User Test

# General method

During the *Inspection* phase, we discovered a few problems with the website's usability from our technical point of view. It's time to determine whether these flaws affect the end-user as well. We used a method known as *User testing* to confirm or refute our findings. The fundamental goal of user testing is to identify the kinds of problems that heuristics may not fully understand or, more accurately, that inspectors were unable to identify during the Expert Evaluation step.

As the name would imply, it is based on the personal experiences of a carefully chosen sample of users who are typical of the website's intended audience. Twenty participants were given different tasks to complete on the website, and their activities were carefully monitored without interfering with the test by consensually recording their face and the screen. This allowed researchers to study participants' behaviour, facial mimic, and cursor movements. After that, a questionnaire was used to gather additional data. After integrating all of the collected data, we ultimately learned a lot about the genuine and most important issues with the website.

# Design of the study

User testing has a well-defined approach that must be followed. The primary aspects that needed to be addressed in order to begin the correct testing phase are described in the section that follows.

## User selection

The website is intended for a wide variety of young people, from high school students to those in the highest study positions so it's possible that the number of users interested in the website's material will be vast and heterogeneous while still young. Although we believe that young adults between the ages of 15 and 30 who are technologically inclined would use this site primarily, there are also sections designated for the parents of the individuals in question.

We identified 20 persons who represented the desired targets. The important thing is to make sure each class has enough participants for the test to represent a statistically significant sample. It should be pointed out that, according to the Nielsen Curve, 5 individuals should be sufficient to identify 85% of problems, and 15 users should be required to identify every issues.

We decided to include two groups of persons in our study:

* Students, age 17-25
* Parents of students, age 45-65.

## Evaluation criteria

The evaluation criteria are not fixed or at all predefined. There are some that show up in every user test (like *success measurement* or *completion time*), but there is no particular restriction.

In carrying out our own analysis, we adopted:

* **Success** in completing the task.

Measured using a straightforward metric: 0 (wrong answer or not completed), 1 (completed).

* **Attempts** to complete the task.

According to the difficulty of each task, we chose to give a different number of attempts to deliver the found answer.

* **Time** to complete the task.

According to the difficulty of each task, we chose to introduce a different threshold. The execution was stopped when the time expired.

* **Times** the user resorted to the ***home* shortcut**.

We interpreted this as a sign that the user wants to start over on a new page, indicating some perplexity and disorientation.

* **Times** the user resorted to the ***back* browser arrow**.

To evaluate how effective the website was at preventing the user from using it.

* **Notes**.

Here, all of the user's insightful comments—especially the critical ones—were gathered. Furthermore, any qualitative observation about a person's behaviour goes here.

## Tasks

Users were given a slightly different set of tasks to complete in the same sequence.

1a. Submit an application using the data provided (without submitting it);

1b. Find testimonials from other parents whose children have participated in an internship program;

1. Find the average price to live a week in New York (extra-curricular activities);
2. Find out what is not included in the program fee;
3. Find all and only Latin American employees and open the LinkedIn profile of one of them (of your choice);
4. Find the accommodation photos for a spring internship.

Students were assigned tasks 1a, 2, 3, 4, 5, whereas parents were assigned tasks 1b, 2, 3, 4, 5. We reasoned thus since the two groups play distinct roles in accessing this website. Every task has a time restriction and an attempt limit, however we chose to extend each time limit by 1 minute for the class of parents to compensate for their inexperience navigating a never-before-seen website.

## Execution

### Before Test

The users were given the task sheet with a brief introduction and the primary directive to follow, customised for their class. The full task sheet for each class can be found in the annex.

Regardless of the version, each user was given a context in which to operate:

* **Students** who want to participate in an international internship to expand their knowledge;
* **Parents** who want to send their children abroad and are curious about the price and the feedbacks from other parents about this programme.

### During Test

We maintained the following guidelines for the test's execution:

* Assuring users that they were not being evaluated. There is no need to worry about their failure or need for assistance, in particular because it is precisely a useful component for the website evaluation;
* Encouraging individuals to speak their opinions aloud, whether positive or negative;
* Not helping;
* Encouraging users to leave negative reviews without concern;

Direct user observation and audio and video recording of the computer screen and camera were both used to collect data.

### After Test

After completing all of the tasks, each participant offered feedback on the website by completing a questionnaire (*System Usability Scale* (***SUS***)) on their overall perceptions of the site's content, comfort of use and exploration, as well as overall satisfaction.

The users were asked to rate their level of agreement with each line on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The responses were gathered using *Microsoft Form*.