# Pluralistic Usability Walkthrough

A Pluralistic Usability Walkthrough engages groups of representative users to walk through tasks scenarios, uncover usability issues, and discuss design solutions. This method permits discussions between representative users, subject matter experts, system developers, and usability specialists to find solutions to usability problems.  This method especially effective for evaluating early user interface designs (such as paper mock-ups); it has also been used to facilitate discussions between various user types with differing needs.

A usability assessment method employed to generate usability feedback on early designs by assigning a group of users a series of paper-based tasks that represent the proposed product interface. The assessment is pluralistic in that structured participation from the development team is encouraged.

A variation of this method leverages the group-assessment approach to achieve consensus on design solutions from representatives of different user types (ex. providers and pharmacists) or different locations (ex. small, large, and integrated VA medical center).

## Benefits

* Reduces test-redesign-retest cycle by generating immediate feedback and discussion of design problems and possible solutions while users are present.
* The group atmosphere encourages collaborative, constructive comments from users, developers, and other members of the product team.

## Limitations

* Only a few scenarios can be assessed during a single session.
* A fixed sequence of hard-copy panels limits the simulations that users can perform (no browsing or exploring alternative paths).
* Sessions require a highly skilled facilitator.

## Study Execution

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| **​Milestone** | **​Owner** |
| ​Initiate Kick-off Call | ​                                       HFE |
| Specify Study Objectives | ​                           Project Team / HFE |
| Create Scenarios of Use | Project Team / HFE |
| ​Provide UI mock-ups or system access | Project Team |
| ​Recruit Participants | ​                                 Project Team |
| ​Schedule Participants | ​                                        HFE |
| ​Conduct usability assessment | ​HFE |
| ​Analyze findings, write report | ​                                        HFE |
| ​Discuss findings and solutions | ​                            Project Team / HFE |

## Outcomes

* A list of potential usability problems.

Recommended improvements to UI designs based on collaboration between representative users, subject matter experts, system developers, and usability specialists.

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| **Phase of Development​** | |
| ​ | ​Planning, Scoping & Definition |
| ​**✔** | **​Requirements Gathering** |
| **✔** | **​Early Design** |
| **​** | ​Detailed Design & Development |
|  | ​Field Testing |
|  | ​Deployment |
| ​ | ​Post-Deployment |

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| **​Study Characteristics ​** | |
| ​**Timeframe** | 3-4 weeks |
| **​Level of Effort** | Medium |
| ​**Data Collection** | Attitudinal |
| ​**Data Reporting** | ​Qualitative |

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| **​Related Methods ​** | |
| **Derived from** | [**Ethnographic Study**](https://vaww.portal2.va.gov/sites/humanfactors/HFBoK/SitePages/Ethnographic%20Study.aspx) User Persona Development |
| ​Complimentary Methods | [**Heuristic Evaluation**](https://vaww.portal2.va.gov/sites/humanfactors/HFBoK/SitePages/Heuristic%20Evaluation.aspx) |
| ​Similar Methods | ​[**Participatory Heuristic Evaluation**](https://vaww.portal2.va.gov/sites/humanfactors/HFBoK/SitePages/Participatory%20Heuristic%20Evaluation.aspx) |
| ​Follow-Up | ​User Interface Design Usability Testing |

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| **Referenced on this page...** |
| Werner, B. and Wilson, C. (2005). Pluralistic Usability Walkthrough. In Usability Body of Knowledge. Retrieved February 1, 2014, Retrieved from [**http://usabilitybok.org/pluralistic-walkthrough**](http://usabilitybok.org/pluralistic-walkthrough) |