Acknowledgments xi
Foreword xxix
Preface to the Second Edition xxxiii

Part One Usability Testing: An Overview

Chapter 1 What Makes Something Usable? 3
What Do We Mean by “Usable”? 4
What Makes Something Less Usable? 6
Five Reasons Why Products Are Hard to Use 6
Reason 1: Development Focuses on the Machine or System 7
Reason 2: Target Audiences Expand and Adapt 8
Reason 3: Designing Usable Products Is Difficult 9
Reason 4: Team Specialists Don’t Always Work in Integrated Ways 9
Reason 5: Design and Implementation Don’t Always Match 11
What Makes Products More Usable? 12
An Early Focus on Users and Tasks 13
Evaluation and Measurement of Product Usage 13
Iterative Design and Testing 14
Attributes of Organizations That Practice UCD 14
Phases That Include User Input 14
A Multidisciplinary Team Approach 14
Concerned, Enlightened Management 15
A “Learn as You Go” Perspective 15
Defined Usability Goals and Objectives 16
What Are Techniques for Building in Usability? 16
  Ethnographic Research 16
  Participatory Design 17
  Focus Group Research 17
  Surveys 17
  Walk-Throughs 18
  Open and Closed Card Sorting 18
  Paper Prototyping 18
  Expert or Heuristic Evaluations 19
  Usability Testing 19
  Follow-Up Studies 20

Chapter 2  What Is Usability Testing? 21
  Why Test? Goals of Testing 21
    Informing Design 22
    Eliminating Design Problems and Frustration 22
    Improving Profitability 22
  Basics of the Methodology 23
    Basic Elements of Usability Testing 25
    Limitations of Testing 25

Chapter 3  When Should You Test? 27
  Our Types of Tests: An Overview 27
  Exploratory or Formative Study 29
    When 29
    Objective 29
    Overview of the Methodology 30
    Example of Exploratory Study 32
  Assessment or Summative Test 34
    When 34
    Objective 34
    Overview of the Methodology 35
  Validation or Verification Test 35
    When 35
    Objective 35
    Overview of the Methodology 36
  Comparison Test 37
    When 37
    Objective 37
    Overview of the Methodology 38
  Iterative Testing: Test Types through the Lifecycle 39
    Test 1: Exploratory/Comparison Test 39
      The situation 39
      Main Research Questions 40
Brief Summary of Outcome 41
Test 2: Assessment Test 41
  The Situation 41
  Main Test Objectives 41
  Brief Summary of Test Outcome 42
Test 3: Verification Test 42
  The Situation 42
  Test Objectives 43
  Brief Summary of Test Outcome 43

Chapter 4  Skills for Test Moderators 45
Who Should Moderate? 45
Human Factors Specialist 46
Marketing Specialist 46
Technical Communicator 47
Rotating Team Members 47
External Consultant 47
Characteristics of a Good Test Moderator 48
  Grounding in the Basics of User-Centered Design 48
  Quick Learner 48
  Instant Rapport with Participants 49
  Excellent Memory 49
  Good Listener 49
  Comfortable with Ambiguity 50
  Flexibility 50
  Long Attention Span 51
  Empathic “People Person” 51
  “Big Picture” Thinker 51
  Good Communicator 52
  Good Organizer and Coordinator 52
Getting the Most out of Your Participants 52
  Choose the Right Format 53
    Sit-By Sessions versus Observing from Elsewhere 53
    “Think-Aloud” Advantages and Disadvantages 54
    Retrospective Review 54
  Give Participants Time to Work through Hindrances 55
  Offer Appropriate Encouragement 55
Troubleshooting Typical Moderating Problems 56
  Leading Rather than Enabling 57
  Too Involved with the Act of Data Collection 57
  Acting Too Knowledgeable 57
  Too Rigid with the Test Plan 58
  Not Relating Well to Each Participant 58
Jumping to Conclusions 58
How to Improve Your Session-Moderating Skills 58
Learn the Basic Principles of Human Factors/Ergonomics 59
Learn from Watching Others 59
Watch Yourself on Tape 59
Work with a Mentor 59
Practice Moderating Sessions 60
Learn to Meditate 60
Practice "Bare Attention" 61

