

Case Study: International Collecting Requires International Coverage



Company size: 150

Company location: Los Angeles, CA

Testing type: Functional Testing, Staging

App type: Website

www.sideshow.com

Sideshow designs, manufactures, and distributes exclusive pop culture figures, statues, and high-end items. They are known for their collectible properties, including characters and elements from Star Wars, DC Comics, MARVEL Comics, Terminator, Predator, Disney, and more.

Marc Hawkins is the Ecommerce Implementation Manager at Sideshow. He's worked in software for more than 20 years and has been at Sideshow for nearly fourteen. He began his work at Sideshow by implementing their early ecommerce site, an off-the-shelf cart software, which has been modified over the years to meet evolving needs with the help

of an agency. Over time, Sideshow's business grew more complex, and they eventually hired an internal development team to take over on future iterations.

Marc's team is lean, consisting of three backend engineers, one frontend engineer, and a server administrator. The development team reports to marketing, a department of 21 people. They also work closely with the internal IT team in order to complete backend processing in-house, such as purchases and distribution.

When Marc first joined Sideshow, there were only two or three members on the development team, so testing was solely manual and tough for a lean team. That said, before international product was such a large side of the business — and even before mobile really caught on — they felt like they had a handle on it.

“Everyone had a laptop and desktop, and it felt like we could stay on top of it.”

However, when mobile took off, especially in international markets, it became difficult to keep up. His team bought a variety of devices to extend device coverage, but it became impractical to maintain

these devices. More than half of the business eventually grew to be international, thus prioritizing customization for international audiences, and further adding to the complexity of in-house testing.

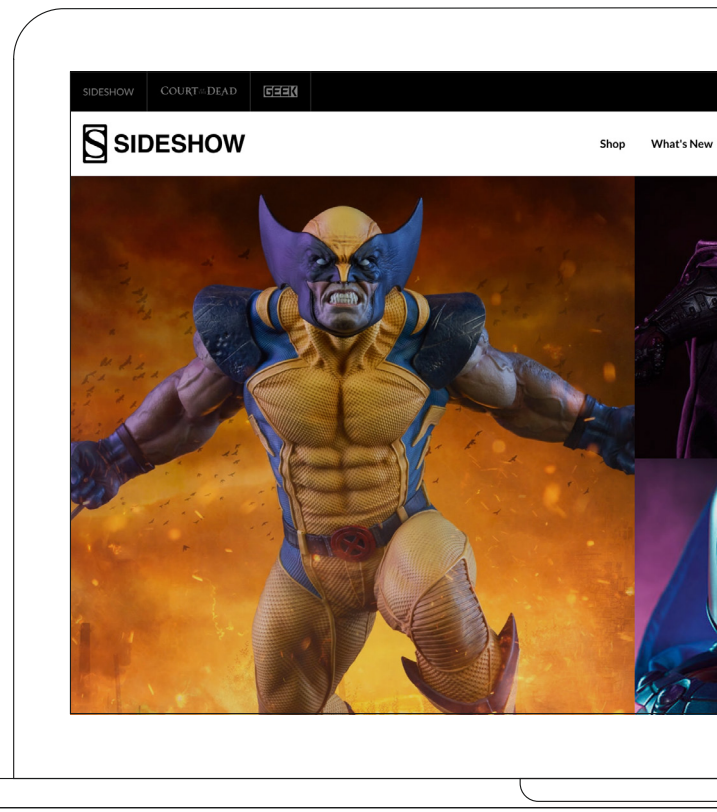
“It became a pain to test, to run another couple tests that we didn’t have time for.”

Test after test, it became ever more clear that testing for an international audience on all the devices that represent that market was a major challenge. Issues began to appear in production as reported by customers, which led to a major communications issue in figuring out what exactly had gone wrong.

