



How to....Plan a Usability-Test

What kind of equipment?

Basically a PC, paper and a pencil

If you decide to let more than two persons observe the test, it might be a good idea to have the test transmitted to another room (using video conferencing for instance) in order not to disturb the user.

It is always a good idea to have the web-developers observe the test.

Test participants

How many?

It depends on the complexity (and size) of your site, and on how many different user groups you try to reach. Very generally speaking 5-6 participants should give you a good impression of the problems on your site.

It is better to have frequent tests of your site with few participants, than one test with many participants. An iterative process with tests -> changes -> tests -> changes will keep your website developing in the right direction.

Who?

Test participants should be a variety of users from the user groups you try to reach.

Take the following aspects into consideration:

Demographic: Gender, age, where they live

Level of IT-experience

Pre-knowledge of the subject (eg. your NREN and services)

Test tasks

- Focus on realistic tasks – on the daily routine of the user
- Make sure you do not indirectly help the user
- Include tasks that focus on topics, that you are in doubt about



TF-PR How To...

Predefined tasks vs. interview based tasks

Predefined tasks:

You have read a book by Jane Austen. Find a description of her authorship on the website

Interview based tasks:

What did you use the library web site for last time you visited it? Please show us what you did.

The essence

Hands-On: Make the user work – not (just) talk

The user is the expert – the web-development team the audience

Facilitating a test

- Listen to what the user says – do not explain
- Make the user feel comfortable
- Acknowledge social conventions
- Ask open-ended questions
- Use the words of the user
- The user is always right!!

The extras

To make the user feel comfortable it is a good idea to;

- Choose a place with a quiet and relaxing atmosphere (not in the middle of a busy office)
- Serve coffee/tea, goodies and/or fruit to the test person (you might need it yourself too)