

Basic User Testing

Recruiting Users

- Find people with the same experience level as the typical user
- Don't get people who are familiar with the product or your views on it.
 - Be careful about “friends and family” testing
 - Public places like libraries, dining halls, coffee shops can be good places to find people who wouldn't mind helping for a few minutes.
 - Some companies have user testing labs that they set up and they handle recruiting users.
 - In academia, we often post fliers or set up agreements with local organizations.
 - A small budget to give out gift certificates or something can help.

Realistic Situation

- If you can, find a quiet, distraction free room for user testing.
- Consider recording audio or video of the user tests.
 - This can be useful, but you can get lots of great info without recording.

User Instructions

- Tell users:
 - You are testing a piece of software, not them.
 - It's ok for them to stop at any time.
 - How do you handle cases where people do leave?
 - Demonstrate equipment that users will need to use (unless the equipment is what you are testing)

Question

Some products, such as flipboard or other mobile applications, have innovative gestures that are crucial in navigating the application. When user testing, should this information be included in step 4, or should you let the users figure it out for themselves?

Tasks

- These should basically be the tasks you developed in Milestone 1.
- For user testing –
 - Rephrase as “you”
 - Note: the user details will come back in forms of testing without a user, which are coming up soon.

Think Aloud Protocol

- Ask users to “think aloud” as they are working.
 - Explain why – rich information source for you
 - You may need to model it once for them
 - You may also want to get them to practice once with an unrelated task

As an observer

- Capture the user's behavior
 - What they do
 - But especially the thoughts behind it

Listen for...

- I'm looking for....
- I'm guessing that...
- I'm confused...
- Oh, so this is the...

Dealing with silence...

- Can you tell me what you're thinking?
- Can you tell me why you clicked on x?

No Help

- You *cannot* provide help.
 - Do **not** tell users.
 - When users have questions, they should ask them anyway – you can note the question and answer it at the end.
 - In some cases, you can intercede. But. Know in advance when you'll step in.
 - For example, users have to be making no progress for 3 minutes for the experimenter to help.

Evaluating Results

- You should find lots of problems – what do you go after?
 - Importance – is this a nit, a minor hurdle, or a complete showstopper in terms of users completing tasks.
 - Difficulty – is this an easy fix or a major rewrite (note major rewrite can come into play when there's a digital prototype, not on paper. That's the point of the low-fi – you have to be willing to pitch it).

Stages

- Phase 1 – Can people tolerate this intervention at all?
 - Do they get sick (yes/no)?
- Phase 2 – small scale lab studies
 - Dosing requirements
 - Does it work
- Phase 3 – large multi-center trials
 - Larger numbers, sometimes less tightly controlled.
- Paper prototyping – can people complete the tasks at all?
 - (yes/no) If not, fix
- Digital Prototype – which tasks are the most problematic per cost to change?
 - Timing, errors, etc.
- Deployed Beta –
 - Bug reports, complaints...real world scenarios, more variable data.

Question

The reading mentioned that you should also try to involve the user in brainstorming. How might one do this? It is clear to me how we can involve the user by observing them use our product, but what might their role in brainstorming might be?

Paper Prototype Testing Roles

- Greeter
- Facilitator
- Computer
- Observers