

## How to conduct a website user test

### What is a user test?

- Examines how easy or hard it is to perform a particular task on any given website.

### Benefits of running a user test?

#### Designer

- Help inform the design process
- Fix problems early in the process when they are easy to fix
- Test assumptions
- Highlight unnecessary features

#### Site owner

- Fix problems early in the process when they are **cheaper** to fix
- Improve customer satisfaction, retention and loyalty
- Increase conversion rates
- Increased revenue

### Pros and Cons of user tests

#### Pros

- Very quick and easy to perform
- Relatively inexpensive so can afford multiple tests
- Qualitative nature can provide improved design insight
- Results can be fed back into the design process very quickly

#### Cons

- Have to recruit users and arrange location
- Familiarity with project may introduce personal bias
- write tests yourself

### When should I run the test?

- Ideally during the design phase
- If your site is already live it is still useful run a test

### Who do I test?

- Ideally test 5 people but testing 1 person is better than none
- Use friends or family, they don't have to fit your exact demographic so long as they are not familiar with your website
- Advertise on Gumtree, Twitter, use people in the next office etc

### Where to test?

- Ideally in the place where the person doing the test uses the internet
- If you are testing several people then providing internet access at a central location may be easier.
- Schedule the session so that you test one person at a time.

### What to test?

- Ask the participants to complete 4-5 tasks
- Test to last no longer than 30 minutes
- Ask them to find a particular product, service or fill out a contact form for example, or whatever is critical to using your site effectively

### **Your role**

- Put the participants at ease
- Remind them that you're testing the site, not them
- Start with a simple task
- Give encouraging but non-committal feedback
- If you don't understand an action feel free to ask why they did something
- Know when to stop a task but don't rescue people too soon

### **Questions to Ask**

- "What are you currently thinking?"
- "Describe the steps you're going through here"
- "What do you think will happen next?"
- "Why are you looking at this part of the site?"
- "What options are you considering?"

Before the participants leave ask them for their overall assessment of the site on a scale of 1 – 5 with 1 being very difficult to use and 5 being very easy to use.

Would they consider using this site for real or recommending it to others – why?

What would make the user experience easier or more enjoyable?

### **Test Results**

- Was the task completed?
- Time on Task – How long did it take to complete?
- Page Views – How many pages did it take to complete?
- Errors – The number and severity of errors per task?
- How quickly did the user recover from the error?
- Satisfaction – How does the user rate the site?

Analyze the results to discover whether there are common themes among participants.

- Did they all stumble on the same activities?
- What did you learn from the thought processes that they went through?
- Can you adopt any of the improvement suggestions they made?

Use this information to plan improvements to your site.