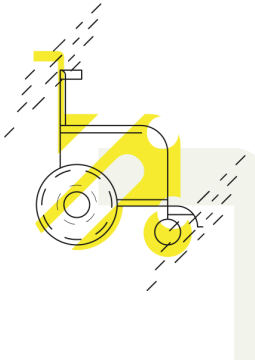


EXPERIMENTATION

USABILITY TESTING

Usability testing is a way to see how easy it is to use something is by testing it with real users. Users are asked to complete tasks, typically while they are being observed by researchers, to see where they encounter problems and experience confusion. Usability testing reduces the risk of building the wrong thing. It saves money, time and resources. It finds problems when they are still easy and cheap to fix. The usability testing is an iterative process, it's not one-time blessing, you need to repeat the process until the design is not confusing anymore and your users are able to achieve the scenarios you propose.



FORMAT
Method



TIMEFRAME
2-3 hours



GROUP SIZE
1-20



FACILITATION LEVEL
Advanced



REQUIRED MATERIALS
PC, recording device, paper

STEPS

1

Create a test plan. Creating the test plan is the initial activity you need to perform to do a good usability testing. These following tasks are the ones you need to do before facilitating a test session.
1. Define scope of work. You need to decide the areas that you want to test.
2. Recruit users. Recruiting can be performed according to their demographics (age, where they live, etc.) or psychographics (cognitive background: if they're used to perform the proposed scenarios).
3. Identify objectives. Identify what you want to accomplish with this test, what you are looking for, what you want to demonstrate to your stakeholders.
4. Establish metrics. Metrics give you a common fact-based description of user/task performance upon which to make informed design decisions. Time on a task, task performance, success rate, speed, goal fulfillment, expectation matching are the most common ones but there are many more it will depend on the nature of your project if you select one or another one.

2

Facilitate the test. Being a good facilitator takes time but these are some ideas that could help you to be a good facilitator:
• Ask your users to externalise thoughts and feelings when interacting with the solution
• Keep test environment as realistic as possible, don't try to minimize distractions
• Take notes (structured or unstructured)
• Record the session
• Do not lead the user
• Do not jump into any conclusions during the session
• Remember that it's not about what we think of what's a good user experience it's about how the user perceives the solution so keep your mouth shut, relax and listen.

3

Analyse case data. Once you're done with all your testing sessions it's time to sit, analyse the information and jump into conclusions. There's no common rule to do this but when you have all the information in place you need to look for the trends that emerge, make notes of the possible problems and the potential solutions.

4

Create test report. A test report should be created each and every time you perform a usability testing and must be stored with any other testing documentation of your product.

Benefits

- Gain insights from our users.
- See if user's expectations are met.
- Check if the user can perform the tasks you proposed.
- Find out if you are on the right track.
- Get user reactions and feedback.
- Issues and potential problems are highlighted before the product is launched.
- It increases the likelihood of usage of your product or service.
- It minimises the risk of product/service failure.

Tips

Usability testing is not to prove yourself that you make the right decisions but to learn how your users perceive and use your product. It's cheap, saves development time and what's most important it saves money.

Sources

- 1 UX Collective