

PREPARING FOR PAPER PROTOTYPE TESTING

CREATING A TASKS LIST

You test a paper prototype by making up tasks and scenarios, usually all related to navigation.

Examples:

- "How would you find _____?"
- "What would you expect to see when you click on this link?"

First you choose the tasks to test—the things you want them to try to do.

Examples:

- Book an appointment online
- Find contact information
- Purchase a chainsaw

The first step is to jot down a list of the *most important tasks* that people need to be able to do on your app.

Make a list of 3–5 of the most important things people need to be able to do when using your app.

DECIDE WHICH TASKS TO TEST

Once you have your tasks list, you need to decide which ones you want to test.

Your choice of which tasks to test is based on these factors:

What are your most critical tasks? These are the things that people must be able to do. If they can't do them, your app will be a failure. For instance, if you're selling books online, people need to be able to find books they're interested in and they have to be able to pay for them.

What's worrying you about your app design? What are the things that you suspect people are going to have trouble with? Do you think something may be confusing or unclear to users?

PAPER PROTOTYPING TEMPLATES:

sneakpeekit.com
sketchize.com
sketchsheets.com

CREATE SCENARIOS

Convert the task description into a script that the user can read, understand, and follow

Example:

Task: Complete a purchase

Scenario: You need to buy a chainsaw in preparation for the zombie apocalypse. It needs to be a gas-powered saw as there likely won't be electricity during the apocalypse and you need it delivered as soon as possible in case the undead begin to rise. Order the chainsaw with rush shipping.

A scenario provides some context ("You are...", "You need to...") and supplies information the user needs to know (e.g., username and password for a test account).

Don't go overboard: trim any detail that doesn't contribute to the scenario.

You have to phrase each scenario so that it's clear, unambiguous, and easy to understand. Write each scenario using common words that don't appear on the screen—if you do, you turn the task into a simple game of word-finding.

Remember: You are not asking for feedback (What do you think?) or opinions (Do you like this?). You are asking people to figure something out to see if they can navigate your app.

Once you have your scenarios worked out, print them, one per page, so you can give them to your test participants.

CREATING THE PAPER PROTOTYPES

Once you have your scenarios worked out, it is time to assemble your paper prototypes (if you haven't already).

When testing the prototypes, you need to prepare every screen, dropdown, dialogue, etc., that the user may encounter. You can do this by drawing multiple screens or by creating extra pages that you overlap on the page.

The nice thing about paper prototyping is that if something isn't working, you can literally sketch out a solution and test it on the spot with the next person.

Pro Tip: Bring extra template sheets, a ruler, pencil, and scissors with you so you can change your design on the fly!