Part Two The Process for Conducting a Test
Chapter 5 Develop the Test Plan 65
Why Create a Test Plan? 65
   It Serves as a Blueprint for the Test 66
   It Serves as the Main Communication Vehicle 66
   It Defines or Implies Required Resources 66
   It Provides a Focal Point for the Test and a Milestone 66
The Parts of a Test Plan 67
   Review the Purpose and Goals of the Test 67
   When Not to Test 68
   Good Reasons to Test 69
Communicate Research Questions 69
Summarize Participant Characteristics 72
Describe the Method 73
   Independent Groups Design or Between Subjects Design 75
   Within-Subjects Design 75
   Testing Multiple Product Versions 76
   Testing Multiple User Groups 77
List the Tasks 79
   Parts of a Task for the Test Plan 79
   Tips for Developing the Task List 82
   Example Task: Navigation Tab on a Web Site 83
   Ways to Prioritize Tasks 85
Describe the Test Environment, Equipment, and Logistics 87
Explain What the Moderator Will Do 87
List the Data You Will Collect 88
   Sample Performance Measures 88
   Qualitative Data 90
   Sample Preference Measures 90
Describe How the Results Will Be Reported 90
Sample Test Plan 91
Chapter 6  Set Up a Testing Environment  93
  Decide on a Location and Space  94
    In a Lab or at the User’s Site?  94
    Test in Multiple Geographic Locations?  96
  Arranging Sessions at a User’s Site  98
    Minimalist Portable Test Lab  100
  Setting up a Permanent or Fixed Test Lab  101
    Simple Single-Room Setup  101
    Modified Single-Room Setup  103
    Large Single-Room Setup  105
    Electronic Observation Room Setup  107
    Classic Testing Laboratory Setup  108
  Recommended Testing Environment: Minimalist
    Portable Lab  110
  Gather and Check Equipment, Artifacts, and Tools  111
    Basic Equipment, Tools, and Props  111
    Gathering Biometric Data  112
  Identify Co-Researchers, Assistants, and Observers  112
    Data Gatherer/Note Taker  112
    Timekeeper  113
    Product/Technical Expert(s)  113
    Additional Testing Roles  113
    Test Observers  113

Chapter 7  Find and Select Participants  115
  Characterize Users  115
    Visualize the Test Participant  116
    Differentiate between Purchaser and End User  116
    Look for Information about Users  117
      Requirements and Specification Documents  117
      Structured Analyses or Marketing Studies  118
      Product Manager (R&D)  118
      Product Manager (Marketing)  118
      Competitive Benchmarking and Analysis Group  119
  Define the Criteria for Each User Group  119
    Define Expertise  119
    Specify Requirements and Classifiers for Selection  121
    Document the User Profile  122
    Divide the User Profile into Distinct Categories  124
    Consider a Matrix Test Design  125
  Determine the Number of Participants to Test  125
  Write the Screening Questionnaire  126
Contents

Review the Profile to Understand Users’ Backgrounds 127
Identify Specific Selection Criteria 127
Formulate Screening Questions 128
Organize the Questions in a Specific Order 129
Develop a Format for Easy Flow through the Questionnaire 130
Test the Questionnaire on Colleagues and Revise It 131
Consider Creating an “Answer Sheet” 131

Find Sources of Participants 131
Internal Participants 132
Qualified Friends and Family 134
Web Site Sign-Up 134
Existing Customers from In-House Lists 135
Existing Customers through Sales Representatives 136
User Groups or Clubs, Churches, or Other Community Groups 136
Societies and Associations 137
Referrals from Personal Networks, Coworkers, and Other Participants 137
Craigslist 138
College Campuses 139
Market Research Firms or Recruiting Specialists 140
Employment Agencies 141
Newspaper Advertisements 142

Screen and Select Participants 143
Screening Considerations 143
Use the Questionnaire or Open-Ended Interview Questions? 143
Complete the Screener Always, or Only When Fully Qualified? 144
Conduct Screening Interviews 145
Inform the Potential Participant Who You Are 145
Explain Why You are Calling and How You Got the Contact Information 145
Go through the Questions in the Questionnaire 145
As You Eliminate or Accept People, Mark Them Off on Your List 146
Include a Few Least Competent Users in Every Testing Sample 146
Beware of Inadvertently Testing Only the “Best” People 147
Expect to Make Tradeoffs 148

