

Exploratory or Formative Usability Testing - Website Usability Testing Guide



Exploratory or Formative Usability Testing

TESTING : In the initial phases of development you want to judge users reactions to the design.

What/Why: Exploratory usability tests are done early in the design phase, often using paper prototypes*. This type of test requires a lot of interaction between the moderators and the testers. It can help surface

- Users expectations of the site

- Users ability to distinguish between elements of each page
- User value of the functions the site presents

These tests typically yield information about user needs and enhancement ideas for the process and next iteration. Obtaining early testing results enables you to begin the design process fully informed with the exact needs of your users, saving your time, money and work throughout the process.

Types of Questions/Prompts:

- Testers think aloud while looking at screenshots/prototype of the website.
- How would a tester conduct realistic tasks?
- To gauge user's understanding of the site, what assumptions do they have about the purpose/function of the site?
- Does anything confuse the tester?
- Additional features or enhancements- what do testers like/don't like?

*Paper prototyping is a baseline prototype of the interface is given to the users, and they are able to change and make edits on the spot. It is often used in early stages because they are easy and cheap to make. <http://usabilitygeek.com/paper-prototyping-as-a-usability-testing-technique>

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