

Conducting Usability Tests with Prototypes

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You have a paper prototype. Now What?

Usability study vs test

- Usability Study
 - Is a SERIES of tests with a give interface and a set of tasks to test.
- Usability Test
 - Just one session with a user.

- Determine the goals of the testing—what do you want to learn?
- Who are your users? Define them so recruitment can begin.
- Create tasks around things that those users do.
- Create the paper prototype pieces needed to perform those tasks
- Hold internal walkthroughs to prepare for testing.
- Conduct usability tests, refining the prototype after each test.
- Establish priorities for the issues found
- Plan additional changes to the interface
- Communicate with your team your findings.

Terminology

- At some companies, the same person who designs the interface also codes it, tests it, and maybe helps with documentation, and support.
- Other companies distinguish between designers and developers. In some there are many:
 - graphic designers
 - interaction designers
 - software designers
 - instructional designers
 - ... see the problem of this approach?

Terminology

- designer: someone that figures out what it should do or be.
- developer: the person that makes it work.

Make a list of your questions

- Create a list of questions about the product.
- Think about:
 - What are you least sure about?
 - What are the design decisions that you have still to make?
 - If you have already shown the prototype out, what is the most negative feedback you received?
 - What tasks are crucial for your users, even if they are done infrequently?

Define good tasks!!!

- Is based on a goal that matters to the user profile you've chosen.
- Covers questions that are important for the success of your product.
- Has appropriate scope. Not too broad, not too specific either.
- Has a finite and predictable set of solutions.
- Has a clear point that the user can recognise
- Elicits action, not just opinion.

Tasks: Use a Template

Task <#>:	<Task Name>
Goals/Output:	What will users have accomplished when they're done with the task? Is there some tangible output? How will they know the task is complete? What might the users do to be sure?
Inputs/ Assumptions	List all the information and resources — tangible and intangible — that a user would need to complete a task. eg. valid login, business policies. Physical objects. The assumptions are the conditions and prerequisites that are in place at the start of the task.
Steps:	Write down the steps you expect the user to go through to complete the task. This helps you create the pieces of prototype needed.
Time to Expert:	Estimate the time an expert (someone on your team) will take to complete the task.
Instructions to User:	Do this last after the Task Card Template is finished.
Note:	Extra stuff, like reasons to do the task, how you'll conduct it, etc. Write down everything that you might think you'll need during testing.

ASK ME FOR A PDF TEMPLATE FILE

Task 2:	Get 2 Tracks on MP3 player
Goals/Output:	At the end the user should have 2 extra tracks on his mp3 device that he loves.
Inputs/ Assumptions	mp3 player Received email confirmation of registration on website (task 1)
Steps:	go to [site].com go to music section search and browse for music listen download to device detecting device listen on device to confirm success.
Time to Expert:	5 minutes
Instructions to User:	“Choose 2 songs you like and put them in your portable MP3 player”
Note:	Prototype won't have music they like (probably), at that point we'll tell them to pick some music they recognise. If they get no results, do they understand why?

EXAMPLE

Number of Users

- Rule of Thumb - Between 5 and 8 users will give you data to see the main patterns.



Tips: Reserve Time for Testing

- If you plan that your expert will take 5 minutes to complete a task, expect your user to take somewhere between 4—10 times more.
- Make sure tasks are not too long << 30min.

Conducting the Tests

- **Think Aloud** - Ask the users to articulate their thoughts as they work on the task.
- **Taping tests.** More useful in Computer prototyping. In paper prototyping things go more slowly and therefore give you more time to register. In any case **video** is a great tool.