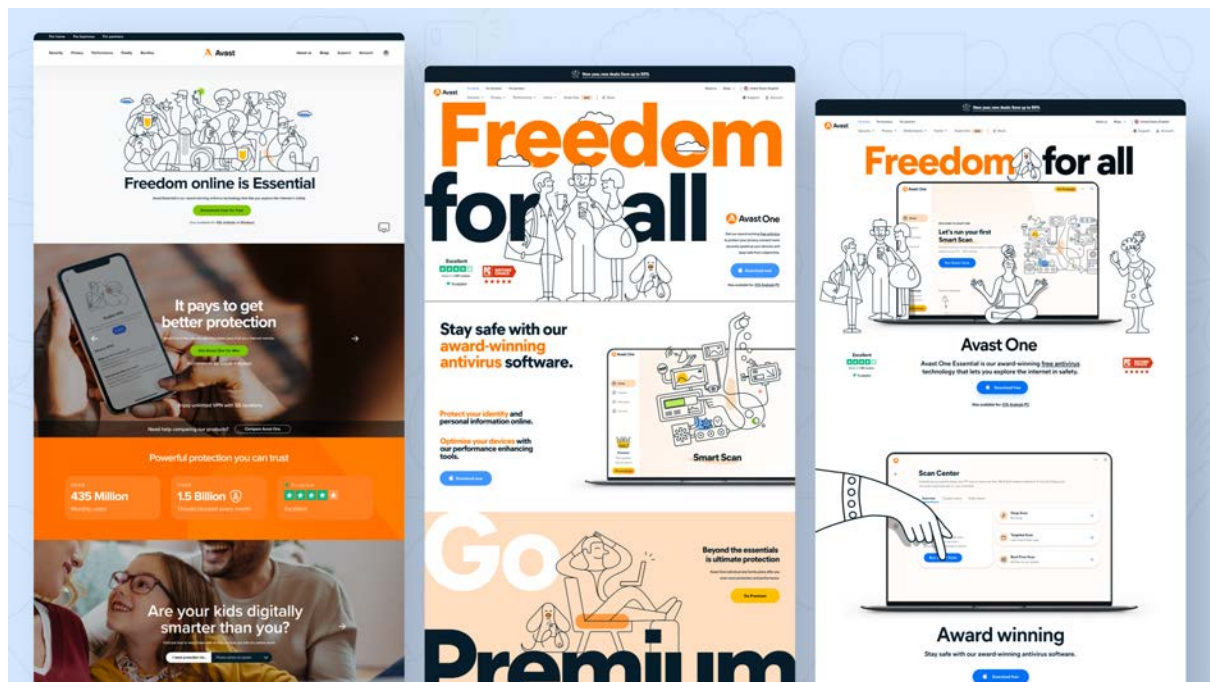
A more human voice

To deliver on our brand personality objective, we found more opportunities to connect with customers' needs, to relate Avast products to their real-world lives and to highlight the core company belief that digital security is a right that all deserve. Content and the Academy is featured to create domain authority.

Prioritising the consumer experience on mobile

Consumers carry out research on their mobile, <mobile traffic data redacted> , with downloads and purchases typically happening on desktop. So, we wanted to improve the experience of both journeys, helping users access the right content and information at the right time.

A move out of the comfort zone



Our design solutions would have to deliver a tangible uplift in conversions. Their effectiveness would in part need to be powered by improved customer recognition for, and trust in, the brand. This second, sometimes intangible, aspect of the brief that gave some stakeholders understandable pause for thought.

With the stakes so high, we had to navigate competing internal priorities and the designs went through a number of iterations. To succeed, we had to leverage the perspectives in the room —blending the science of optimised performance and the art of wanting to convey the right feelings and emotional connection.

Throughout the project, finding that alignment sweet spot was a challenge. But as our senior client, Kata Bleyer – Senior Director, Global Web & Online Acquisitions – clarified for all involved:

“We (Avast) don’t want you (the agency) to just listen to us, otherwise we’ll end up with exactly what we already have”.

So, an important part of our role on this project became to facilitate conversations and support changemakers like Kata — by delivering galvanising design work that was underpinned by robust experience strategy.

Accessibility

The site needed to be **accessible** — to fully conform to WCAG 2.1 AA standard.

Other influencing factors

The redesigns of the three pages were tested in the English-speaking US market between April 26 – June 5, 2022. <Number of users in the test redacted>

