1.

Activity introduction

This activity will help you create a research plan so you can conduct a usability study on the high-fidelity prototype you created for your portfolio project. A research plan is a step-by-step examination of when, where, how, and why a usability study will be conducted. Research plans are essential to conducting a successful usability study that identifies the parts of a design that are usable, and the parts that need to be refined or adjusted.
A complete research plan has seven steps:

. Project Background: What led you to conduct the research and why it's needed

. Research Goals: What the desired outcome of the research is

. Research Questions: The questions the study is trying to answer

. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs): Measurements of progress toward a research goal

. Methodology: The steps you take to conduct your research

. Participants: The people who will participate in your usability study

. Script: A list of tasks and follow-up questions given to participants during the usability study

In the activity, you'll create your own research plan to conduct a usability study on the high-fidelity prototype you've been working on by following these steps. If you've completed the previous courses in order, you should be familiar with research plans. If you want to brush up on your research plan knowledge, review the video on planning usability studies ⧉.

Step-by-step instructions

To complete a research plan for your project, follow the instructions below:
Step 1: Access the template

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

Link to template: UX Research Study - Plan [Template] ⧉.
OR

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

⌲ Google UX Design Certificate - UX Research Study Plan [Template]
DOCX File

Step 2: Write the project background
In the Project Background panel of your research plan template, write a short explanation of why you're doing this research. You can do this by answering each question in order. This puts your team on the same page at the beginning of the study and demonstrates that you understand why you're conducting the research.

Introduction	• **Title:** A few words about the focus of the study • **Author:** Your full name, job title or role, and email address on one line • **Stakeholders**: List the names of project stakeholders and their roles • **Date**: Update the date listed every time you edit this plan • **Project background**: What led you to conduct this research?

Step 3: Identify research goals

Next, write down your research goal or goals in the space provided. Your research goals should address what problems you're trying to solve by conducting this research, or what you expect the outcome of the research to be. Since you're working with a high-fidelity prototype, ask yourself what you want to find out at this stage in the design cycle. What is important to learn more about?

Research goals	• What design problems are you trying to solve for the user and/or the business? • How will the results of the research affect your design decisions?

Step 4: Create 5-7 research questions

Now, come up with research questions and write them in the corresponding panel of the template. These questions should represent the questions you're trying to answer by conducting this research and should support your research goals. Keep the number of questions manageable so your research has a clear focus and doesn't become scattered.

Note that your research questions aren't the same questions you will ask your usability study participants in the interview stage. Research questions help you decide what questions are important to answer as a result of your research, rather than questions you ask usability study participants directly.

Research questions	• What are the questions your research is trying to answer? • Pro tip: Five research questions is a solid place to start. Do not include more than 7-10 research questions.

Step 5: Choose KPIs to measure

Using the template, write down 2-3 KPIs that will help you measure your progress towards your research goal.

There are six types of KPIs that are typically used in UX research:

Time on task: How long it takes a user to complete a task

NOTE: Time on task may change depending on whether the user uses assistive technologies or has other accessibility needs

Use of navigation vs. search: The number of users who navigate casually compared to those who use the search function

User error rates: How often users make mistakes

Drop-off rates: The number of users who give up without accomplishing a goal

Conversion rates: The number of users who reach their goal successfully

System Usability Scale (SUS): A series of 10 questions evaluating how easy your product is to use

Think about what parts of your design you want feedback on, and what will help you evaluate progress made towards your research goals.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	• How can you measure progress toward the research goals? • KPIs might include: Time on task, use of navigation vs. search, user error rates, drop-off rates, conversion rates, system usability scale (SUS), etc.

Step 6: Propose a methodology
Decide on a methodology for your usability study. Here, you'll address how your study will be conducted and what you'll do with the data once it's collected. Choosing a methodology is important because it affects how your data is gathered and the questions you will ask your participants during interviews.
Your methodology should include:

Procedures for running the test

The time and location of the test

The person who will be conducting the test

The way the test will be conducted

The methodology should clearly demonstrate what you did, how you did it, and why you did it so that stakeholders and other designers can understand how you conducted the research.

Methodology	• How will you collect data? How will you analyze the data once you get it? • The methodology should be detailed so that other researchers can understand what you did, the choices you made, and the limitations of the methods employed to decide if or when further research is needed.

Step 7: Choose participants
When recruiting participants for your usability study, you want to have a small group of participants in your study that represent your key user group, as well as user groups that are often marginalized.
The participants section of your UX research study plan should have:

Primary characteristics of people you'll recruit to participate

Justification for why you chose your target group

Considerations for users who use assistive technologies and have other accessibility needs

Take some extra time to think about who your study participants will be. Since you're designing an app focused on social good, you should probably include study participants who are members of the community you're trying to serve. They can give you authentic and direct feedback about whether your designs meet the needs of the community and if they're able to use your product effectively.

Participants	• Who will you include in this study? What characteristics do the participants have? Why did you choose them? • Note: If you're intentionally including specific populations (e.g., users with diverse abilities and perspectives), be clear about the needs of the study.

Step 8: Write a usability study script
In the last panel of your research plan template, write a script for your usability study. These are the tasks and questions you will present to your participants. They will complete each task, then respond to your follow-up questions. Implementing this script is how you will gather your data, so keep your script aligned with the goals and ideas in the rest of the research plan.
Your script should include:

An introduction

A warm up to help the participants settle in

Specific tasks related to your research goals

Follow-up questions for each task

Script	• What questions will you ask study participants?

When you're finished, you should have all seven panels of the research plan template filled out. If you need to review UX research plans in detail, revisit the Course 7 video on planning usability studies⤴ and the reading that covers usability study planning in

further detail