



Data Driven Product Development

Lessons learnt in a startup environment by @will_ogden, CTO at [TrustedHousesitters.com](https://www.TrustedHousesitters.com)

About TrustedHousesitters

- Enables pet owners to find a sitter to care for their home & pets for FREE, in exchange for a place to stay
- Largest global house & pet sitting business
- Members in over 140 countries
- Facilitated over 1m nights of house and pet sitting to date
- Pioneering a new industry means less established benchmarks; therefore a real focus on data driven insights and product development

Key to using data in product development is to understand what success looks like...

- Are you trying to drive engagement? Are you wanting to increase conversion (probably)? Are you wanting to reduce churn?
- Ensure that everyone is using the same metrics to measure these success factors.
- Always look at the metrics holistically.

A/B testing and the folly of marginal gains

- A/B testing software has become increasingly easy to use. Very attractive to a startup due to ease of activation and low cost. You can reach easily a segmentable, global user base.
- Assists in shifting product development conversations from “we think” to “we know”
- Poster child of A/B testing software...the “call to action...”



TrustedHousesitters UK: Home x Will

Trustedhousesitters Limited [GB] | https://www.trustedhousesitters.com/gb/

TrustedHousesitters™ FIND A SITTER FIND A HOUSE SIT HOW IT WORKS [Join Now](#) Login ?

Proudly supporting

The win-win for pet lovers that travel

We connect home and pet owners who need a sitter, when going away, with trustworthy people who are happy to sit for FREE.

WEBSITE OF THE YEAR 2015

Find a Sitter

Find a House Sit

Excellent ★★★★★ based on 2639 reviews ✓ TRUSTPILOT

HOME & PET OWNERS HOUSE SITTERS

Focus of our attention



TrustedHousesitters UK: Home x

Trustedhousesitters Limited [GB] | https://www.trustedhousesitters.com/gb/

TrustedHousesitters™ FIND A SITTER FIND A HOUSE SIT HOW IT WORKS [Get travel freedom!](#) Login ?

Proudly supporting

The win-win for pet lovers that travel

We connect home and pet owners who need a sitter, when going away, with trustworthy people who are happy to sit for FREE.

WEBSITE OF THE YEAR 2015

Play button icon

Find a Sitter

Find a House Sit

Excellent ★★★★★ based on 2639 reviews TRUSTPILOT

HOME & PET OWNERS HOUSE SITTERS

Testing round 1...



TrustedHousesitters UK: Home x

Trustedhousesitters Limited [GB] | https://www.trustedhousesitters.com/gb/

TrustedHousesitters™ FIND A SITTER FIND A HOUSE SIT HOW IT WORKS

For the love of all that is good please join now!

Login ?

Proudly supporting RSPCA

The win-win for pet lovers that travel

WEBSITE OF THE YEAR 2015
thegoodwebsites.co.uk

We connect home and pet owners who need a sitter, when going away, with trustworthy people who are happy to sit for FREE.

Find a Sitter

Where do you live?

Find a House Sit

Where would you like to house sit?

Excellent ★★★★★ based on 2639 reviews TRUSTPILOT

HOME & PET OWNERS HOUSE SITTERS

Testing round 2...

- Our testing centered around “micro conversions”. Improving individual sections and interactions of the site iteratively.
- Mantra of marginal gains make a lot of things a little bit better...however...

- There's a big assumption that these “micro conversions” are isolated...in most user journeys however this is almost never the case...changing traffic patterns and user journeys higher up the funnel can impact engagement further down...potentially wiping out previous gains.
- Imperative to have a structured plan around testing. Start at the top of the funnel and work down. See where the opportunities are.
- Can definitely improve experience and optimize conversion...but generally more evolution rather than revolution.
- For larger “step change” or “revolution” functionality, A/B testing is still a good fit to trial new functionality without risk.