Schedule and Confirm Participants 148
Chapter 8  Prepare Test Materials  153
Guidelines for Observers  154
Orientation Script  155
Keep the Tone of the Script Professional, but Friendly  156
Keep the Speech Short  156
Plan to Read the Script to Each Participant Verbatim  157
Write the Orientation Script Out  158
Make Introductions  159
Offer Refreshments  159
Explain Why the Participant Is Here  159
Describe the Testing Setup  160
Explain What Is Expected of the Participant  160
Assure the Participant That He or She Is Not Being Tested  161
Explain Any Unusual Requirements  161
Mention That It Is Okay to Ask Questions at Any Time  161
Ask for Any Questions  161
Refer to Any Forms That Need Be Completed and Pass Them Out  161
Background Questionnaire  162
Focus on Characteristics That May Influence Performance  163
Make the Questionnaire Easy to Fill Out and Compile  163
Test the Questionnaire  163
Decide How to Administer the Questionnaire  163
Data Collection Tools  165
Review the Research Question(s) Outlined in Your Test Plan  167
Decide What Type of Information to Collect  167
Select a Data Collection Method  168
Fully Automated Data Loggers  168
Online Data Collection  169
User-Generated Data Collection  169
Manual Data Collection  170
Other Data Collection Methods  170
Nondisclosures, Consent Forms, and Recording Waivers  173
Pre-Test Questionnaires and Interviews  174
Discover Attitudes and First Impressions  175
Learn about Whether Participants Value the Product  177
Qualify Participants for Inclusion into One Test Group or Another  179
Establish the Participant’s Prerequisite Knowledge Prior to Using the Product 181
Prototypes or Products to Test 181
Task Scenarios 182
Provide Realistic Scenarios, Complete with Motivations to Perform 183
Sequence the Task Scenarios in Order 183
Match the Task Scenarios to the Experience of the Participants 184
Avoid Using Jargon and Cues 184
Try to Provide a Substantial Amount of Work in Each Scenario 184
Give Participants the Tasks to Do 185
Reading Task Scenarios to the Participants 185
Letting the Participants Read Task Scenarios Themselves 186
Optional Training Materials 187
Ensure Minimum Expertise 187
Get a View of the User after Experiencing the Product 188
You Want to Test Features for Advanced Users 189
What Are the Benefits of Prerequisite Training? 190
You Can Conduct a More Comprehensive, Challenging Usability Test 190
You Can Test Functionality That Might Otherwise Get Overlooked During a Test 190
Developing the Training Forces You to Understand How Someone Learns to Use Your Product 191
Some Common Questions about Prerequisite Training 191
Post-Test Questionnaire 192
Use the Research Questions(s) from the Test Plan as the Basis for Your Content 193
Develop Questionnaires That Will Be Distributed Either during or after a Session 193
Ask Questions Related to That Which You Cannot Directly Observe 193
Develop the Basic Areas and Topics You Want to Cover 195
Design the Questions and Responses for Simplicity and Brevity 196
Use the Pilot Test to Refine the Questionnaire 196
Common Question Formats 197
Likert Scales 197
Semantic Differentials 197
Fill-In Questions 198
Chapter 9  Conduct the Test Sessions  
Guidelines for Moderating Test Sessions 201
Moderate the Session Impartially 202
Be Aware of the Effects of Your Voice and Body Language 203
Treat Each New Participant as an Individual 203
If Appropriate, Use the “Thinking Aloud” Technique 204
Advantages of the “Thinking Aloud” Technique 204
Disadvantages of the “Thinking Aloud” Technique 205
How to Enhance the “Thinking Aloud” Technique 205
Probe and Interact with the Participant as Appropriate 206
Stay Objective, But Keep the Tone Relaxed 209
Don’t “Rescue” Participants When They Struggle 209
If You Make a Mistake, Continue On 210
Ensure That Participants Are Finished Before Going On 210
Assist the Participants Only as a Last Resort 211
When to Assist 211
How to Assist 212
Checklists for Getting Ready 213
Checklist 1: A Week or So Before the Test 214
Take the Test Yourself 214
Conduct a Pilot Test 215
Revise the Product 215
Check Out All the Equipment and the Testing Environment 216
Request a Temporary “Freeze” on Development 216
Checklist 2: One Day Before the Test 216
Check that the Video Equipment is Set Up and Ready 216
Check that the Product, if Software or Hardware, is Working 217
Assemble All Written Test Materials 217
Check on the Status of Your Participants 217
Double-Check the Test Environment and Equipment 217
Checklist 3: The Day of the Test 217
Prepare Yourself Mentally 218
Greet the Participant 219
Have the Participant Fill Out and Sign Any Preliminary Documents 220
Read the Orientation Script and Set the Stage 220
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 10</th>
<th>Debrief the Participant and Observers</th>
<th>229</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why Review with Participants and Observers?</td>
<td>229</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Techniques for Reviewing with Participants</td>
<td>230</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where to Hold the Participant Debriefing Session</td>
<td>231</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Debriefing Guidelines</td>
<td>231</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Debriefing Guidelines and Techniques</td>
<td>235</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Replay the Test” Technique</td>
<td>235</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Manual Method</td>
<td>235</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Video Method</td>
<td>236</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio Record the Debriefing Session</td>
<td>236</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewing Alternate Designs</td>
<td>236</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“What Did You Remember?” Technique</td>
<td>236</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Devil’s Advocate” Technique</td>
<td>238</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to Implement the “Devil’s Advocate” Technique</td>
<td>238</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example of the “Devil’s Advocate” Technique</td>
<td>239</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewing and Reaching Consensus with Observers</td>
<td>241</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Review with Observers?</td>
<td>241</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Sessions</td>
<td>241</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the End of the Study</td>
<td>243</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 11</th>
<th>Analyze Data and Observations</th>
<th>245</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compile Data</td>
<td>246</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begin Compiling Data as You Test</td>
<td>247</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Organize Raw Data 248
Summarize Data 249
  Summarize Performance Data 249
    Task Accuracy 249
    Task Timings 250
  Summarize Preference Data 254
Compile and Summarize Other Measures 256
Summarize Scores by Group or Version 256
Analyze Data 258
  Identify Tasks That Did Not Meet the Success Criterion 258
  Identify User Errors and Difficulties 260
  Conduct a Source of Error Analysis 260
  Prioritize Problems 261
  Analyze Differences between Groups or Product Versions 264
  Using Inferential Statistics 265

