

YouTube Subscription Test

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Introduction

YouTube is a platform where people can watch any number of videos. There are videos that give in-depth guides on how to forge a blade from Damascus steel, to videos explaining each and every conspiracy theory. It is a well of both useful and not-so-useful knowledge.

I have conducted a Concurrent Think Aloud (CTA) test, using my laptop and a fresh YouTube account, to test how well users can subscribe to the channels that they wish to watch on a daily basis. I was present in the testing rooms, though I made sure to sit out of sight. These sessions were focused on surveying participants' ability to follow the instructions given to them.

Executive Summary

I conducted a CTA test in two places. One was my mother's office, and the other place was the dining room at my Grandparents' house. The tests in the office were conducted on the 28th of October, 2020, and the dining room interviews were conducted on the 29th of October, 2020. There were four participants, two of which are in their fifties, and the other two are in their eighties.

Each participant was not given a time frame to work in, and I did not time them as I felt the age gap would bias how fast they interact with the laptop in use and YouTube. Also, this test was not to see how fast they were able to complete the instructions but to see what parts they found confusing, and how to also see how the Older generations were able to navigate these instructions and YouTube itself. In general, the participants brought forward relatively the same questions and concerns, but after the concerns were addressed the majority were able to make their way through the instructions.

The concerns that were brought up included:

- How to return to the YouTube home screen.
- Which video to click on (Many of the participants asked "Does it matter which video I click on?").
- Lack of clarity when it comes to the photos (I.e photos were fuzzy).
- Confusion over photo labels.

Participants

All participants were family members of mine. Two of the participants are my parents (A male and a female), who are both in their fifties, and the other two participants are my grandparents (male and female), both of which are in their eighties. I tested my parents on October 28th, and my grandparents on October 29th. Participants were chosen based on two reasons. One was their age, I wanted to see how the elderly and middle-aged people would respond to the instructions, and follow these instructions in an application they are not all that familiar with. There were some candidates who have had experience on YouTube, but none of them have used the subscribe feature until this point.

Methodology

Participants were recruited based on the knowledge I had of their age and their usage of YouTube. I recruited all participants verbally, two were face-to-face while the other two were over the phone. During these conversations the date and time the tests were to take place were established, I also gave them a brief overview of the things they were to be doing.

Before the testing began, each participant was given a sheet of paper that had the instructions on them and had a laptop placed in front of them that had YouTube already opened onto the Home screen. During the setup, I gave the participants another overview of what these instructions were looking for and asked them to think aloud while they were working their way through.

- Sat behind them as they took the test.
- Tried to stay out of the way, but if someone was struggling for too long I would intervene. (Made sure to take note of the instance.)
- Took notes about the things they were saying

Results

Task One

- The first task was completed with little to no issues.
- Everyone asked if it mattered which video they clicked on on the Home Screen page.
- After finding which video to look at the rest of the first part of the instructions went off smoothly.

Task Two

- This is where some of the road bumps came into play
- Everyone asked how to return to the home screen.
- Everyone spent multiple minutes looking over the pictures on the instructions. Probably due to some fuzz in the images.
- There was a lot of time flipping between the pages. As the participants were trying to continue to read the instructions, and then go back when the instructions mentioned a previous photo. Definitely slowed the process down.

Post Test General Questions

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Percent Agree
The overall flow of the instructions was easy to follow.		2	2	50%
The images in the instructions aided in the instructions (After they were able to read them properly)			4	100%
The images in the instructions were clear and easy to read.	1	1	2	50%
The text in the instructions aided in the following of the instructions		1	3	75%

Suggestions

Change	Justification	Severity
Adjust instructions so they fit on fewer pages.	All candidates spent time scrolling up and down a lot to look at past figures.	Low
Improving Picture Quality	50% of candidates were seen leaning into the computer screen when looking at images.	Medium.
Indicate how to return to "Home Screen"	During the second part of the tasks, candidates did not know how to return to the home screen which stopped them from progressing.	High
Indicate which video to click, Potentially adding a video link in the instructions to ease the process.	<p>In the first round of tasks, The majority of the candidates asked if it mattered which video they clicked on when it did not.</p> <p>This was something that everyone asked before they began to do anything.</p>	High

Conclusion

During their time testing the instructions on how to subscribe to YouTube, many of the candidates were able to make it through with relatively little confusion. The first section of the instructions was said to be easy to follow, and after minor questions went smoothly. After working with the candidates, it was found that the second section of the instructions is where the majority of the issues came into play, but through their help and recommendations the second part of the instructions was made smoother, and hopefully more user-friendly towards an older audience.