Usability Test Plan

Company:	Snohomish and Island County Public Library System
Team:	Calvin Calvo, Rosie Fisher-Sergent, Haben Haftu, Adam Kozie, Naomi Nosek
URL:	http://www.sno-isle.org

Introduction

In addition to the competitive analysis, heuristic analysis, and card sorting exercise, we will perform a usability test on the Sno-Isle Library website. Usability testing is another method for evaluating the usability of user interfaces. We will be conducting the usability testing to further explore the strengths, weaknesses, problems, and areas of possible improvement in site structure and user interaction of the Sno-Isle Library website.

What is Usability Testing?

Usability testing, put simply, is an administered test composed of set tasks given to a number of potential site users. We have designed a usability test with six scenarios (see below) and a small number of tasks associated with each scenario. Twelve test participants will complete these tasks under our observation.

The Research Questions

During our usability test we plan on using these questions to help better understand the usefulness of the current structure of the website and where changes can be made.

- Is the layout of the website navigation effective for users?

- Are the sites features being displayed properly?
- Is the visual layout of the site a help or a hinderance to the user?

Participant Info

An optimal usability test will test participants from the client's target demographic. For our purposes we had access to a group of a dozen students from the ITC298 class at Seattle Central College, and these were the participants in our study.

The scenarios and test tasks, however, were designed with the target audience of the library in mind. As a library system has a very broad user base, we had to consider many different kinds of users when designing the scenarios. The tasks, described below, were a variety of straightforward core tasks that the site is designed for and that a majority of users will likely find necessary or useful.

Methods

Introduction Process

Before any formal testing will occur, each participant will be given a brief **introduction** to the project and it's subsequent goals in addition to being screened by way of a pre-test questionnaire. This is done in order make the participant comfortable and to make sure they fit the demographics of the website or to determine bias which will result in relevant data collection in part 2.

Usability Testing

The next method will be the **usability testing**. The participants will be given a set of generic tasks. The purpose of which are to test the sites usability by providing believable scenarios that are what a real user would do. During the test the participant will tell the moderator when they feel they have completed a task or they cannot complete it.

Think Aloud Protocol

In tandem with usability testing the participant will be **thinking out loud** and giving the moderator their impressions, feelings, etc. However this is not intended to be a conversation the moderator will not lead or direct the individual.

Post-Test Questionnaire

After the test each participant will be **interviewed** and given a **post -test questionnaire**. The moderator will debrief them and then the individuals will be asked to voice their comments, experiences, and specify the problems they ran into (if any).

Logistics

The study will be conducted at Seattle Central College in BE3167 between the times of 3:30pm-5:50pm. Each participant will be asked to sit at a desktop computer while the moderator sits to the side. The moderator will show the participant the task cards and take notes throughout the usability test.

The Scenarios and Tasks

Scenario #1: Participant is a new transplant to the Snohomish-Island County area, specifically they have recently moved to the city of Snohomish. They need to become a member of the local library system.

Task A) From the homepage (without using the site search feature), find a way to get a library card for the Sno-Isle Library system.

Task B) Log in to the Sno-Isle library site with your new account.

Scenario #2: *Participant is an avid reader who wants to explore what their local library system has to offer. They want to use the search function on the website because it will show them all the books and resources in the region, not just at the library closest to them.*

Task A) From the home page, find an article on family health. Do this through the site's navigation structure, without using the site search or catalog search functions.

Scenario #3: Participant is a casual library user who simply prefers to check out books rather than own them. They are looking for a new book to read without any preconceptions of what that might be.

Task A) From the home page, find the library's lists of recommended books.

Scenario #4: Participant has a question that they cannot find the answer to anywhere on the site. They now want to ask for help from an expert.

Task A) Find a way to chat online with a librarian from the home page.

Scenario #5: Participant wants to learn about web design on their own with a book from the library.

Task A) Find the nearest library if you live in the city of Snohomish.

Task B) Find the book "Web Design For Dummies" by Lisa Lopuck, and put it on hold to pick up at your nearest library.

Task C) Cancel your hold on the book.

Scenario #6: Participant is the parent of a middle school aged child, and is looking for tutoring for their child to aid with homework.

Task A) Find a homework help or similar workshop suitable for a middle school student.

Data Collection & Reporting

The usability testing session will be recoded using Google hangout and the participants will be asked to use the think aloud protocol to document their thought process and experiences.

Quantitative Data

1. The time spent completing each task
2. The number of errors the participant made while completing the task

Qualitative Data

1. The think aloud protocol will give us insight into the participants thought process and immediate impressions and observations of the website. It will also give us

insight into which parts of the sire they find frustrating or confusing and why they had trouble with these particular areas.

2. The post-task interview will allow us to gather further information on the participants thought and decision making processes.

The results of the usability tests will be compiled into a final usability report that outlines the outcome of the participant testing and our recommendations for changes based on the research data.