The Three U's: Usability, Usability, Usability
Health Sciences Library Digital Solutions

Developing an Effective User Experience

Know your users[1]

Clarify who your users are by gathering information from the project stakeholder(s).
- Who is the audience (and sub-audiences) to which the stakeholders are marketing?
- What are the goals of the audience?
- Where are the users most likely accessing the information?
- What is the user's state of mind?
- How comfortable is the user with technology?

Evaluate early[1]

Before too much or any development has taken place, evaluate your design and workflow with your audience. Click-throughs or wireframes with minimal design elements incorporated can be used during the evaluation. The wireframes can be electronic or in paper format. Post-it notes can even be used to have your audience evaluate the content and build out how they would categorize the information you plan to include (e.g. card sorting technique).

Assess your competition and your own product[2]

Survey the land and define elements you like or don't like and determine the reasons why.

Health Sciences Library Usability Lab

What is a usability lab?
A usability lab is a space in which usability evaluation takes place and typically involves observing users interacting with a product to make determinations about how easy the product is to use.

> *I'd like to have a resource to review my protocols before they are implemented.*

> *What about workshops and training opportunities for designers and developers?*

> *Could the lab provide a mobile kit (laptop with testing software) that could be checked out?*

Comments harvested from Usability World Café February 2012

Initial Services
- Assistance with developing evaluation protocols
- Review of website interfaces, mobile app interfaces, and learning objects
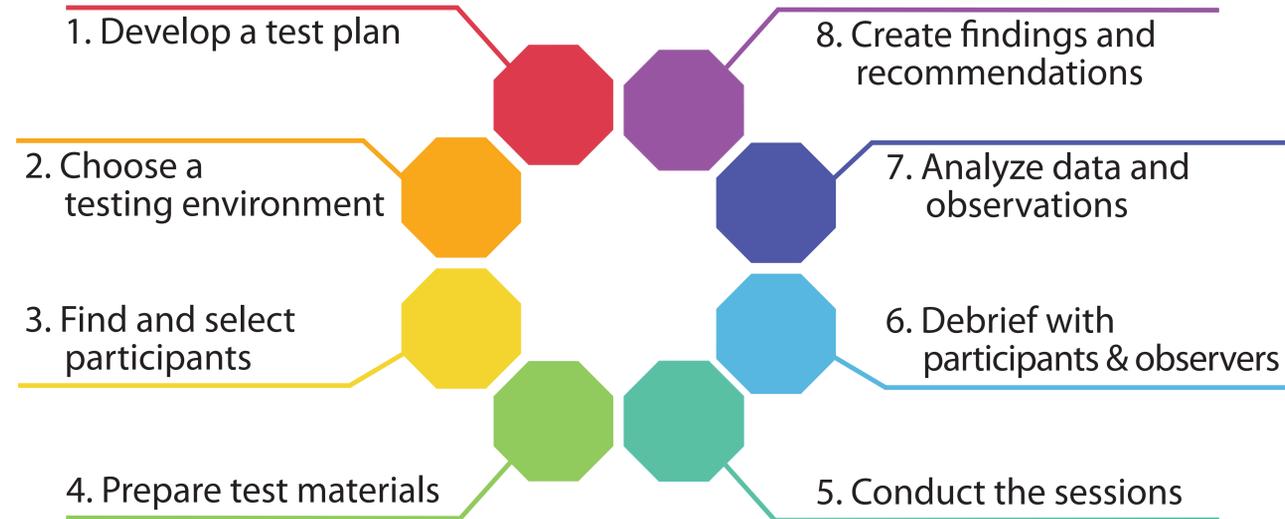- Small scale usability evaluations and data analysis

Collaboration and Partnerships
Health Sciences Library (HSL) and Department of Biomedical Informatics are partnering with the OSU community to explore what services a usability lab would offer, who would utilize it, and what funding opportunities may be available to bring the concept to fruition.

Key Components of Usability Evaluation[3]

> *"Usability is like love. You have to care, you have to listen, and you have to be willing to change. You'll make mistakes along the way, but that's where growth and forgiveness come in."*
>
> – *Jeffrey Zeldman*

1. Develop a test plan
2. Choose a testing environment
3. Find and select participants
4. Prepare test materials
5. Conduct the sessions
6. Debrief with participants & observers
7. Analyze data and observations
8. Create findings and recommendations

Benefits of Usability Evaluation

Usability evaluation determines if products are efficient, effective and satisfying to those who use them.[4]

A usability evaluation can help:[5]
- Convince teams that something is wrong and motivate them to take action
- Establish trust with stakeholders
- Reduce complexity and create a better experience for the end-user

1. http://alistapart.com/articles/audiences-outcomes-and-determining-user-needs/ | 2. http://www.ibm.com/developerworks/ibm/library/i-osource2/sidefile1.html | 3. http://alistapart.com/articles/usability-testing-demystified/
4. http://www.upassoc.org/usability_resources/about_usability/index.html | 5. http://alistapart.com/articles/the-myth-of-usability-testing/
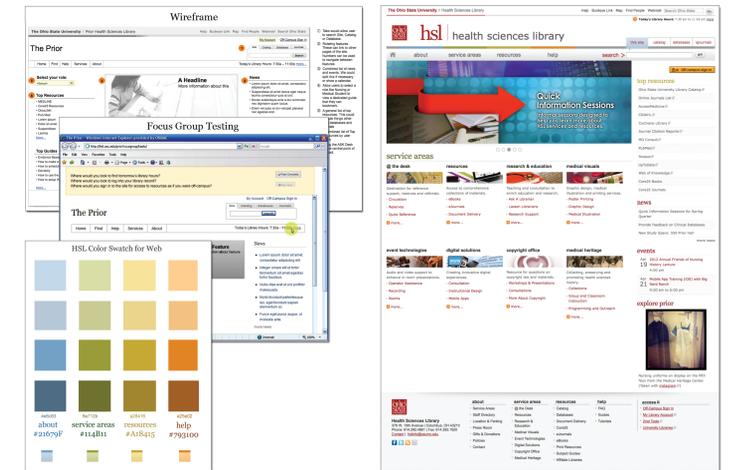
Project Examples

Health Sciences Library Website
Challenge: Communicate/market eight unique service areas from an organization within a single, cohesive website.

OSU Suicide Prevention App
Challenge: Create an intuitive, easy-to-use interface to connect students in crisis with immediate aid and resources.

College of Pharmacy Website
Challenge: Re-evaluate existing structure of the College's website and provide recommendations to improve the user experience.

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY Health Sciences Library