

Usability Tests in a Nutshell:
The Six Steps for Success



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What is a usability test?

- ▶ A **usability test** involves putting your users in front of the product and observing what they do



Conducting your first test

- ▶ Usability testing is not a science
 - Anyone can conduct a usability test
 - You can't conduct an "incorrect" test
 - Testing any user is better than testing no one
- ▶ Goals: Observe problems users experience with product and listen to questions users ask



Six steps for a usability test



Step 1: Plan the test

- ▶ You can't test everything
 - Focus on what is most essential to learn
- ▶ Schedule a **planning meeting** with stakeholders to:
 - Define the goals of the test
 - Outline research questions
 - Discuss user profile and major tasks
- ▶ Write a **test plan** based on info gathered from meeting



Sections of a test plan

- ▶ Goals of the study
- ▶ Research questions and issues
- ▶ User profile
- ▶ Test method
- ▶ Schedule
- ▶ Tasks
- ▶ Data to collect

Step 2: Find users

- ▶ Recruiting the right users is key to success
- ▶ User demographics are typically not an important characteristic of users
- ▶ Focus on recruiting for user behaviors

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Focus on behaviors

Where to find users

- ▶ Your existing customer database
- ▶ Craigslist
- ▶ Friends and family
- ▶ Friends of other users
- ▶ User groups
- ▶ Temp or real estate agencies
- ▶ Recruitment firms

Step 3: Write realistic tasks

- ▶ Provide users with tasks and scenarios
- ▶ Tasks should focus on business and user goals

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What do users typically want to accomplish?

Step 4: Facilitate the tests

- ▶ Observe users' behavior when interacting with the product
- ▶ Facilitator is responsible for:
 - The safety and comfort of users
 - Gathering the data from the test
 - Analyzing the data

Questions to ask

- ▶ Is that what you expected?
- ▶ What are you thinking?
- ▶ What are you trying to accomplish?
- ▶ What does this mean to you?
- ▶ Can you say more about that?

Step 5: Analyze the data

- ▶ The type of analysis will depend on the type of test you're running and the goal of the test
- ▶ Formative test: Identify problems with product and iterate
 - Focus on qualitative data and prioritizing observations
- ▶ Summative test: Demonstrate success of design
 - Establish success metrics before test

Step 6: Communicate results

- ▶ Reports
- ▶ Highlight video
- ▶ Presentations and workshops
- ▶ Working meetings with project team
- ▶ Email or internet dashboard

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