

Step 13: Evaluate usability prototype iterations.

Purpose of this step:

To get some quick and early feedback on the usability of previously build prototypes.

Overview:

- Plan the test and develop supporting materials.
- Run the test with users and collect data as specified in the test plan.
- Analyze and interpret the data and formulate redesign recommendations.

End tests include:

- Modify the Screen Design Standard
- Modify the prototype.
- Modify the test plan and materials.

Practical application of these principles to your site:

- Decide on ease of learning/focus
 - Guided by your user profile, one will have to focus on user criteria for the screens going through iterations
- Decide on user and task focus for the test
 - Decide which group of users you will be testing on first and iterate though the screens through their eyes. These are broad user groups; clerk, data entry, administrator, mechanic etc..
- Design test tasks
 - Recruit actual users to sit down and help you design test tasks
 - These tasks should aim at aspects of usability goals, not interface tasks to achieve those goals.
- Design the test and develop test materials
 - Plan the exact sequence of events for the test.
 - Schedule test sessions
 - Include: Observer Briefing, Welcome, Introduction, Pretest questionnaire, Training, Video permission form, Test tasks, Data collection sheets, Posttest questionnaire, Data analysis summaries.
- Design and assemble test environment
 - Provide a dedicated lab where the tester can view the user under controlled conditions.
- Recruit pilot test users

- Two – Three users.
- Run pilot test
- Revise test procedure
- Recruit more testers
- Three – Ten per iteration.

Conducting the Test

- Run the test and collect data.
 - Follow a script, make sure to treat each user identically. Take notes and video tape the process if possible
 - Encourage users to talk out loud during their interaction with the prototype.
 - Ask what and why they are doing what they are doing.
- Summarize Data
 - Find a way to summarize the massive amount of data one will collect into a individual report per user.
- Analyze and interpret data
 - Focus on areas where the data seems to indicate a problem
 - High frequency of errors, too much time spent on a task.
- Draw Conclusions and formulate recommended design changes
- Document and present results
 - Required to evolve the next iteration of prototypes and standards

Examples: See examples of this step in the “Examples” folder.