UX Research & Strategy — Usability Lab Protocol

Introduction

We are a group of undergraduate students at the University of Washington, enrolled in the Human Centered Design & Engineering department. As a part of our senior capstone, we have been sponsored by UX Research & Strategy, a 501c3 non-profit organization dedicated to educating and connecting people with topics in UX Research. We have been tasked with redesigning their main website, specifically focusing on improving information architecture and search-engine optimization.

To undertake this task, we began with preliminary research and ideation. From these processes we were able to derive a list of changes to make and compile an updated list of design requirements. With these in hand, we built a low-fidelity prototype of a completely redesigned website.

Purpose

The primary goal of this usability test is to both to further identify pain-points with the existing website and to evaluate whether our new prototype is more effective. As SEO is algorithmic in nature, our evaluation will mostly consist of testing the reorganization of the information hierarchy/architecture. Our tasks are specifically tailored to attain a better understanding of the effectiveness of the two iterations.

Testing Kit

Screening Questionnaire

Thank you for your interest in participating in our usability study on the UX Research and Strategy website. Before we proceed, we would like to gather some basic demographic information to ensure that we capture a diverse range of experiences and perspectives. Your responses will help us in selecting participants who reflect different levels of familiarity with both UX Research and the organization of UXRS. Please answer the following questions honestly and to the best of your ability:

- What is your current occupation?
- What is your educational background?
- How many years of experience do you have with UX Research as a general subject?
- Have you utilized the UXRS website before to sign up for events or view past events?
    - If so, how many times have you used the website in the past year?

Consent Statement

We are a group of UW's Human-Centered Design & Engineering Department's students completing our senior capstone, and our project is on improving the information architecture and search engine optimization of the UXRS website. We want to better understand users' experiences/interactions with the website and an iterated prototype. Your participation in our research will be used for educational purposes, and the data we collect from you will be anonymized during our analysis of insights from the study. Please understand that you can pause and/or terminate this study session whenever; you can also let us know post-session if you'd like to withdraw your participation, and we will follow-through with that.

UXRS Usability Lab Testing Consent Form

I agree to participate in the study conducted by UW's HCDE Capstone team.

I understand that participation in this study is voluntary and I agree to immediately raise any concerns or areas of discomfort during the session with the study administrator. I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent from the study at any time.

I understand that this study will be recorded for note-taking purposes. The recordings will not be shared with anyone outside of the study group and will be deleted upon completion of the study.

Please sign below to indicate that you have read and understand the information on this form and that any questions you might have about the study are answered.

Thank you.

Date:_____

Name:_____

Sign:_____

Task List

1. Find and sign up for the UXRS Slack
   a. Start state: [UXRS Homepage](#)
   b. End state: [Slack Google form](#)
   c. Success condition: User successfully navigates to the Slack Google form page to be signed up for the UXRS Slack

2. Sign up for an upcoming UXRS event
   a. Start state: [UXRS Homepage](#)
   b. End State: Signed up for UXRS event page
   c. Success condition: User successfully registered for an upcoming UXRS event.

3. Search for and find Clinical UX
   a. Start state: [UXRS Homepage](#)
   b. End State: Page displaying "Getting Started in Clinical UX" event
   c. Success condition: Located the details for Dr. Gyles Morisson's "Getting Started in Clinical UX" event from March 5th, 2022 and tells the moderator this date.

4. Sign up for the UXRS mailing list
   a. Start state: [UXRS Homepage](#)
   b. End State: Subscribed to the mailing list
   c. Success condition: Located and subscribed to the UXRS mailing list using a disposable email address

Facilitation Script

Hi, my name is _____, and today I will be walking you through a series of tasks. Thank you for coming today and taking your time to help us.

Before we begin, I want to let you know in advance that in this study, we will be evaluating the usability of the UX Research & Strategy website and the efficiency for users to navigate through its pages. After that, we will follow up with an early stage prototype of a new version of the website and see how you would interact in comparison to the current one. This means that we are solely focusing on the website itself, and not your ability to complete the tasks so there shouldn't be any pressure in this as there are no right or wrong answers.

