Usability Testing Basics

Here is a quick reference guide on usability testing. Also keep in mind what your limits are and how feasible any testing is within those limits.

Know Your Basics

SEE: Take the time to SEE the site where users perform their tasks.

Say: Listen to what users SAY about how they perform their tasks.

Do: Watch what users DO to perform their tasks

Iterate with as many design phases as feasible.

Know the Numbers

- 5 users catches 85% of design issues
- 10 users hits 98% of issues
- 15 users hits 99.9% of issues
- Iterate groups of 5 for maximum success and efficiency

See Also

5-user testing explained: http://www.nngroup.com/articles/why-you-only-need-to-test-with-5-users/

A guide to iterative user testing: http://www.nngroup.com/articles/flexible-usability-testing/
Reviewing User Interaction

From econsultancy.com:
Usability Testing in Brief

SEE

Say

Do

Repeat
Usability Testing in Brief

SEE: Take the time to SEE the site where users perform their tasks.

Say: Listen to what users SAY about how they perform their tasks.

Do: Watch what users DO to perform their tasks.

Repeat: User Testing is a part of iterative design.
Keys to a Good Usability Test

Users from a well-defined customer demographic.

Tasks meant to test known concerns in the design.

You only need 5 users for quality results.
  – 5 users catches 85% of design issues
  – 10 users hits 98% of issues
  – Iterate for maximum success
Do Not Talk to Strangers

Tips for Impromptu Interviews with Potential Users
7 Key Tips

1. Prepare targeted questions
2. Capture attention and interest
3. Display credibility
4. Be transparent about goals and expectations
5. Offer an incentive
6. Improvise
7. Be gracious and kind
Prepare targeted questions

• Generate purposeful and relevant questions
• Focus on the user’s experiences and opinions
• Use accessible lay-friendly language
  “How would you rate your camping stove’s ignition process?”
  VS “Is your camping stove easy or difficult to light?”
• Be mindful of leading questions
  “Would you use your camping stove more if it was lightweight?”
  VS “What, if anything, would you change about your camping stove?”
• Prioritize your questions, you likely will not be able to ask them all
Capture attention and interest

• Be noticeable
• Display energy and positivity
• Visible signage with exciting words
  – MIT, Invention, Class project, Need your help, 90 seconds
• Sidewalk pitch for the interview
Display credibility

- MIT, MIT, MIT
- MIT T-shirts
- Signage
Transparency of goals and expectations

- Explain the purpose of the conversation
- Communicate what you hope to gain
- Describe exactly what you will do with the information they provide
Offer an incentive

• Opportunity to help shape a new product
• Invite them to the final presentation
Improvise

• Be curious
• Paraphrase their responses
• Ask “how?” or “why?” after abrupt answers
• Ask follow-up questions
• Don’t be afraid to go off script
Be gracious and kind!

- Time is precious, they’ve given you a gift
- Reiterate the impact of their participation