## Assessment 1 SP4 - Usability Testing Sessions

The purpose of this exercise is to provide you with a practical introduction to usability testing.

The purpose of the usability testing you will undertake is to perform an informal exploratory test of your site to evaluate the effectiveness of specific areas and to make recommendations for improvements.

Further information and reading about usability testing will be provided on Moodle.

## Planning & preparation

1. Making use of your personas and user journeys already created, you should develop a number of relevant tasks (user scenarios) to test specific features on your site.

* **Task 1** should ask your tester to make an initial exploration of your site, to see if they can get an overall impression of the sort of information your site provides.
* **Tasks 2 and 3** should be *task specific* to test features on your site. For example, each task will comprise of a scenario (to set the context) and an action that the tester should attempt to complete:
  + Scenario – you are trying to manage an Info Comms student conference at MMU.
  + Action - Try and find out what sort of catering facilities MMU offers for Info Comms students.

**Three tasks are sufficient but if you think these tasks are likely to be completed quickly, create some 'back-up' tasks in case you have time left over.**

*The actions you develop will depend on what information your site provides*.

1. **Pilot test your tasks** (scenario plus actions) with a member of your group or a friend prior to you test session. Practising **will** mean your session is more successful.
2. **Write a basic script for the whole session** (including your scenarios and actions) to ensure that the session flows smoothly. There should be an introduction to the group, the reason for testing, what you are testing etc. Remember (and reinforce) that you are not testing the tester!
3. **Create a (post-test) exit survey**, asking participants to rate on a scale of 1 - 10, about 5 or 6 questions on things such as:
   * + Did you like the look and feel of the site?
     + Use of images?
     + How informative were the links?
     + Logical presentation of information?
     + Overall satisfaction?
4. **Customise the consent form (provided) for your test candidate to sign**. This should include permission to record the session including video, audio and their actions on screen. Note that the recording will be solely used in conjunction with this coursework.

**Important:** Prior to your usability testing session you need to work on your site design (following the parallel design process) working to build the final design, making the most of any feedback. This initial build should have some (not all) of the developed content and media to get the most out of your session. *We don't expect you to be testing the completed site. You will get more out of the session if you do have 'something' to test.*

## The Usability Testing session

**The session** - Each group will be timetabled a slot for their usability testing. The session will be managed by a tutor but essentially will be under the group’s direction.

**The test candidate** - For the usability testing the group should find a volunteer to act as the tester. Many groups bring along family, friends, roommates or volunteers found in the corridors. If not, we will ask a member of another group to test your work (although this is not ideal as they already have an insight into the project).

**Recording** - We will record the testing session (video & sound) using screen capture software. The tutor will manage the recording. The group should take notes.

**Think aloud** - Throughout the session you will want your tester to provide a verbal dialogue (i.e. Think Aloud Protocol) – more below.

**(Post-test) exit survey** - They should also be asked to complete a post-test survey on completion.

The following bullet points are a useful checklist to take you through each step of the Usability Testing:

* At the start of the usability testing, try to make the tester feel at ease. Explain that you are not testing them, you are trying to find out what people think of your website and the features if offers so that you can improve it.
* Explain that the results from the usability testing will be treated with confidentiality and the tester will remain anonymous.
* Settle the tester at the computer and ask them to sign a consent form
* Explain that the usability testing will consist of a number of tasks (depending on how many you have created).
* Explain that you would like the tester to provide a verbal dialogue (i.e. Think Aloud Protocol) – not only of what they are doing but also comments, thoughts and feelings they have about the site (you may need to prompt sometimes e.g. say ‘could you describe what you are doing now?’ or ‘what are you thinking about?’). Remember to explain that any comments or suggestions will be taken into consideration and treated with respect (even if they are negative).
* Ask if they have any questions. If not, begin the usability testing.
* The tutor will start the recording (screen, video and sound capture).
* Read out instructions for the initial exploration of your website.
* Where possible, just let them get on with the exploration without intervention.
* After a few minutes, ask them to stop the initial exploration.
* Now go on to the first task. Read out the scenario and action and ask the participant to begin.
* Where possible, just let them get on with the task without intervention (you may need to remind them of the task if they forget). Some groups choose to give a written copy of each task to the tester.
* Give testers a few minutes to undertake each task, whether they complete it or not.
* At the end of all the tasks the recording will be stopped by the tutor.
* Give the tester the post-test survey to complete.
* Thank them for their time (in real usability testing, any financial reward is usually give at this point).
* The tutor will give the group feedback on their performance and any issues highlighted in the testing.

## Writing up the results for your Portfolio

The recordings will be placed on the shared drive for you to review. The portfolio submission consists of the following (brief) report.

To create the report:

* Go through your recording.
* Note any relevant comments and actions, for example:
  + Could they complete the tasks?
  + Did they need help?
  + How much time did each action take?
  + Likes and Dislikes about the site.
  + Problems/obstacles such as not understanding what a link means, or the terminology used.
  + Overall observations, comments.
* Write up the responses from the post-test survey.
* Illustrate the above (recording and survey results) with relevant screen shots from the recordings.
* Write up your report, including the following details:
  + The website and features tested
  + Purpose of the usability testing
  + Usability testing framework (i.e. how many participants, the scenarios you used to test your site)
  + Results of the testing (i.e. the relevant comments and actions noted above, the post-test responses)
  + Include screen shots where appropriate to illustrate the above.
  + Recommendations for improvements to your site.

**It may be useful to repeat this whole exercise later in the development process, prior to launch/submission. If you do, make sure you document the results and add to your portfolio.**

**The report(s) form part of ACW1 SP5, the portfolio.**