**Page ID**: **#.# Common Usability Issues**

Primary Content

**Title**

Enter the **Title** of the **Method** here (REQUIRED).

**Common Usability Issues for Clinical Reminder Dialog Templates**

**Introduction**

Enter the **Introduction** here (REQUIRED).

Clinical reminder dialog templates (CRDT) are generally reviewed by two or more usability experts before they are rolled out nationally. The approach used by the reviewers is called a heuristic evaluation.

Heuristics are just rules of thumb — principles that tend to result in more user-friendly products.

We have highlighted a few usability issues commonly seen during these evaluations and explain how they go against the grain of one or more of these rules-of-thumb.

**In this section:**

Questions Formatted Inconsistently in the Note

Text Overflow for Selected Items Makes Note Hard to Read

The Required Format of Field Entry Is Not Clear

**Questions Formatted Inconsistently in the Note**

A screenshot of a cell phone

Description automatically generated

Figure 1

In figure 1, the top panel shows a series of yes/no questions that all have “yes” selected.

The middle panel in the figure shows inconsistent formatting of the questions and responses in the note.

* The first item drops the “yes” to the next line with an indent.
* The second item places the “yes” at the end of the same line.
* The third item is re-written in the form of a statement.

**Consistency and standards** applies here. Maintaining consistency is a good rule of thumb to follow because it makes the note more predictable and, as a result, easier to search and read.

The bottom panel is formatted more consistently. Dropping the response to the next line with an indent has the added benefit of spacing the text.

Because the note is less crowded with text, it is easier to read and more in keeping with another rule of thumb: **aesthetic and minimalist design**.

**Text Overflow for Selected Items Makes Note Hard to Read**

A screenshot of a cell phone

Description automatically generated

Figure 2

In figure 2, the top panel shows a series of statements checkmarked to be included in the note.

It also shows the resulting note below, which is difficult to read because there is no space between the items. Critically, the second item is long and overflows to the next line. The overflow makes it difficult to see.

**Aesthetic and minimalist design** applies here because the note is crowded with text. The rule of thumb is as much about the removal of extra information as it is about the amount of information packed into the available space.

The bottom panel shows how dashes can turn the text into a bulleted list. This breaks up the text and makes it easier to see each individual item. This solution can be used when a line break between items is not possible or not preferred.

**The Required Format of Field Entry Is Not Clear**

A screenshot of a cell phone

Description automatically generated

Figure 3

In figure 3, the top panel shows free text fields for date and weight. The template can be finished without generating an error message regardless of what is entered into these fields.

Two rules of thumb apply here: **Help and documentation** and **error prevention**.

Use of a date picker could protect against date entry errors, but not all situations have such a ready fix. A more general solution is to support the user by providing some instruction.

The bottom panel shows instructional text that tells the user how the date should be entered, what the proper unit is for weight, and that they do not need to enter the unit in the field.

**Excerpt**

Summary text for WordPress.

See highlights of a few usability issues with clinical reminder dialog templates and how to fix them.