



Usability Test Results Report

California Emergency Alert System

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Document Overview

This document serves to provide details and evidence for the usability testing portion of our user centered design process. Within this document we provide insight, at a high level, about who we tested, how we tested them, what the results of those testes were, and most importantly, how we used the data to improve out product.

Executive Summary

Usability tests are conducted with the express intent of providing insight on problem areas and actionable recommendations around those problem areas. We strive to measure how well the interface facilitates the completion of routine tasks a user might need to accomplish within our product. We establish a protocol for how we interact with end-users, what we are trying to measure (e.g. time-on-task, task completion rate, error and failure rates, etc.), and how we intend to use the results. These results are then used to facilitate future planning and estimation exercises in our continual effort to progressively improve the application over the course of it's development and maintenance life-cycles..

Methodology

For this PoC, we used a small subset of potential end-users and administrators, 3 to be exact. We selected 2 individuals that met the end-user persona criteria and 1 individual that met the persona criteria for system administrators. Each participant was tested in-person using a combination of analog and digital techniques, including but not limited to wireframe walk-throughs, pre- and post- study questionnaires, and browser based application testing.

For each participant, we gathered basic demographic statistics, technological proficiency assessments, overall application impressions, and satisfaction assessments. For early testing we used analog wireframes and walked participants through a series of use-cases to that we could begin to incorporate user feedback early in the process. As more areas of the application began to take shape we were able to use our in-browser testing suite to gain more detailed insights about how the participants moved about the application, where they clicked, scrolled, and where they may have had difficulties with task completion.

Who We Tested

Three participants, having the following characteristics, evaluated MyCAalerts between February 18, 2017 and February 28, 2017

Audience Type	
User Profile 1	2
User Profile 2	1
Total Participants	3

Computer Usage	
0 to 10 hrs/wk	0
11 to 25 hrs/wk	3
26+ hrs/wk	0
Total Participants	3

Age	
18-25	1
26-39	1
40-59	1
Total Participants	3

Audience Type	
Men	0
Women	3
Total Participants	3

What Participants Did

Test participants met with the testing moderator for a brief period to provide a bit of background and context as well as to explain the process, complete documents and make sure the relevant artifacts were in order before testing began. Some of the activities included completing consent forms and pre-study questionnaires. After the testing completed, users were asked to complete an exit questionnaire as well to help capture feedback and suggestions for improvements.

What Data We Collected

We collected quite a bit of data throughout the testing process. In the initial stages, we collected basic demographic and general internet/technological usage data. Other data we collected came in the actual testing phase and included a substantial amount of verbal feedback as test participants completed the prescribed tasks. Other kinds of feedback we collected was more exploratory in nature; where the user clicked, scrolled and the comments they made as they moved around the app. This data was collected, reviewed, and synthesized into actionable improvements that were then incorporated into sprint planning exercises and ultimately completed as part of the sprint development cycle.

Major Findings and Recommendations

The roles involved in a usability test are as follows. An individual may play multiple roles and tests may not require all roles.

Major Issues

1. Speed and overall performance issue with loading time of the admin landing page (list/map view)
2. Event list does not have enough identifiers in the individual events to make the stand out as unique events rather than appear as duplicated records

Solutions

1. Restrict the amount of data coming back to the list and/or implement a form of paging or lazy loading to help speed up the initial list load.
2. Provide a better mechanism in the event list so that users/admins can more easily distinguish unique events in the list.

Detailed Findings and Recommendations

Introductory Questions & Tasks

Sample Questions	Sample Responses
Have you heard of MyCALerts?	None of the participants had been to or heard of the site.
Just from looking at this site, what kinds of information do you think you could get from this site? Please be specific.	All participants correctly defined the purpose of the site. Participants used phrases from major headers and labels to describe the information on the site.
Who do you think this site is designed for? Why?	Participants correctly identified general public.

Scenario 1 - Resident moved

You have recently moved and would like to make sure you still get emergency notifications that are relevant to your new home address. Go ahead and make the necessary change to your personal information.

Number of Participants	2
Percent Successful	100%
Sample Findings	Sample Recommendations
2 participants completed the task with ease by finding the “Manage Profile” link and updating their zip code information.	None
0 participants needed prompting or had significant difficulty completing the task.	None
0 participants did not complete the task.	None

Scenario 2 - Location Based Notifications

You are traveling, within California, but quite far from home, and you want to make sure you are still able to receive emergency alerts no matter what part of California you travel to. Log into MyCALerts on your mobile device and confirm you have enabled MyCALerts to send you notifications based on your phone’s location.

Number of Participants	2
Percent Successful	100%

Sample Findings	Sample Recommendations
2 participants completed the task with ease by finding the “Allow notifications based on phone location” option.	None
0 participants needed prompting or had significant difficulty completing the task.	None
0 participants did not complete the task.	None

Scenario 3 - Sending Ad Hoc Notifications

You have already logged into the application. Send a new non-emergency notification to users in the following zip codes: 95814, 95815, 95816. As this is a non-emergency please use the following text: “Please be advised that this area is expected to receive heavy rains. Do your part to help avoid flooding by making sure rain gutters are clear.”

Number of Participants	1
Percent Successful	100%

Sample Findings	Sample Recommendations
1 participants completed the task with ease by finding the “Publish New Notification” link and completing the form.	None
0 participants needed prompting or had significant difficulty completing the task.	None
0 participants did not complete the task.	None

Scenario 4 - Visualizing Past Events

While you are still logged into the application; you decide that you want to see all previous flood events throughout California.

Number of Participants	1
Percent Successful	100%

Sample Findings	Sample Recommendations
1 participants completed the task with ease by using the filter at the top of the events list and filtering down to “Floods”	Provide more clarity for the individual events in the list to help distinguish unique alerts.

0 participants needed prompting or had significant difficulty completing the task.	None
0 participants did not complete the task.	None

Exit Questions & User Impressions

Sample Questions	Sample Responses
What features of the site were vague or confusing to you, if any?	The events list. There were too many identical events listed without enough detail to distinguish individual events.
What is your impression about navigating the site? Does it seem easy or difficult? What makes it that way?	Seems very simple and straightforward.
Did you feel that anything was missing from the site you just tested today? What else should be included in the site design?	Nothing other than the additional details in the list view.
What did you like best about the site?	Its simplicity.
What did you like least about the site?	The lack of unique event identifiers.
Do you think some people would have problems using the web site? What kinds of people? What kinds of problems?	No one with any level of previous internet usage history should have difficulty with this site.
Would you like to make any other comments about what you tested today or about your current experiences with the existing California Emergency Alert System (if you use it)?	No.