

Product Review



e-Forex talks with Johnathan Assia, CEO of leading FX trading platform eToro



Take your trading to another level with eToro

Johnathan, what did you and your team set out to achieve with the launch of the eToro trading platform?

Nothing less than revolutionize the forex industry of course! It all started one fine morning over a cup of coffee with me and a few friends who also happened to be into financial trading and software design. We noticed that most of the software available out there makes forex trading look very complicated, the key word in that sentence being "look" since in its essence the forex market is rather simple and requires experience rather than prior knowledge. It dawned on us that there is absolutely no concrete reason why only professionals should enjoy all the advantages of forex trading, so we had the wild idea to strip forex trading of unnecessary complications and focus on the user experience. I have to say that I'm very happy to have had that particular cup of coffee.

What do you think traders find particularly appealing about your platform and what value does it add to their day to day trading activities?

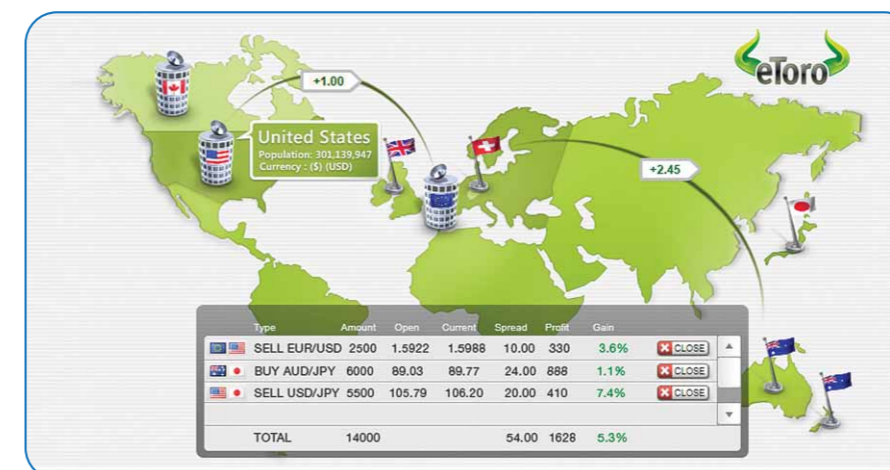
In a nutshell, I think that eToro is one of the first forex service providers to actually give top priority to the customer's trading experience. Rather than focusing on forex data, we've decided to focus on our traders and their particular needs in order to gear our platform to cater to these needs. I think the incredible flexibility of our platform and the wide range of possible trading experiences it provides makes sure that any trader finds our platform more comfortable to use than any other

software offering out there. I also think that our community makes eToro feel more like home to a lot of traders and adds a rich social aspect to their trading.

Do you think the technicalities of trading FX continue to pose significant challenges for many retail traders and how does the use of the company's groundbreaking visual software enable the eToro platform to help traders overcome many of these?

I definitely think that many FX traders continue to struggle with poorly designed trading software simply because they're not aware of the alternatives. The purpose of the eToro platform is to remove the technical obstacles from forex trading so that the traders can focus on the trading instead of the wasting time on figuring out how to operate the software itself. Our simplified approach makes the workings of the forex market and our platform self explanatory. Our visual mode presents traders with innovative graphic visualizations of their positions while the platform's expert mode utilizes an intuitive step by step function flow and incorporates advanced trading tools in a user friendly manner.

eToro has traditionally focused on FX day traders as your core client base. What steps have you been taking to widen your customer base to accommodate the needs of increasing numbers of forex investors from all around the world?



eToro's Globe Trader

Traditionally investors are looking for long term gains and aren't too interested in actively managing their investment on a daily basis. To enable forex investors to minimize their risk exposure, we've expanded our leverage range to provide them with lower leverages such as 1:5 and 1:10. We've also added the trading orders function to our platform to enable investors to manage their investments without having to monitor market rates around the clock. The development of the eToro online WebTrader has also been to offer investors the opportunity to check up on their investments from wherever they are without having to download the platform.

The eToro platform offers some very innovative functionality including both Visual and Expert modes. The Visual mode, which novice traders will find useful, contains five Trading Arenas. What are these designed to offer?

