**Books about Usability:**

**Classics:**

***Don't Make Me Think* by Steve Krug**

The ultimate beginner-friendly book on usability. Covers intuitive navigation, visual hierarchy, and user testing.

***The Design of Everyday Things* by Don Norman**

Not just about web, it teaches human-centered design that applies to all usability.

**Web-Specific Usability**

***Rocket Surgery Made Easy* by Steve Krug**

Companion to *Don't Make Me Think*—focused entirely on quick, low-cost usability testing.

***Forms That Work: Designing Web Forms for Usability* by Caroline Jarrett and Gerry Gaffney**

Deep dive into one of the most critical (and often poorly designed) parts of web UX: forms.

***Letting Go of the Words: Writing Web Content That Works* by Ginny Redish**

Emphasizes the importance of usable *content*—not just layouts or graphics.

**Accessible & Inclusive Design**

***Accessibility for Everyone* by Laura Kalbag**

Covers designing for people with disabilities and improving usability for all.

***Inclusive Design Patterns* by Heydon Pickering**

Practical and code-friendly guide to creating accessible web components.

**Usability Testing & Metrics**

***Handbook of Usability Testing* by Jeffrey Rubin & Dana Chisnell**

Step-by-step guide to planning and conducting usability tests—from script to report.

Covers recruiting users, running tests, and analyzing findings.

***Observing the User Experience* by Elizabeth Goodman, Mike Kuniavsky, Andrea Moed**

Covers contextual inquiry, field studies, usability testing, and more.

Ideal for developers working with UX researchers.

***Think Like a UX Researcher* by David Travis & Philip Hodgson**

Practical methods for gathering usability data and making user-centered decisions.

***Measuring the User Experience* by Tom Tullis & Bill Albert**

Focused on quantifying usability: task success rate, time on task, satisfaction scores.

Also explains how to interpret and present findings to stakeholders.

**Other Resources**

**Nielsen Norman Group Articles**

https://www.nngroup.com/articles/

Industry gold standard. Clear, research-backed articles on every usability topic.

**[Usability.gov](https://www.usability.gov/)**

Managed by the U.S. government. Includes templates and step-by-step guides for testing, personas, journey mapping, etc.

**[UX Booth](https://www.uxbooth.com/)** and **Smashing Magazine**

Developer-friendly UX content with real-world examples.

**[UseIt.com (Steve Krug Archive)](https://sensible.com/)** – Old-school, but full of gems.

Watch a Usability test

**Usability Tools:**

Maze - <https://maze.co/platform/user-testing/>

**A/B Testing and Heatmaps**

Evaluate performance post-launch.

* **A/B Testing:** Show two versions (A and B) to different users to compare performance.
  + Tools: Optimizely, VWO
  + Metrics: Clicks, conversions, drop-off rates
* **Heatmaps:** Visualize user behavior like clicks, scrolls, and cursor movements.
  + Tools: Hotjar, Crazy Egg, Microsoft Clarity
  + Hotjar v Google Analytics: Google Analytics provides quantitative data and metrics, while Hotjar offers qualitative insights. By combining the two, you can get a comprehensive understanding of user behavior and make data-driven decisions to optimize your website.

**Follow Common Design Patterns**

**Navigation principles:**

* Keep it simple: Limit top-level options (ideally 5–7).
* Use familiar labels (e.g., "Home", "About", "Contact").
* Make clickable areas large enough and visually distinct.
* Maintain consistency across devices and sections.

**Organizing Content and Information**

Information Architecture (IA) structures content so users can intuitively navigate it.

* Group related items.
* Use card sorting with users to determine logical categories.
* Create a sitemap to visualize structure.
* Use clear, hierarchical headings.

**Test Across Devices**

Use Chrome DevTools

* Test different breakpoints (mobile, tablet, desktop)
* Check visibility and accessibility
* Ensure touch targets are appropriately sized

**How to Set Up A/B Testing (No-Code and Code Options)**

**Option 1: No-Code Tools**

Tools:

* [VWO](https://vwo.com/)
* [Optimizely](https://www.optimizely.com/)
* [Unbounce](https://unbounce.com/)
* [Convert](https://www.convert.com/)

Steps:

1. Create two versions of your page or element (A and B).
2. Set your goal (e.g., button clicks).
3. Choose your audience split (e.g., 50/50).
4. Run the test for enough users (~1–2 weeks minimum).
5. Analyze results with statistics

**Code Your Own A/B Test (Basic Example)**

<script>

const variant = Math.random() < 0.5 ? 'A' : 'B';

document.documentElement.dataset.variant = variant;

</script>

<style>

[data-variant="A"] .btn { background: blue; }

[data-variant="B"] .btn { background: red; }

</style>

<button class="btn">Click Me</button>

**Explanation of code:**

const variant = Math.random() < 0.5 ? 'A' : 'B';

document.documentElement.dataset.variant = variant;

* Randomly assigns either 'A' or 'B' to the **<html> element** as a data-variant attribute.

So <html> becomes:  
  
<html data-variant="A">

Or  
<html data-variant="B">

[data-variant="A"] .btn { background: blue; }

[data-variant="B"] .btn { background: red; }

* Applies different styles based on the randomly chosen variant. Attribute selector and class inside:
  + Variant A → blue button
  + Variant B → red button

<button class="btn">Click Me</button>

* Will be either blue or red, depending on which variant was randomly chosen

You can then track clicks with Google Analytics events

**Heatmaps**

A heatmap visually shows where users click, scroll, and hover on your website. It helps identify hotspots and dead zones.

**Types**:

* Click maps: Where users click
* Scroll maps: How far they scroll
* Move maps: Mouse movement/hover patterns

**Setting Up a Heatmap**

**Tools:**

* [Hotjar](https://www.hotjar.com/) - free plan available
* [Microsoft Clarity](https://clarity.microsoft.com/) - 100% free
* [Crazy Egg](https://www.crazyegg.com/)

**Steps (Hotjar Example):**

1. Sign up at [hotjar.com](https://hotjar.com/).
2. Add the tracking script to your website (via HTML or tag manager).
3. Select a page to track.
4. Collect data for a few days.
5. View heatmap, scroll map, and recordings.

<!-- Example Hotjar Tracking Code -->

<script>

(function(h,o,t,j,a,r){

h.hj=h.hj||function(){(h.hj.q=h.hj.q||[]).push(arguments)};

h.\_hjSettings={hjid:1234567,hjsv:6};

a=o.getElementsByTagName('head')[0];

r=o.createElement('script');r.async=1;

r.src=t+h.\_hjSettings.hjid+j+h.\_hjSettings.hjsv;

a.appendChild(r);

})(window,document,'https://static.hotjar.com/c/hotjar-','.js?sv=');

</script>

**Using A/B Testing + Heatmaps Together**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **A/B Testing** | **Heatmaps** |
| Shows *which* version works | Shows *why* it works or not |
| Needs setup before testing | Can run passively on live site |
| Good for comparing variations | Good for diagnosing behavior |