Chapter 12 Report Findings and Recommendations 269
  What Is a Finding? 269
  Shape the Findings 269
Draft the Report 271
  Why Write a Report? 273
  Organize the Report 273
    Executive Summary 274
    Method 274
    Results 275
  Findings and Recommendations (Discussion) 275
Develop Recommendations 277
  Focus on Solutions That Will Have the Widest Impact 278
  Ignore Political Considerations for the First Draft 280
  Provide Both Short-Term and Long-Term Recommendations 280
  Indicate Areas Where Further Research Is Required 281
  Be Thorough 281
  Make Supporting Material Available to Reviewers 282
Refine the Report Format 283
Create a Highlights Video or Presentation 283
  Cautions about Highlights 284
Steps for Producing a Highlights Video 285
  Consider the Points You Want to Make 286
  Set up a Spreadsheet to Plan and Document the Video 286
  Pick the Clips 286
  Review Timing and Organization 287
Draft Titles and Captions 288
Review and Wrap 288
Part Three  Advanced Techniques

Chapter 13  Variations on the Basic Method  293

Who? Testing with Special Populations  293
  People Who Have Disabilities  293
  Scheduling and Reminding  295
  During the Session  295
  Older Adults  295
  Scheduling and Reminding  296
  During the Session  297
  Children  298
  Scheduling and Reminding  298
  During the Session  299

What: Prototypes versus Real Products  299
  Paper and Other Low-Fi Prototypes  300
 Clickable or Usable Prototypes  301

How? Techniques for Monitored Tests  302
  Flexible Scripting  303
    What You Get  303
    How to Use It  303
  Gradual Disclosure or Graduated Prompting  304
    What You Get  304
    How to Use It  305
  Co-Discovery (Two Participants at a Time)  306
    What You Get  306
    How to Use It  307
  Alpha or Beta Testing with Favored Clients  307
    What You Get  307
    How to Use It  308
  Play Tests  308
    What You Get  309
    How to Use It  309

Where? Testing Outside a Lab  309
  Remote Testing  310
    What You Get  310
    How to Use It  310
  Automated Testing  311
    What You Get  311
    How to Use It  311
  Testing In-Home or On-Site  312
    What You Get  312
    How to Use It  312

Self-Reporting (Surveys, Diary Studies)  313
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents xxvii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What You Get</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to Use It</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 14 Expanding from Usability Testing to Designing the User Experience</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stealth Mode: Establish Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choose the First Project Carefully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begin Your Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start Slowly and Conservatively, Get Buy-In</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Your Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a Strategy and Business Case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build on Successes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set Up Long-Term Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sell Yourself and What You Are Doing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategize: Choose Your Battles Carefully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formalize Processes and Practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish a Central Residency for User-Centered Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add Usability-Related Activities to the Product Life Cycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educate Others within Your Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify and Cultivate Champions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicize the Usability Success Stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Link Usability to Economic Benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand UCD throughout the Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pursue More Formal Educational Opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standardize Participant Recruitment Policies and Procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Align Closely with Market Research and Industrial Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate Product Usability in the Field after Product Release</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate the Value of Your Usability Engineering Efforts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop Design Standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Your Efforts Early in the Product Life Cycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create User Profiles, Personas, and Scenarios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Afterword</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Index</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>