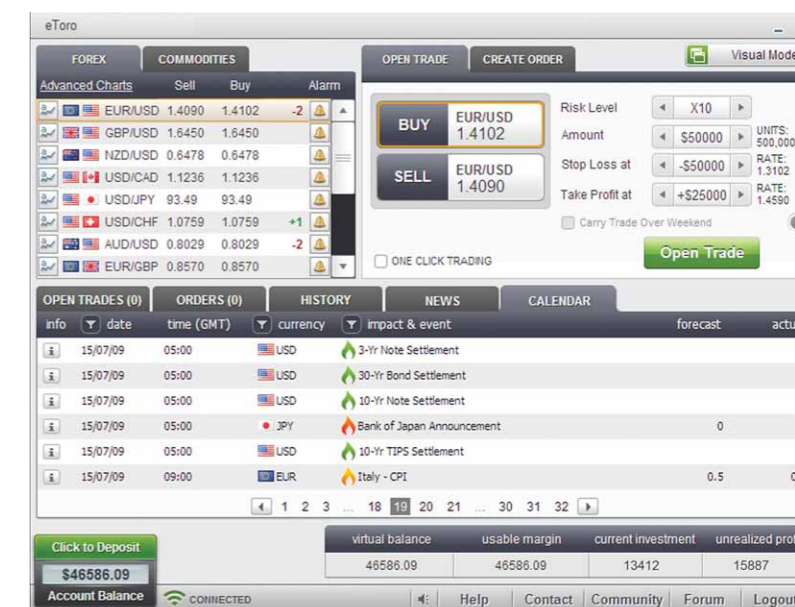
The five visual trading arenas are designed to reflect five different trading strategies or approaches in a simple and graphic manner, enabling the novice trader to absorb forex trading techniques while enjoying our creative visualizations. For example, the Global Trader represents each trade as a transaction between two international economies, thereby reflecting the fundamental analysis approach to trading. In the Forex Marathon the trader pits one currency against others in a race, thereby speculating on a general up trend in that currency's price rate. The idea is that when represented in traditional data form it may be hard for novices to understand just what's going on. With the help of visual representations traders

can watch the currencies race against each other as the market moves and therefore know when to buy and sell.

After registration on the website more experienced traders are automatically directed to the Expert Mode screen. What are the main trading tools available to them on this interface?

The Expert Mode interface comprises all the tools a serious trader needs to trade in the forex market. For the technical trader, we have provided an advanced charting feature that includes line and candlestick charts, interactive charting tools and a huge variety of technical indicators from Bollinger Bands to Welles Wider Smoothing. The Expert Mode also includes manageable stop loss and take profit, trading orders, commodity trading, the one click trading mode, interactive charts of open positions, and a carry over the weekend option. The beauty of the Expert Mode interface is that it has everything, including the trader's history, forex news updates and a forex calendar, in one simple easy to use screen.

One of the things that make the eToro platform unique is its community features. Can you tell us a little about what these are and how they benefit the traders?



eToro's Expert Mode



From the beginning we decided that we want our platform to be a part of web 2.0 and to support a user community. We thought that a forex trader community is particularly useful because the forex market itself is affected by trader sentiment. How else can a trader get a gauge on market sentiment than

by keeping up a constant communication with their peers? We also thought that novice traders might get a huge educational benefit from mingling with more experienced traders, and that all of our traders would enjoy discussing forex with other traders like themselves. Our community is facilitated through private and public chats, forums, personal profiles, prize bearing trading challenges and Top Traders' Insight, and is immensely popular among our users. We've had many responses from traders saying that our community has helped them get adjusted to forex trading and that they hadn't felt this welcome at any other platform

The Top Traders' Insight tool seems to be a particular favourite with traders. Can you tell us more about this specific feature?

This is a unique innovative feature developed by the eToro team to help our less experienced traders take a lesson from the pros. The feature displays the ten most popular currency pairs bought or sold at an given moment by our top 100 profiting traders, including what percentage of the traders are selling the particular pair and what percentage are buying it. The tool enables novice traders who are yet to pick up forex market analysis skills to imitate the trading decisions of those experienced enough to do it for them. Furthermore, the novices can also intuitively internalize the pros' trading strategies by watching the market's movement in juxtaposition with the Top Traders' Insight stats.

What are the collaboration options offered by eToro?

As a community oriented platform we are always looking to collaborate with other members of the forex industry. Our collaboration programs include a highly successful affiliate program, eToro Partners. Other collaboration options include an introducing broker program which enables companies and individuals to refer their client base to the eToro platform and manage their client base themselves. We also offer a local partner option for individuals who want to recruit eToro traders in their local language and offer client management services in that language.

The White Label program enables the companies to utilize the eToro software and recruit whatever services they require in order to offer forex trading services through our platform, while making optimal use of the company's existing capacities. At eToro we place a very high value on partnership and therefore employ expert teams that customize and personalize our collaboration programs to suit our various partners.

What are the values that guide eToro as a company and how do you think they've affected eToro's success?

There are a few things that we consider as essential to our approach. It's crucial for us to relate to our clients openly so they can know who they're dealing with instead of facing the mask of anonymity so often adopted by forex providers. We always think of ways to simplify forex trading with inventive technology and tools. Apart from that we also want our clients to have a trading experience that is enjoyable as well as profitable.

Most importantly, we dare to be different. I think it is this precise combination that has made us stand out in a closed up and old fashioned industry, and that has attracted such a huge amount of clients to our platform.