test IO and International Coverage

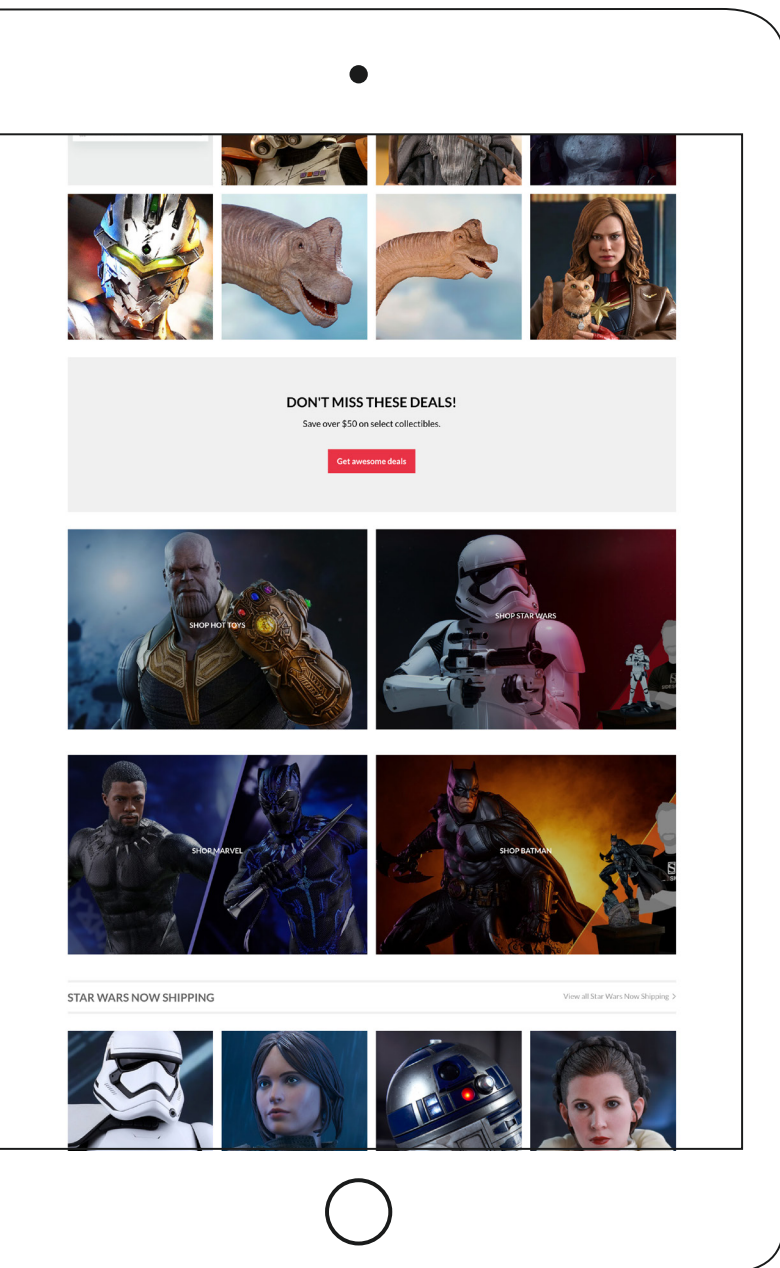
Prior to working with test IO, the joint QA efforts between the IT and marketing teams did not provide confidence in releases. With test IO serving as a primary buffer for quality control, Marc’s team knows that the big issues are out the way before sharing the update with the rest of their wider team, strengthening their confidence in delivery. His team now knows that if they run a test, they’ll find 50+ people working through the new push, providing enhanced confidence and insurance for the new release.

This confidence has been instrumental in international efforts, as both device coverage as well as awareness of geographically based issues have been enhanced; for example, making sure that an international address is formatted correctly or a that a particular device is catered to have become inherent in the QA process. With test IO’s international time-zone and device coverage, Marc is more assured that issues will not go unnoticed. Moreover, having issues reported by technical experts, as opposed to customers, allows for more insight into the specific issue at hand.



“Features such as screencaps are invaluable; the reports are detailed, succinct, and show us exactly what went wrong.”

Marc schedules the tests and reviews the results within their bug tracker of choice, GitLab. He accepts more than 85% of the bugs that he receives. Recently, Marc’s team pushed a new cart feature that was completely untested. They used a staging environment run a test cycle and surfaced a lot of issues they hadn’t even thought about.



“It was really helpful to have you [test IO] test the new cart before we opened it up to the rest of the team, especially since there are a lot of one-off scenarios you don’t necessarily consider.”

Marc said that his team runs tests at least weekly and, subsequently, saves up to eight hours per week in time otherwise spent testing themselves. Specifically, this has freed Marc up to spend time on other urgent managerial tasks. As a less burdened development team, they don’t have to chase down bugs; instead, they simply triage the issues as reported by test IO. This allows them to focus on what really matters, developing software for their customers.

About Test IO

test IO helps software teams ship high-quality software faster. As a global leader in software crowdtesting, we speed up agile software development teams with a platform for on-demand QA testing throughout the entire development cycle. Test setup takes just minutes, and we dynamically allocate human testers under real-world conditions to fit your specific testing needs. No more QA bottlenecks at the end of your sprints.

Our community of thousands of professional QA testers ensures on-demand availability when you need testing and guarantees coverage across all the devices, operating systems, regions, and languages that matter to you. Test results can be delivered in as little as an hour within the development tools you already have in place.

Founded in Berlin in 2011, test IO is headquartered in San Francisco and is the trusted testing partner of leading companies such as Daimler, Edmunds, and 1800Contacts.