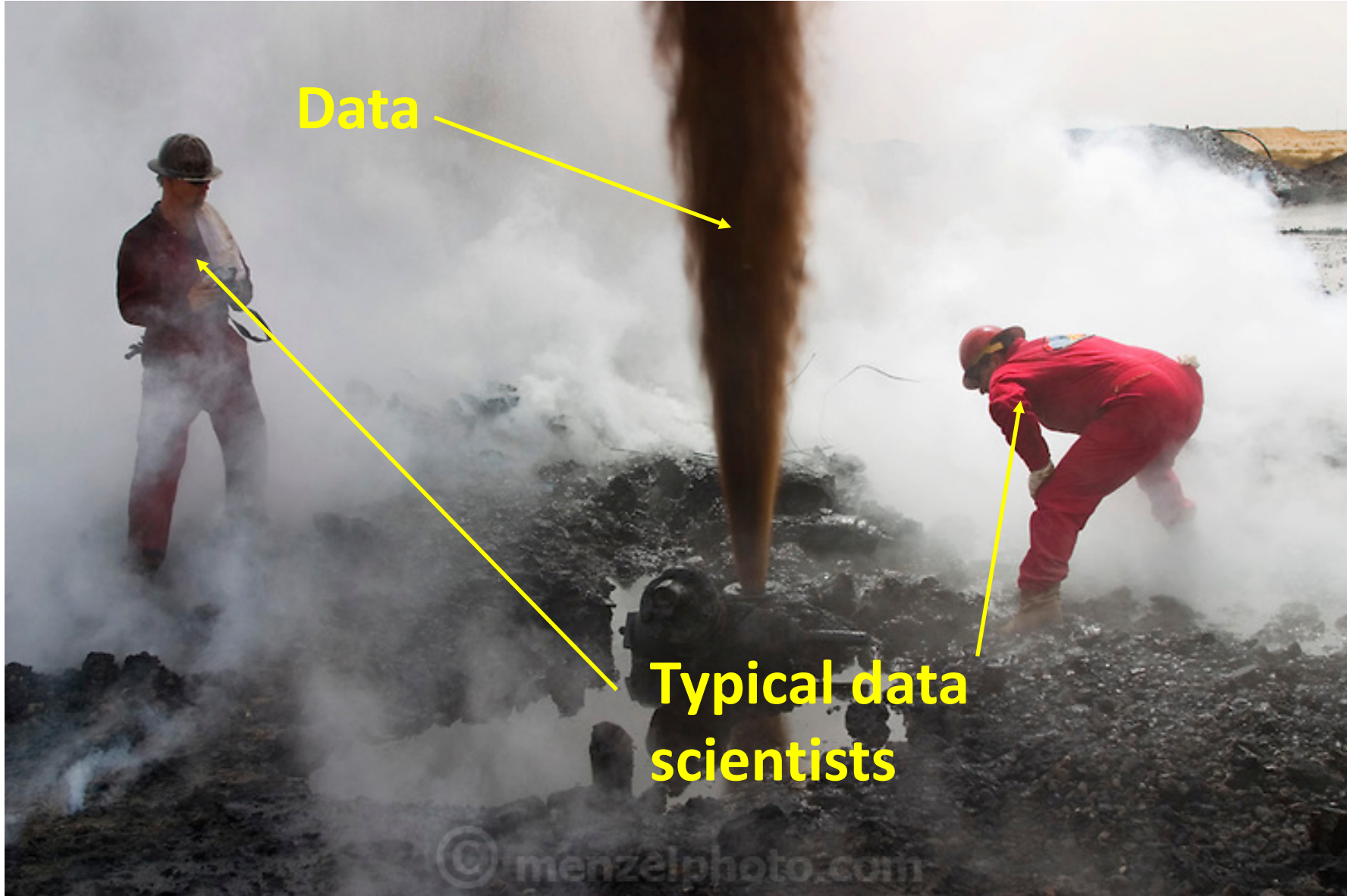
User testing and customer feedback

- Remaining customer centric through rapid growth is a challenge; but it's paramount to staying focused on delivering what the customer wants...especially as headcount increases.
- User testing and research is great in getting data about how real life humans are engaging with your product. Various ways of capturing this data e.g. remote observations, surveys, interviews, etc.
- Important to pick the correct audience – asking professional usability testers may give some good insights...however target audience may be quite far removed from this e.g. not as technically savvy.
- Remember the observer effect. Some of the best insights we gleamed, used remote observation software. Unmoderated real world interactions from actual members using their own device.

Baking in future insight requirements and making data sustainable

- When trying to understand customer needs, typically we're analyzing everything we know about the customers intentions and behaviors. This data is often in separate silos which need exploring
- There's a (slightly dubious) analogy that data is the new oil...





- For a given product ecosystem, there will be a finite amount of reportable data. As the low hanging fruit is picked, finding patterns and behaviors within the data becomes more of a challenge...
- To realize more sources of data, sometimes the low tech solution is best...you don't always need to reach for the latest Deep Learning software...
- When at the idea generation and design stage, factor in what data could be captured to provide future insights that could fuel future product development.
- Put increased focus on the acquisition of data as well as user requirements...give your Data Science teams more data to analyze.
- Augment existing data with related user behaviour data. Many off the shelf solutions, but we've had success in building our own inhouse...provides us both reporting insights and drives customized content within the site



The value of data is in the insights

- If you're taking a data centric approach to product development, and are making commercial decisions based on data it's imperative that there is a robust QA process around the validity of the data.
- Important to challenge findings of qualitative data with supporting quantitative data. Use qualitative data to create hypothesis and quantitative to test them. They work best in tandem.

Thank you and happy housesitting!

- Use promotion code “EYEFORTRAVEL” for 1 month free home & pet owner membership!