

Usability Testing Guide

This week, Week 7, we will conduct usability testing. For this assignment you will create a usability script and notes grid document. You will use these to conduct the usability test and capture notes. Then next week, Week 8, we will take the time to analyze the results, synthesize them, and create a Key Findings document.

You may choose between two options for this assignment. You can either:

- 1) Perform a usability test on the wireframes that you created as part of Assignment 6
- 2) Perform a usability test on a website or app that relates to your research topic area. For example, if you are building a workout scheduling app, you could do a usability test of the Peloton app.

The important thing for this assignment is that you practice the skills of writing effective tasks and moderating a usability test remotely.

Moderated Remote Usability Testing

Usability testing comes in many different forms. Some may regularly rely on on-the-spot testing, while others may have usability labs. We will be conducting ours as moderated remote studies (as opposed to unmoderated, see our readings for more details on this), which comes with its own unique set of benefits, challenges, and constraints.

Conducting our usability testing will be very similar to the methods we utilized during our interviews at the beginning of the semester. I highly recommend reviewing any notes you have from then or rereading the Conducting Good Interviews PDF. We will be utilizing a lot of the same methods here. The difference is that rather than following an interview script, we will be following our Usability Testing Plan and our Simple Usability Test script template.

You'll need to first decide what you want to test. You can either test wireframes that you created as part of a previous assignment or choose a website or app that is related to your research topic. This is an accepted practice when you want to better understand how well the competition's offering is working and what you could do to improve upon it for your own.

Usability Test Plan

Before you begin the planning, I highly recommend everyone in the group read the following provided links in this order:

1. Validating Product Design Ideas with Low-Fidelity Wireframes
2. Usability Testing
3. Planning a Usability Test
4. Scenarios
5. Running a Usability Test

This way, everyone starts from the same basic understanding of what your goals are here and how to approach them.

Usability Test Plan Requirements

These elements are what I will be looking for in your W07GroupName-UsabilityTestPlan:

- Scope: First things first, you want to be very specific about what you're testing and why.
- Purpose: I suggest starting with a hypothesis to test and then formulate why you want to test that (your concerns), the questions you want to focus on answering, and then the goals for the test (to what end are you collecting this data and how will the data be applied).
- Schedule: Though the Planning a Usability Study PDF I've had you read specifies and location, location is not necessary for us because it will all be remote and it will all be different. That said, you should know it is normally a requirement. As for schedule. All testing should be completed by Sunday night so you all have time to analyze, synthesize, and update the designs in order to test again for week 8 (if you can do this sooner the better that way there is little work to be done over the holiday).
- Sessions: My recommendation is that your sessions take no longer than 45 minutes. While the Planning a Usability Study PDF I've provided suggested 60 to 90 minutes, and yes that is typical for a standard test, we are testing low-fidelity work and only 3 screens, so it shouldn't take as long.
- Equipment: Though this is a necessary thing to call out for most tests, here it's slightly different. We are doing everything remotely. So, I would call out a Remote Session using Zoom and static low-fidelity screens shared to the users home computer. That said, I do recommend that you work with people who are using a laptop or desktop and not a mobile device as it will be harder to share your screen with people otherwise.
- Participants: We will be testing this twice, so it will be 2 participants per group member. If you want to recruit from a wide base online, I definitely recommend creating a screener (you can do this via a Google form). Be sure to include in the screen questions that will either include or exclude your participant as well as availability and nothing more. Due to our unique situation, if you have someone you know who fits the criteria, it is fine to do convenience sampling for class purposes. I would however, not suggest doing so for a proper study if you can avoid it.
- Roles: Document who the moderator and the note taker are for each session (make sure you switch off).
- Test Metrics: it is good to identify these ahead of time. Review the Planning a Usability Study article for examples.

When complete, you will have a document titled W07GroupNameUsabilityTestPlan. This will be what you and your partner will use for conducting their usability tests.

Usability Testing Script & Notes Grid Requirements

Script

- Introduction and rapport-building questions
- Scenarios & tasks: I recommend 3-5 for this study. We are testing very early work to get direction. There is no need to do more than that. Review [slides 24-33](#) in the Usability Testing slide deck on how to create effective tasks.
- Wrap-up final questions
- Review the [script template](#) to see examples of the sections

Notes Grid

- Create a spreadsheet with a row for each question and scenario.
- Use the columns for each participant.
- Review the [notes grid template](#) to see an example.

Running a Usability Test

I've provided an article titled Running a Usability Test. There they give two options for how to run the test, either Concurrent Think Aloud (CTA) and Probing (CP) or Retrospective Think Aloud (RTA) and Probing (RP). I recommend going ahead and doing the CTA/CP method as I think you'll get a lot more out of it in this context. That said, were there to be multiple tests run in a lab by an experienced team who were all doing them together, a RTA/RP strategy would likely make more sense.

Before you conduct your first usability test, I recommend working together to run through the script remotely with a friend or family member. This is called piloting the test and it will help you and your partner feel more comfortable with it as well as work out any issues you may experience. You can adjust the script and scenarios as necessary after this pilot test.

As with our interviews, be sure to provide your testers with a consent document (you can revise the one used for the interviews if necessary), which they need to sign and return prior to the test. When you start the test, be sure to ask if it is still a good time to do so and ask for permission to record. Also remember how to ask questions and probe. Refer back to the Conducting Good Interviews PDF from Week 3 if you need to. Most of all, please make sure you tell your tester that we are testing the wireframes or site and NOT THEM and that there are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions.

After your recordings are complete, please upload them and provide a link to them at the end of your Usability Test Plan.

Turning it all in

All together you should have three documents. Only one set needs to be turned in for the group.

- W07GroupName-UsabilityTestPlan
- W07GroupName-UsabilityScript
- W07GroupName-UsabilityNotesGrid