Preface

User experience, or UX as it's often abbreviated, refers to all aspects of someone's interaction with a product, application, or system. Many people seem to think of the user experience as some nebulous quality that can't be measured or quantified. We think it can be. And the tools for measuring it are usability metrics such as the following:

- How long does it take users to make a flight reservation using a travel website?
- How many errors do users make in trying to log onto a system?
- How many users are successful when trying to instruct their digital video recorder that they want to record all episodes of their favorite TV show?
- How many users get into a new "destination-based" elevator without first choosing their desired floor, only to discover there are no floor buttons?
- How many users fail to notice the link on a web page that would let them do exactly what they want with only one click?
- How many users get frustrated trying to read the tiny serial number on the back of their new MP3 player when registering it?
- How many users are delighted by how easy it was to assemble their new bookcase that came with wordless instructions?

These are all examples of behaviors and attitudes that can be measured. Some may be easier to measure than others, but they can all be measured. Task success rates, task times, number of mouse clicks or keystrokes, self-reported ratings of frustration or delight, and even the number of visual fixations on a link on a web page are all examples of usability metrics. And these metrics can give you invaluable insight into the user experience.

Why would you want to measure the user experience? The answer is, to help you improve it. With most consumer products and websites these days, if you're not improving, you're falling behind. Usability metrics can help you determine where you stand relative to your competition and help you pinpoint where you should focus your improvement efforts—the areas that users find the most confusing, inefficient, or frustrating.

This book is a how-to guide, not a theoretical treatise. We provide practical advice about what usability metrics to collect in what situations, how to collect them, how to make sense of the data using various analysis techniques, and how to present the results in the clearest and most compelling way. We're sharing practical lessons we've learned from our 40+ combined years of experience in this field.

Measuring the User Experience is intended for anyone interested in improving the user experience for any type of product, whether it's a consumer product, computer system, application program, website, or something else altogether. If it's something people use, then you can measure the user experience associated

with it. Those who are interested in improving the user experience and who could benefit from this book come from many different perspectives and disciplines, including usability and user experience (UX) professionals, interaction designers, information architects, product designers, web designers and developers, software developers, graphic designers, marketing and market-research professionals, as well as project and product managers.

We hope you find this book helpful in your quest to improve the user experience for your products. We'd like to hear about your successes (and failures!). You can contact us through our website, *www.MeasuringUserExperience.com*. You will also find supplementary material there, such as the actual spreadsheets and graphs for many of the examples in this book, as well as information about tools that can help in measuring the user experience.

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