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Assignment 8 Usability testing

1. Why is it usually sufficient to have just 5 users in a single usability test?

The first user often provides the most insightful feedback, with the second and third users offering additional perspectives. Beyond that, the fourth and fifth users tend to contribute fewer valuable insights. Testing with more than 5 users often leads to redundancy in feedback already provided by the initial users. By limiting the test group to 5 users, we can save time and resources, allowing for more efficient iteration of designs and testing with fresh user groups. Rapidly iterating and improving designs proves more beneficial than testing with more than 5 users.

2. In what kind of cases do you need significantly more test users than 5?

For tasks like surveys and card sorting, where quantitative data is crucial for statistical significance, a larger sample size is necessary. However, in usability testing aimed at gathering qualitative insights, the emphasis is on quality over quantity. Therefore, exceeding 5 users is typically unnecessary.

3. What requirements are there for well-defined tasks in the test (the second video)?

- Provide contextual background for the tasks.
- Ensure tasks are realistic and easily understandable.
- Establish clear but not overly specific goals.
- Define qualitative and quantitative criteria for success, including:
 - Completion rate
 - Error rate
 - Time to success
 - Satisfaction levels with the tasks, the overall test, and the product/services.

Usability test demo: Zipcar website

1. What were the two tasks given to the test user?

Task 1: Determine the monthly cost based on the user's specific usage.

Task 2: Locate the availability of a car.

2. Did you pick some of the same problems the video's author did?

Yes I did

3. What other problems did you note, if any? What design changes would you propose?

The initial task for the user is to grasp the website's purpose upon landing. It's interesting to examine Zipcar's early example when car-sharing was a new concept. The user's primary

challenge was confusion over whether the website facilitated car purchases. The button 'Find more cars near you' lacked clarity, leaving the user uncertain, and also regarding its relevance to the iPhone app. Numerous elements on the website remained unclear to the user.

For the two primary usability tasks, generally I think:

- Finding information is challenging due to numerous pathways, leading to confusion.
- Users experience cognitive overload from excessive new terminology and lengthy text, impeding comprehension.
- There's a lack of interactive aids to assist users in decision-making and interaction.

Specifically for Task 1, there are several issues:

- The abundance of options, such as viewing rates and plans or exploring cities, leads to confusion. I'd suggest reducing the number of options, or better to walk users through a step by step calculation for suitable options.
- Users struggle with understanding abbreviations like EVP (Extra Value Plan), highlighting poor clarity in design.
- It would improve user experience if the cost calculation was automated on the screen instead of requiring manual input. However, users were eventually able to calculate the plan's cost.

For Task 2, locating car availability posed several challenges:

- Clicking "Find car" led to locating cars by location rather than availability, causing confusion.
- The map interface was cumbersome, making it difficult to find the user's neighborhood and control the map.
- Users resorted to typing in their neighborhood, eventually finding nearby cars and rates. However, encountering different rates than expected eroded trust and led to user frustration, potentially resulting in abandonment.
- Although availability information was found later in the FAQ, users desired more specific and readily accessible information.