project #2:
usability/accessibility protocols (15%)

Before you develop your own usable, accessible content, we will spend time discussing usability and accessibility issues of pre-existing digital texts. For your second project, you will create a collection of customized usability and accessibility testing steps and procedures. These steps and procedures—sometimes called protocols—are meant to guide usability and accessibility testing. Testing allows professional communicators better understand how users (consumers and readers) experience the documents, software, digital tools, or manufactured products that we test. It is vital to learn whether users find the tested documents usable and/or accessible.

A lot falls under the umbrella of usability and accessibility research. Manufactured products (e.g., office chairs, airline seats) undergo usability research in a specific area of practiced (ergonomics). As professional writers, we care about ergonomics because we often prepare the documentation that accompanies these products in various commercial, governmental, or nongovernmental applications.

Professional communicators often care about the usability and accessibility of digital and print media generally—whether or not these accompany manufactured products. It is this area of general practice that will guide our work the rest of this semester.

"Dogbert the Product Designer" // Dilbert Comics

requirements.

1. usability testing protocol. Based on the guidelines outlined by Krug, you will design the first protocol to evaluate **usability** of most digital/print projects.

2. accessibility testing protocol. Based on accessibility principles (and the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines: http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/), you will design the second protocol to evaluate **accessibility** of most digital/print projects.

Each protocol should comprise a minimum of 15 generic (i.e., adaptable) questions to which specific project-related details can be added. Remember, the protocols you design must be adaptable for most digital/print projects. The users of these protocols are other usability and accessibility testing administrators seeking models for testing the usability and accessibility of digital/print projects with real or simulated users.

You will be assessed on the following:

- **Content:** Your protocols should be grounded in the readings we've done about usability and accessibility. Each protocol should consider both qualitative (rhetorical) and quantitative (technical) aspects of testing. Try not to think about word count; instead, think of the wording of your questions and the effectiveness of other visual cues in your protocols.

- **Context:** Each protocol must provide a space for explaining context: what is the rhetorical situation of these protocols? for whom are they written?

- **Headings & Subheadings:** Your protocols themselves should be usable and accessible. Use headings and formatting to guide readers through steps and chunk information.

- **Professional Design:** Your protocols should be clean, legible, and follow the four principles of design: contrast, repetition, alignment, and proximity.

Your two protocols should be submitted to Google Classroom as separate Google Docs. Project #2 is due Friday, 2/19 by 8am.