Getting Started

slide 1: Introduction

Hi guys! Welcome to [Fundamentals of User Experience Design ], a Tuts+ premium course. I’m [Sarah Kahn] and today we’re going to talk about how to get started..

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Here’s what we’re going to cover:

* + The small test- any testing is better than none
  + The big test- get a baseline
  + Going forward- feature by feature testing
  + Assignment

slide 3

[don’t panic]

So, in our last lesson, ‘The Anatomy of User Experience’, we talked about the different pieces that go into creating a good user experience. In the assignment, I asked you to practice looking at a website and identifying some of the elements of those different pieces.

So if you’ve spent any time thinking about that, you’ve probably started looking at a site that you’ve worked on or are currently working on as well, and wondered if you have any usability problems. In my experience, any site that I’ve ever worked on has had spots that I felt were probably problematic. But it’s one thing to suspect that say, your navigation architecture isn’t as logical as it could be, and another to prove it.

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[rocket ship]

As the people say, it isn’t rocket surgery. The best way to begin it to just do it. It doesn’t have to be complicated, expensive, or time-consuming. It also doesn’t mean that you need to spend weeks preparing a giant test of your entire site or application. It doesn’t mean that you’ll need to overhaul everything and start over.

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[person + computer + notebook = testing]

So here are the 3 things you’ll need to do a user test. A person, something to test, and something to record your findings in. That’s it!

That’s easy, right? You can go do it right now! Well, ok, maybe you can wait until this lesson is over, but seriously, go do it today. This person can be a coworker from another department, who might not use the website much. It can be a friend or family member. Just recruit a helper for 10 minutes. Sit them down in front of your paper mockup, wireframe, or the live website. Ask them what they think they should do, and then what they think they should do next. Write down what they say. That’s it!

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[the big test]

Once you’re comfortable with the idea of running a test, sometimes it is in fact helpful to do the whole big beefalo test.

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[big beefalo]

the big test is one that takes a little more planning and recruitment of participants. it should be done in conjunction with ongoing lightweight user tests, or at least, one should not preclude the other. they really have different purposes. Obviously there’s a lot that goes into recruiting said participants and conducting said test, but we’ll get into all that in greater detail in Lessons 8 and 9, Designing a test, and working with users, so fear not.

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Pros of the big test:

get feedback from a wider group of users. If you’re taking the time to put together a longer more in-depth test, you should take the time to recruit a bigger and more diverse group of users to get the most bang for your buck

more in depth feedback. if you’re letting users roam through more of your website or application for a longer period, you’ll get more information from them than if you were say, asking about the position of one button. that’s just a side effect.

authoritah. a big scholarly test will gain more buy-in from the high-ups in your organization or your client, or at least, it will if your organization is anything like the ones i’ve worked for.

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cons of the big test:

slower

more time-consuming

more expensive

less focused results- not less valuable, just possibly more challenging to apply

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ongoing testing

Once you’ve gotten a good baseline on your project, if you’re actively developing on it going forward, get into the habit of automatically including a user testing phase for each new feature. If you’re working on a more project by project basis, then include it in with each project.

Your assignment:

* Pick a project that you’re working on.
* Find one thing that you think is a problem.
* Find a living person, someone who might feasibly use the project in real life some time.
* Ask them to try it.
* Listen to what they say.
* Was it enlightening? Can you use this to further design and planning discussions in your organization or with your client?

These are interesting conversations to start having.

Ok, so next time on [Fundamentals of User Experience Design ], we’re going to cover [Lesson 4: Find out who your users are]. This is [Sarah Kahn], and from all of us here at Tuts+, thanks for listening!