

Usability Services



Usability Evaluation – Practical Solutions

The screenshot shows the website's navigation and content. At the top, there are links for "Leeds Met Home", "Search", and "Select One". The main navigation bar includes "Visiting/Applying" and "leeds metropolitan university". A left-hand menu lists various service options. The main content area is divided into two sections: "visiting" and "applying".

- Leeds Met Home
- Search
- Select One

leeds metropolitan university

visiting

applying

how to apply...

where we're exhibiting...

campus maps...

request information

how to apply...

Usability Services is a Leeds Met consultancy initiative, within our Innovation North Faculty of Information and Technology.

Our consultancy service is run by experienced usability practitioners and researchers, who can provide extensive advice and guidance on the usability of websites, software and other interactive technologies.

We have a usability lab to conduct tests with potential users. Our equipment is portable and tests can also be conducted in the workplace.

Based at our Headingley Campus, within easy reach of the city centre, we benefit from a large population of students and staff, who can participate in our evaluations.

Research team

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What do we mean by usability?

The International Standards Organisation (ISO) defines usability as, “the effectiveness, efficiency and satisfaction with which a specified set of users can achieve a specified set of tasks in a particular environment”. In our usability studies, we expand on this definition to consider a broad range of factors within a holistic model.

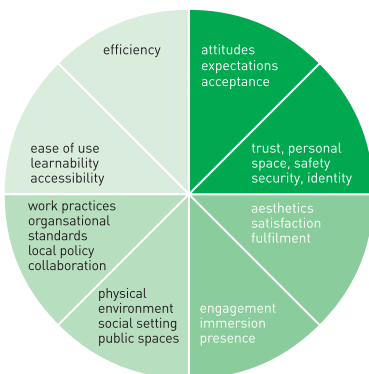
We can test most interactive technologies including: websites; digital media; desktop software; virtual environment and games; ubiquitous and wearable computing; handheld and mobile devices; and kiosks, touch screens and ATMs.

What is usability testing?

Usability studies often involve users participating in a task based exercise, and these are designed to match real-world scenarios, by mapping and modelling user knowledge, experience and skill.

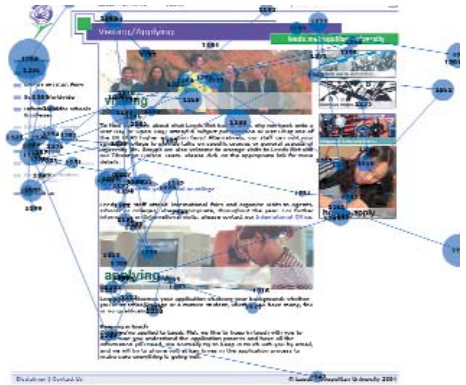
We use a number of evaluation methods, either individually or in combination:

- **Eye tracking** records and analyses users' eye movements in real-time, giving an insight into areas of interest, difficulty, cognitive processes and strategies used;



Holistic model of usability

- **Video observation** records and analyses user behaviour, including facial expressions, movements, and verbal protocols, which give us rich information about the users' experience and the reasons for problems;
- **Usability rating questionnaires** are used to gather information about the users' own assessment of the system and give the interface a usability "score";
- **Pre and post-attitude questionnaires** comprise of a series of questions designed to test the users' attitude before using the interactive technology, and to measure whether these have changed after use;
- **Interviews** allow us to explore the users' experience in depth and follow up issues that have arisen during their use of the system;
- **Expert review and accessibility audit** use well-founded principles, heuristics and guidelines to evaluate the system, identify potential problem areas and offer practical solutions;
- **Focus groups** identify users' experiences and attitudes related to a product or product idea.



What are the benefits of usability testing?

- Identify usability problems encountered by your customers based on realistic task scenarios;
- Measure consumer acceptance and satisfaction;
- Reduce production costs and time to market;
- Fix problems before the product is released;
- Evaluate throughout the product development lifecycle;
- Gain external validation of your system and a market advantage.





What is involved in conducting a usability test?

Step 1: Briefing session to determine the customer needs and requirements, project objectives, methodology, target population, sample size and sampling method, location, level of analysis, required reports, and additional equipment needed.

Step 2: Planning stage involves defining task scenarios, recruiting participants, and conducting a pilot study.

Step 3: Usability study is either lab or field-based, and involves using methods, either individually or in combination, user testing or expert assessment.

Step 4: Data analysis ranges from entry level to more detailed analysis, including: generating scan paths, hotspots and areas of interest; measuring performance; usability rating scale; capturing critical incidents and observing users' behaviours in real-time; and exploring users' expectations and attitudes.

Step 5: Report findings and recommendations

We can report our findings in a number of ways including:

- Summary report in PDF format;
- Detailed report with full statistical analysis;
- Video highlights;
- Full 90 minute presentation of results at your premises;
- Ease of use and effectiveness workshop to help you plan usability improvement;
- Post-project telephone support.

We have a number of "off the shelf" packages that may be suited to your needs. Otherwise we can tailor a package to your specific requirements. We are always happy to put together bespoke research plans.

For further information

Please complete in block capitals and return to: Professor Janet Finlay, Usability Services, Innovation North, Faculty of Information & Technology, Leeds Metropolitan University, Caedmon Hall, Headingley Campus Leeds LS6 3QS

Name: _____

Job Title: _____

Organisation: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Tel: _____

Email: _____

Please contact me to arrange a free demonstration:

Usability Testing & Evaluation

Eye tracking

Video Observation

Expert Evaluation

Website Design

Graphic Design

Databases

Other please specify _____

Any information you provide will be held securely by Leeds Metropolitan University. From time to time, we may wish to contact you regarding courses and events that may be of interest to you, or for quality assurance purposes. If you would like no further contact from the University arising from the information you have provided here, please tick the box.

Contact

Further information can be obtained from:

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