Website Usability Testing: Lessons Learned

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Agenda

• Creating Usability Tests
  • Methodologies
  • Protocols

• Data Collection and Analysis

• Findings
Creating Usability Tests

- Doable
- Affordable
- Skilled staff
- Availability
Communication

- Language
- Timeline
- Location
- Prizes
Tests and Goals

- Surveys
  - High level snapshot of user needs, wants and impressions
- Task-Based Testing
  - Test Functionality
- Focus Group Discussions
  - Test Navigation
  - Observe user behaviour and task success rate
- Individual Interviews
  - Gather observations, opinions, attitudes
## Pros and Cons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surveys</th>
<th>Task-Based Testing</th>
<th>Focus Groups</th>
<th>Individual Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost effective, efficient, reaches a large user base</td>
<td>Mercy of participant and the technology</td>
<td>Mercy of the participant and the technology</td>
<td>Site specific, scheduling, low response rate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reveals user behaviour and preferences</td>
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<td>Site specific, language vs. meaning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uncover what may affect user behaviour</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discover user behaviour, patterns and anomalies</td>
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**Waterloo Library**

**TUG Conference 2013**
Tools

Surveys
Task-Based Testing
Functionality
Navigation
Focus Groups
Individual Interviews

ONLINE
IN-PERSON
Protocol Planning

**Introduction** – Who you are and your role

**Objective** – The purpose of the study

**Methodology** – the deliverables

**Disclaimer** (for Interviews and Focus Groups)

**Tasks** – 1 through to end

**Conclusion** – Thank you statement
  – Contact information
Individual Interviews

- Introduction and Objective
  - Who and What
- Methodology
  - How
- Disclaimer
  - Acknowledged Agreement
- Note User Information
  - Who is Participating
- Start Task Analysis
  - Tasks
- End Session
  - Start Wrapping Up
- Ask General Open-Ended Questions
  - Opportunity to Clarify
- Thank Participant
  - User Feedback is Important
- Provide Contact Information
  - Opportunity to Follow-up
Data Collection and Analysis

- Quantitative
- Qualitative
- Integrate / Compare

Report
Quantitative Data

- Compile data
- Perform calculations
- Interpret the data

TOOLS

- Excel
- SPSS
- SAS
Qualitative Data

• Transcribe
• Code the data
• Draw conclusions

TOOLS

- ATLAS.ti
- TextSmart
- NVivo

Discover Patterns
Identify Themes
Conclusions

WATERLOO LIBRARY
Writing the Report

• Purpose
• Methodology, Protocols
• Findings
• Conclusions
• Recommendations
• Executive Summary

Data Collection → Data Analysis → Conclusions & Recommendations → The Final Report
Findings

• Users want to customize the Library website
• Navigation requires too many clicks
• Too many options / unnecessarily complex
• Confusing and inconsistent terminology
• Users use Google Scholar as a starting point
Lessons Learned

• Keep it simple
• Protocol is key
• Pre-test
• Tools and equipment
• Record observations and progress