



Getting started with user testing

Practical tips to help engage with
participants and ensure quality feedback

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A note from us

Everything within this guide is written to help you take practical steps forward with user testing. It is a simple guide that can save you time.

If you require more in-depth information, please do not hesitate to contact us - info@4mation.com.au

Getting started

The purpose

Organising and running a successful usability test starts with having a well-defined purpose for what you are testing. It may be that you need to uncover usability issues for an existing site/product. Or it may be that you need to gather feedback about concepts and/or prototypes. Whatever the case, you need to know what it is you want to test and what answers you expect to obtain.

The user

Make sure you get the answers to the following questions before starting:

1. Who are the target users of your website/app?
2. What are the characteristics that define your users?
3. Do you have user personas already set?



Tip: Preparing the answers to these questions will make it much easier to recruit for participants.

Scenarios

When we are user testing, users perform specific tasks which help you understand how and if people use, understand, and discover the features. The tasks are based around a scenario that you will explain to your user.

We have put together some key points for writing a good scenario:

- Write in simple language.
- Avoid using keywords that also happen to be your navigation labels.
- Tell them what you want them to do, achieve, or find out, but don't tell them how.
- Try to keep it broad so that participants mimic what they would do in a real-life scenario.

Tasks

Task scenarios need to provide context, so users engage with the interface and pretend to perform business or personal tasks as if they were at home or in the office. Poorly written tasks often focus too much on forcing users to interact with a specific feature, rather than seeing if and how the user chooses to use the interface.

We have put together some basic user goal examples below:

User goal: Browse product offerings and purchase an item.

Poor task: Purchase a bottle of Yellowtail Shiraz.

Better task: Buy a bottle of wine for less than \$20.

Tip: Make the task realistic

User goal: Find movie and show times.

Poor task: You want to see a movie Sunday afternoon. Go to hoys.com.au and tell me where you'd click next.

Better task: Use hoys.com.au to find a movie you'd be interested in seeing on Sunday afternoon.

Tip: Make the task actionable

User goal: Look up grades.

Poor task: You want to see the results of your HSC exams. Go to the website, sign in, and tell me where you would click to get your transcript.

Better task: Look up the results of your HSC exams.

Tip: Avoid giving clues and describing the steps

Script for engaging with users

When doing user testing, it is important to be prepared and have a script ready that outlines very clearly to the user what is involved in the user testing study.

Our moderator script talks through the following with the participant:

- Welcome
- Purpose of the study
- Describing 'thinking out loud'
- Questions and concerns

To note: We have included fields in **blue** for where you need to insert your information.

Starting script

Welcome the participant.

Hello/Hey/Hi **[insert name of participant]**. My name is **[Insert name]**, and I am a part of **[insert company]**. I will be your facilitator for this session.

State the purpose of the study.

First of all, I want to thank you for participating in this study. I understand your time is valuable. We are performing usability testing for **[insert name of website/app/product]**.

For the next thirty minutes, we are going to focus on getting your impressions of our **[insert name of website/app/product]**. We are going to ask you to complete a series of tasks that match goals typical uses like yourself might have when using this website.

We are interested in knowing how you do things, where you look, things like that. More than what you're doing, though, we're interested in knowing what you're thinking, how you react to the website.

Describe thinking out loud.

One important thing we need you to keep in mind while you are testing is that we need you to “think out loud.” You know when you are using something, and you may get frustrated or confused, and you think in your head, “Why is this so hard?” “What am I looking for?” “I think this is what I need to do.” We want you to do the same thing, but instead of just thinking it, we want you to say it out loud. This helps us understand what is going through your mind while you are using the website.

If you like it, we want to know that. If you get frustrated or are confused, we want to know that too. We won’t be aware of anything you are not willing to tell us, so please speak up and say what’s on your mind.

We’re going to record you completing these tasks, take notes, and with these notes we will report our findings to the team.

I want to let you know that there are no wrong answers in this study.

Ask the participant to share any questions or concerns.

So before we get started, do you have any questions or concerns?

During test

To note: We’ve included in [blue](#) a script around sharing your screen for tests performed remotely.

The first thing I’d like you to do is share your screen. You can do that by clicking “Present now” of our video chat. Before you share, make sure to close anything you don’t want recorded.

Great. Next I’d like you to visit the [URL I sent you earlier today](#). To start, please look at this page and tell me what you make of it: What are your first impressions? What is this site for? You can scroll if you want to, but don’t click on anything just yet.

Thanks. Now I’m going to ask you to respond to the following few scenarios. I’m going to read each scenario out loud, and [I’ll also share the text of the scenario via chat](#).

Post-test interview

After the participant goes through the scenario/tasks, you may want the participant to reflect on what they have just seen and completed. This is also an opportunity to ask more about the context of your participant and understanding 'why' they complete the tasks the way they did or expected to see.



Interview question	Rationale
How did it go?	General feel
What do you see as the value of this website/app?	What is their perception of the value that the website/app will provide for them
Name your three favourite things about the experience today, and your three least favourite.	What do they prioritise?
Was there something missing that you were expecting to see?	Find out what is useful
If you could change one thing on the site, whether it is major or minor, what would it be?	What isn't working for them?
What did you find useful in this experience?	Insight into what can be improved

Tip: It is important to identify the type of questions that better suit the goals of your usability study, and the best wording and moment to ask these questions. We recommend performing the post-test survey straight after the test rather than sending it as a survey. This way you elicit an immediate response.

Usability Testing Report

Once you have gathered all of your notes, you will need to write a report that covers the following:

- Scope of user testing including name of evaluator, URL and date
- User profile and context of use
- Scenarios and tasks included in the test
- Assumptions for the evaluation
- Positive findings
- Summary of usability and accessibility issues found

We have included a basic table below as an example of how to compile the usability and accessibility issues.

Example summary of usability and accessibility issues

Usability issues	Principle	Link to screenshots	Priority	Suggestions for solution

Priority Legend

High = Task cannot be completed

Medium = Task completed with significant effort and failed attempts

Low = Task completed with minor complications and/or annoyance

At the end of the report it is important to provide recommendations or action items for improvement. Make sure these items are based on the findings of your usability tests with your audience.

Tip: Several factors may have affected the results of the usability test. It's important to remember that people bring their own experiences and biases into a test without realising.

Resources and tools

Useful websites

- [UserTesting.com](#) - Tool used for remote unmoderated usability testing
- [Hotjar](#) - A beginners guide to user testing
- [Nielsen Norman Group](#) - Article outlining why you only need to test with 5 users

Recruiting websites

- LinkedIn networks - *Tip: Call out for participants through your own networks first*
- [Askable](#) - Participant recruitment platform with remote testing capability
- [Ethnio](#) - One central database for research interactions including intercepting, screening and scheduling. *Tip: Take a look at the compensation calculator.*

Scheduling and remote tools

- [You Can Book Me](#) - Participants can book at time straight into your calendar
- [Google Hangouts](#) - Remote working tool
- [Zoom](#) - Remote working tool

Books for further reading

- Rocket Surgery Made Easy: The Do-It-Yourself Guide to Finding and Fixing Usability Problems by Steve Krug
- Designing Products People Love: How Great Designers Create Successful Products by Scott Hurff



"Usability is about people and how they understand and use things, not about technology." -Steve Krug

We are here to help

Usability testing is at the heart of successful digital products.

Our proven test-feedback-iterate-test cycles ensure that the final solution meets user needs and expectations.

Speak to our friendly solutions team for expert advice:



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