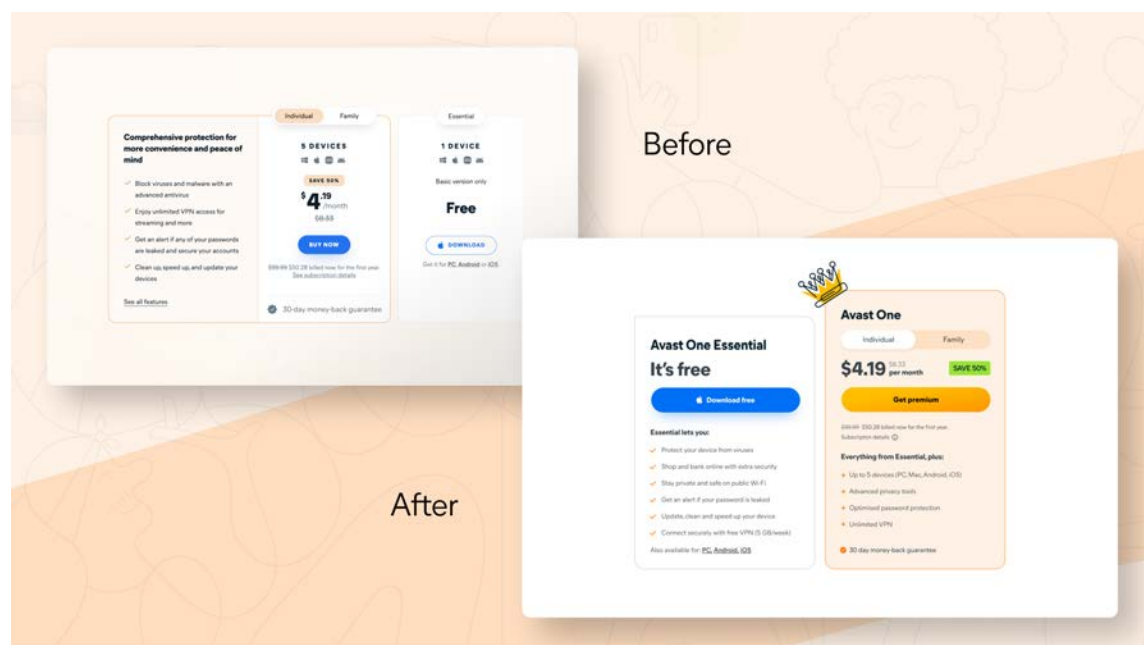
The test of this new experience was deliberately conducted under as “normal” conditions as possible. For that reason, there was no additional marketing spend, no significant price promotions, and no major product launches during this period.

Nor were there any industry-wide shift or global events that could have impacted the test results.

It should be noted, with regards to measuring CSAT scores, that the product experience is known to influence customer satisfaction scores. So, some of the uplift recorded in our results may be attributable to the excellent Avast One product experience.

In the background, Avast was merging with Norton — a significant change for the future of the company. Any drop in performance of key products would have been picked up and considered as a risk in the proceedings.

Results & impact delivered



Soon after the results of the test were published, the new pages were rolled out in all eight Avast One markets around the world. And we were briefed on phase two of the experience redesign across other significant areas of the Avast digital estate, which demonstrated how well the work had been received internally.

Objective 1: Drive direct revenue, but also enable **conversions from free product**

Result: There was a 39% increase in direct purchase revenue.

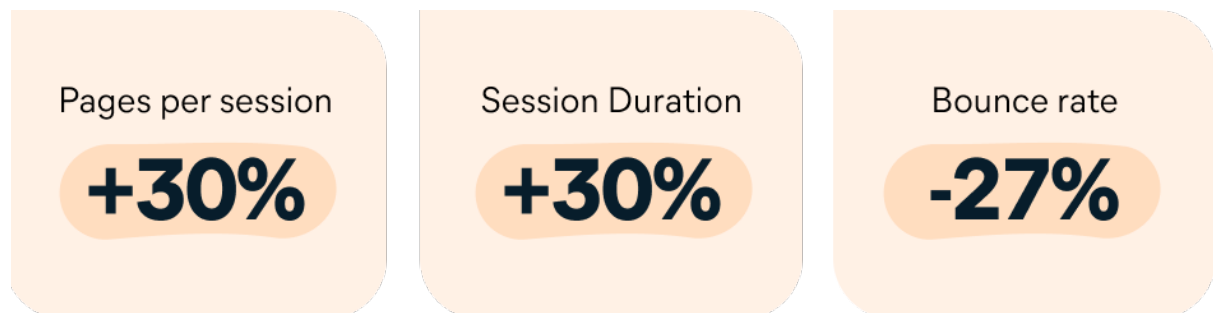
Avast's net revenue last year was \$941.1M. While we cannot share what this 39% direct revenue uplift means in monetary terms, it's clear that it equates to very significant growth.

Objective 2: Improve the **experience for all three core audiences**

Result: Average session duration increased by 30% <Further data redacted>

Pages per session increased by 30% <Further data redacted>

Bounce rate improved by 27% <Further data redacted>



These three increases show that users are staying on each page for longer, navigating to more pages, and dropping off less. These are key indicators of a better experience — it points to them engaging with content and finding what they're looking for.

Objective 3: Bring **brand personality to life**

Result: On-site customer survey showed a significant uplift in positive responses to the brand.

<Data redacted>

This on-site survey allows Avast to track customer sentiment towards the brand. An almost 10% improvement, as a result of the new expression of the brand on these pages, points to a significant positive shift in customer attitude.

We note here that product experience is known to influence customer satisfaction scores, so some of the uplift may be attributable to the Avast One product experience.

Since the test

Thanks to the impact of this project we carried out phase two: redesigning the experience across many more pages. When we compare data from the three months — June to August 2022 — leading up to the rollout of this more extensive overhaul, to the three subsequent months — August to October 2022 — we can see that Downloads and Purchase Completion are up significantly <data redacted>.

It should also be noted that seasonal factors determine that this huge increase cannot be attributed to the design work alone. However, it also cannot be discounted and contributes meaningful data that testifies to the impact of the project.

A successful partnership

This project involved helping our client go on the journey with us. We both had to learn how best to work with each other. Once we gained their trust through the process, and a deeper understanding of what their customers wanted, we were able to work together to challenge the status quo.

Avast required this design project to serve as a playground for testing out new approaches, technology, and tools. It became a showcase across the business for best design-led practices. And, thanks to the results, it established a new, even more effective approach to experience design for Avast.

“We have been optimising our website for performance for years and have felt that working with an external agency could provide the necessary fresh perspective that would allow us to take a leap in our evolution. Our partnership was just what we needed and although the timelines and rounds of revisions weren’t easy for either side, I can confidently say that the end result was worth every effort.”

Tom Kačmárý, Avast Senior Experience Strategist

