

IS 214 Needs Assessment and Evaluation of Information Systems

Simple Usability Testing

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- Write the tasks
- Recruit the users
- What to say to users
- What not to say to users
- What to record
- Debriefing the user

Goals

- Give you experience conducting a test
- Give you experience as a test participant
- Get you comfortable with the process
- Show valuable data from simple methods
 - Without long planning documents
 - Without experimental controls, statistical analysis
 - Without cameras, video taping, lab equipment

Write the Tasks

- What do you want to test?
- Think of real tasks that most users will do
- Give the user some context
- Give the user goals, not instructions

Recruit the Users

- One of the hardest parts of testing
- Find typical users of the product
- Don't use only users familiar with your product
- You can use two users together

What to Say Before the Test

- We're testing the product, not you. Any problems you encounter will help us improve it.
- You can quit at any time.
- Tell us your thoughts as you are working. If you forget to think aloud, we may remind you.
- Please ask questions as they occur to you, but we won't be able to answer them until the end of the test.

What to Say During the Test

- As little as possible.
- Reflect back what the user has said.
- Remind the user you can't help with problems.
- Probe verbal or non-verbal cues to problems:
 - What are you thinking right now?
 - What were you expecting to happen there?
- Provide gradual hints to get user "unstuck"

What Not to Say to Users

- Don't show users how to do it
- Don't show surprise
- Don't imply that the user did something wrong
- Don't rescue users when they struggle
- Don't ask users how they would design it
- Don't badger the user to think aloud

What to Record

- User comments, positive and negative
- Where and how user had problems
- Whether user completed task, how long it took

Debriefing the User

- Post-test satisfaction and other questions
- Review user answers to questions
- Interview user for high-level issues
- Answer user questions

What's Important

- Usability testing is simple – just watch real users doing real tasks
- There are limits to the data you can gather from traditional usability testing

What's Next

- What is Usability?
- The Big Picture – Usability Process