As you use the site, talk aloud and explain your process. Examples could be describing what you see, your actions and why, as well as what you are thinking when on a certain portion of the task. This will help us understand your experience and the process. We are asking that you give us your honest reactions, as we are trying to improve the site.

If any questions arise after you complete a task, please feel free to ask them. We may not be able to help immediately **during the study** to see how people interact with the website without guidance. Overall, this session will last about 30-45 minutes, but if you need to take a break or want to at any time discontinue with the session, please let me know.

You may have noticed that we have a microphone on and that's because we'll be recording what you say during the sessions and post-interview. We will also be recording your screen with your permission. The data we collect will only be viewed by the people working on this project for reporting purposes. If you are okay with this, we have a consent form for you to sign. There are four people on the team including me and _____, _____, and _____. Please let us know if that is not something you are comfortable with.

Before I explain how the session will work, do you have any questions?

Pre-test Questionnaire

1. How would you describe your level of experience with UX research?
2. Have you ever attended a UX research event before?
   - If so, have you once used the UXRS website to sign up for these events?
   - Otherwise, what about joining any UX-related event in general?
3. What is the primary reason you join these events?
4. How do you typically sign up for these UX-related events? (Through LinkedIn, social media, school, etc.)
5. Do you often read blogs/articles on UX related topics?
   - Where do you often access these readings?

Post-Test Questionnaire

1. How did you feel about your experiences with the current version of the website?
   - Were you confident in locating the information you needed?
2. Any thoughts with the prototype and how it differs from the current website?
3. What aspects of this interface did you find to be confusing or challenging to use with the current website?
   - And what about the prototype?
4. How would you describe the difficulty levels of the various tasks you did during the study? What made them different/difficult?
5. Were there any site features that you found particularly helpful or frustrating?

Debriefing Interview Questions

1. Do you have any suggestions for improving the redesigned website's usability?
2. What were the features you enjoyed for both versions of the website?
3. Was there a difference in experience between using the redesigned and the current version?

Note-taking Forms

Notes will be taken via laptop and concurrently with the session. A set of group members, excluding the moderator, will be involved with note-taking using a notes outline document. This outline will have areas to keep quantitative information such as the amount of clicks, task completion time, and successful task completion. There will also be spaces to accommodate for qualitative notes, which can range from quotes to observations.

Participant Reference Sheet

Users
Users are UX researchers of all skill levels looking to join a community of UX researchers as well as join events to learn more about UX research.

Audience are global and open to all occupation and experience

Problem
The issue is navigating through the UXRS can be a handful, especially when finding ways to join the community, attending upcoming events, or viewing previously held event

A proposed redesign of the UXRS website will look to emphasize the community and events aspects to ensure a seamless user experience

Competition
Current users may not be using the UXRS website and only engaging with their socials such as Slack or LinkedIn. Similar ux research group that users may be in is UXPA.

UXRS is looking to fill the gap where ux researchers can participate in an event and walk away with info that they can implement that very same day\

Solution
Our solution is to explicitly advertise UXRS's community such as Slack and allow multiple points of avenue. For events, past and upcoming events have been consolidated onto one page to group similar content together while recommending a structured format to list out past events to simplify scrolling and looking through content

Further interviews and iterations would be required to outline specific features and improvements

Value Proposition

Users will be able to seemingly join the UXRS Slack and community as well as find the content they are looking for regardless of their experience in UX research. UXRS should also see an increase in community members as well as website traffic.

Feasibility

UXRS has a design team and backend engineers that are considering implementing the recommendations if it is proven useful to the user base.

Tests

Participants will be part of usability testing comparing the current UXRS website to a Figma prototype of a redesigned version of the website based on our research and insights from the survey data.

      Testing will be conducted at a Microsoft research usability lab

Business Case

Features of the redesigned website will receive positive reception from users because the current website is outdated for its purpose and is inconsistent in its UX while the redesign follows best information architecture practices while elevating values that users have exclaimed in the survey.

Recommend to UXRS

We want to recommend various IA and SEO improvements to our sponsor, UXRS, as the purpose of the capstone was to give a fresh view of ways to improve UXRS's current website.