

User Experience Process

Plan

Understand

Specify

Produce

Evaluate

Measure

Evaluate Phase

The Evaluate phase of the user experience (UX) process tests the latest design with end users to determine if it meets the user’s requirements.

The design should be reviewed by the appropriate project leaders to ensure that the solution also meets the business objectives and technical constraints identified earlier in the process.

Evaluation activities should make sure:

- The project’s value proposition is covered and we have avoided any risk to veterans and clinicians.
- We have minimized the risk of incurring unnecessary costs due to rework or an ineffective design.

Typically, the design evolves through several iterations. Different UX methods are effective at providing insights, whether the design is a high-level concept model or a detailed interactive prototype.

Objectives

In the Evaluate phase, the team should:

- Define an overall evaluation plan for product design, including plans for each evaluation cycle.
- Identify inaccurate interpretations of interaction specifications.

Identify the design features that are likely to maximize usability while meeting the project’s value proposition and conforming to business and technical requirements.

- Minimize rework by fixing design defects prior to implementation.

Benefits

Key reasons to perform evaluations on potential designs for VHA products include:

- By ensuring that the design meets the needs and expectations of the end user, research can measure user-centered objectives like usability, accessibility, and avoidance of harm.
- Strong evaluation results often lead to increased end-user performance and, as a result, produce positive impact on organizational operations, reduced training and support costs, and reduced staffing costs.
- Creating products that are accessible by all users increases the size of the potential audience; that audience can be more diverse and serve a wider variety of roles in the organization.
- When there is potential harm based on a solution, evaluation research can increase the safety of veterans, reduce clinicians’ stress while using the product, and lower costs associated with user error.

Principles to follow

Regardless of the particular evaluation method used, there are several principles to follow when conducting product research with end users:

- Any evaluation should have predefined objectives, and generally those objectives should measure how well the design meets the value proposition defined in the Plan phase.
- To improve the validity of the evaluation’s results, the research should be conducted with targeted end users performing typical tasks in a work environment that simulates their clinical setting.
- A test plan for each round of evaluation is created and approved by the interdisciplinary project team. After the test, a report is created that includes descriptions of usability problems and recommendations for resolving them.

Get Started

Create a research plan

Each round of design evaluation should begin with a research plan. This plan outlines several key attributes of each evaluation cycle, including identifying:

- Research goals
- End-user profiles and context of use
- Evaluation methodology
- Roles of members of the research team

The plan helps teams conduct tests in a consistent manner and provides results that can be repeated or serve as a solid baseline for future rounds of research.

Choose an evaluation method

A variety of methods are available to conduct design research, including those performed in-person, remote with a researcher moderating the research, and unmoderated remote.

- In-person evaluation
- Usability testing
- Heuristic Evaluation
- Remote moderated
- TBD
- Remote unmoderated
- TBD

Clinical Uses

Conducting design evaluation within the VHA setting follows the typical evaluation process described above. In addition, the researcher should consider approach details that take into consideration the needs of veterans and clinicians in particular, as well as the nuances of a clinical setting.

Organizations within the VA have prescribed process details for particular scenarios. These include:

- **Clinical Limits of Use Tools (CLOUT) Process Guide:** Research teams have outlined specifics regarding examples of testing, as well as the principles behind such tests. CLOUT cites three types of evaluations: in-lab qualifying testing, controlled environment user testing, and single user community-based testing.

The CLOUT team suggests two principles that serve as the bases for all evaluation research: testing for worst case scenarios and documenting the test procedure so that future research can confirm the results of earlier test trials. Get more information.

Basics of Healthcare Failure Mode and Effect Analysis: In addition to evaluation of design products, VA teams often need to evaluate the redesign of clinical processes. One approach to process refinement is reviewing a process to determine where it might fail and what those implications might entail.

The VA Patient Safety team has created guidelines and samples for conducting failure identification and effect. These approaches include graphically describing the process, analyzing potential hazards, and identifying actions and outcomes to remedy the process failure points. Get more information.