1.

Activity introduction

This activity will help you conduct a usability study for your high-fidelity prototype. A usability study is a research method that evaluates how easy it is for participants to complete tasks in a design. An effective usability study provides actionable feedback about your design, which helps you decide what to do next. In this activity, you'll be conducting a usability study for your portfolio project using the research plan you've already created as well as the hi-fi prototype that you've been working on.

At this point, you should have created a UX research plan and working high-fidelity prototype for your project. You'll use these resources to conduct your usability study. If you don't have a high-fidelity prototype and a research plan, you need to complete them before beginning this activity.

Before you begin the usability study, keep two things in mind:

- Consider what interaction issues users may encounter as they use your prototype, then test those things to make sure they work before conducting the usability study.
- Include considerations for assistive technology and other accessibility needs that participants may have
- Conduct your usability study using the device platform and screen size that you designed for, otherwise the prototype may not work the same way as it did when you were designing it.

With these considerations in mind, you're ready to conduct your usability study.

Step-by-step instructions

Step 1: Open the note-taking spreadsheet template

To use this template, click the link below and select "Use Template."

Link to template: note taking spreadsheet template

OR

If you don't have a Google account, you can download the template directly from the attachment below.

Google UX Design Certificate - Note taking spreadsheet [Template]
XLSX File

Step 2: Instruct participants to complete each task

Now it's time for your interviews. An interview is the portion of a usability study where you give your participants usability tasks, then ask them follow-up questions about their experience.

By now, you should have five participants that represent your user group who have agreed to take part in the study. Now it's time to read the script from your research plan to each participant.

After welcoming the participant and letting them settle in, confirm that you have their permission to record and use the interview. Then, present them with the tasks and follow-up questions in your script. Remember to take notes throughout the interview so you can revisit important things that participants mentioned.

As a usability study moderator, be sure to:

Ask questions that are open-ended and encourage elaboration

Ask follow-up questions whenever possible

Summarize the participant’s answers for confirmation

Encourage participants to think out loud

Phrase everything neutrally so it doesn’t sound like you’re making assumptions

Phrase questions identically for each participant to avoid skewed data

Avoid helping participants with tasks and explaining how parts of the design work

Take detailed notes on each participant’s behaviors, questions, and feedback

Your goal during these interviews is to learn as much as possible about what users feel and experience while interacting with your design. Encourage your participants to elaborate as much as possible in order to understand the motivations behind their actions and feelings.

Step 3: Record interview feedback

Using your note taking spreadsheet, organize your observations by column, with one column for each participant. Record your observations in each row of the column the current participant’s name is in.

When organizing the notes from your interviews, think about:

How easy or difficult it is for the participant to complete their tasks

What tone of voice or attitude the participant has while completing a task

How useful the participant believes the product is

Meaningful quotes that summarize the participant’s experience

Whether the participant is frustrated or speaking in a positive tone

Your thoughts and impressions on the participant’s overall experience

Add your observations for Participant A to the corresponding column in the spreadsheet, then do the same for the other participants in their own columns. Here’s an example:

	Participant A	Participant B	Participant C	Participant D	Participant E
Sees uses for labels					
Doesn't see uses for labels					
Knows how to get started					
Confused how to get started					
Has a hard time knowing what to do first to create a label					
Feels frustrated getting started					
Has trouble changing the color of the "Shopping" label					
Has trouble finding the 3 dots for the sub-menu					
Frustrated finding where to add a sublabel					
Speaks in a positive tone					
Speaks in an indifferent tone					
Speaks in a frustrated tone					
Speaks in an annoyed or impatient tone					
Speaks in a confident tone					
Observation					
Observation					
Observation					
Observation					
Observation					
Observation					
Observation					

Next, look at the participants’ behaviors, questions, and feedback. Input the number one into the field that corresponds with the behavior or attitude you’ve observed, like this:

	Participant A	Participant B	Participant C	Participant D	Participant E
Sees uses for labels		1	1		1
Doesn't see uses for labels	1			1	
Knows how to get started			1	1	
Confused how to get started	1				1
Has a hard time knowing what to do first to create a label	1				1
Feels frustrated getting started	1				
Has trouble changing the color of the "Shopping" label	1				1
Has trouble finding the 3 dots for the sub-menu	1		1		1
Frustrated finding where to add a sublabel	1				1
Speaks in a positive tone		1	1		1
Speaks in an indifferent tone				1	
Speaks in a frustrated tone	1				
Speaks in an annoyed or impatient tone	1				
Speaks in a confident tone		1			
Observation					
Observation					
Observation					
Observation					
Observation					
Observation					
Observation					

If you observe a behavior that has not already been identified in the spreadsheet, add a new row for the observation.

The example above also uses different colors to help separate your feedback into categories. Here's one way to do this:

Opinions on the product's usefulness. These are indicated in red.

Ease or difficulty completing the assigned tasks. These types of behaviors are indicated in blue.

Attitude, or tone of voice, when completing the assigned tasks. These are indicated in green.

Step 5: Reflect on the completion of this activity

Once you've finished your interviews and organized your notes, ask yourself if you've satisfied the following criteria:

- Did you interview five distinct people?
- Did you ask open-ended interview questions and didn't lead the user towards answering in any particular way?
- Did you account for accessibility and other inclusive design observations when interviewing and analyzing the data?
- Did you take notes in the note taking template?
- Did you carefully summarize user behaviors, questions, and feedback?

If you didn't answer "yes" to any of the questions, go back and make sure to address anything you missed.