Readability/Usability Test Documents

*Introduction*

This documents contains the readability/usability test informed consent form, participant demographic questionnaire, protocols, and surveys that you will use to assess your documents or website. Normally, writers and designers would develop their own test methods. But in many cases, customized testing resources are augmented by existing models.

To simplify our testing process, I am providing these resources. If you feel that they do not work with your documents/project, feel free to alter them to match your requirements.

*Usability Testing Script and Protocols*

**Purpose**: The purpose of this test is to collect data from participants while they read your documents or use your website. The author should use this data to help her/him improve the deliverable. Under normal testing conditions, designers would collect data from at least 11 participants. Moreover, data would be collected by multiple data recorders. For this session, however, you will adapt your testing scenario to your project and your group.

Read the following:

* 1. *Thank you for agreeing to spend time with us today. Please remember that you can stop testing at any time for any reason. If you are uncomfortable or want a break for any reason, simply tell me and we will take a break. My name is (FIRST NAME), and I can answer any questions that may occur to you during testing. In addition to walking you through these tests, we are recording your reactions, timing how long it takes you to find information, and noting phrases that you use to describe the documents/website we are testing today. Overall, this test should take less than an hour. We may break at any time, or you may choose not to continue the testing if you feel uncomfortable.*

*Informed Consent Form*

(This is a sample form used for class and not part of a formal research study)

**Purpose of Research**

The purpose of this research is to test the readability/usability of a deliverable. Students are completing this test as part of coursework for a professional writing class.

**Specific Procedures to be Used**

Participants will fill out a demographic survey, complete task-based protocols on the deliverable to find information, and fill out a post-test questionnaire.

**Duration of Participation**

The readability/usability test session should take less than an hour.

**Benefits to the Individual**

Participants will learn about readability/usability testing, and testing may contribute to a body of knowledge that supports innovation in readability and usability research.

**Risks to the Individual**

Risks for participating in this study are minimal and are no more than people would encounter in everyday life or in the course of studies at Loyola University Maryland.

**Compensation**

Participants will not receive any compensation for this study.

**Confidentiality**

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed because of the nature of large groups⎯the class. Participant responses cannot be guaranteed to be anonymous because Dr. Allen Brizee cannot guarantee that other classroom participants will not disclose my participation in the study. Furthermore, documents created for the course may be posted on online.

Information collected during the test will be stored by the tester (the author). Aggregate results⎯data compiled from test responses⎯will be shared with the class and included in readability/usability documents. No information from this course-based study will be published in peer-reviewed venues.

**Voluntary Nature of Participation**

While the testing is part of the class requirements, I understand that I can stop the testing process at any time without penalty.

**Participant’s Signature and Date**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Participant Demographic Questionnaire*

Age:

How do you identify?:

* American Indian/Alaskan Native
* Asian (including Indian subcontinent and Philippines)
* Black/African-American
* Black/African Heritage
* Black/ Caribbean American
* Chicano/Latino/Hispanic
* Middle Eastern
* Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
* White

How do you identify:

* Female
* Male
* Transgender
* Questioning
* Prefer not to answer

1. On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest), how important is the content (you should adjust this to fit your project) of a document to you? 1 2 3 4 5

2. On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest), how important is the design (you should adjust this to fit your project) of a document to you? 1 2 3 4 5

3. What are some features that you think are important in a document (adjust for project)?

4. What kinds of information would you expect to see in a document (adjust for project)?

*Task-Based Protocols*

This protocol is a quantitative, task-based process combined with a short questionnaire about the experience. The proctor will ask the participant questions that will require them to find information in your deliverable, time the participant, and record whether or not the participant successfully answers the question.

Note: Make sure each computer has your documents open. Also, the proctor is permitted to repeat the task or clarify questions about the task itself but is not to assist the participant or answer questions relating to the navigation of your deliverable. (i.e., the proctor can help the participant understand the task but not complete it).

**Proctor**: *The computer in front of you is displaying one of the documents/websites that we are testing today. During this phase of the test, we would like you to use the document to find specific information, which will be given to you shortly. You are not going to be evaluated on your proficiency with using the computer; rather, this test is to see how well the document allows you to find particular information. We are testing the document and not you*.

**Task 1**: Fill in your task here

Time:

Navigation path:

Reaction:

Did the participant answer the question correctly? Y N

*Thank you. Please return to the beginning of the document.*

**Task 2**: Fill in your task here

Time:

Navigation path:

Reaction:

Did the participant answer the question correctly? Y N

*Thank you. Please return to the beginning of the document.*

**Task 3**: Fill in your task here

Time:

Navigation path:

Reaction:

Did the participant answer the question correctly? Y N

*Thank you. Please return to the beginning of the document.*

**Task 4**: Fill in your task here

Time:

Navigation path:

Reaction:

Did the participant answer the question correctly? Y N

*Thank you. Please return to the beginning of the document. Please take a few minutes to read the document/surf the website. As you familiarize yourself with it, please complete the after-test survey below. Thank you.*

*After-Test Survey and Questionnaire*

Please fill out this survey and questionnaire based on your experiences with the job documents. Thank you for your time today. (Adjust to fit your project.)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Organization** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Organization of website is clear: | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
| Usability of the website is effective: | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
| **Document Design** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Document/web page appearance makes it easy to read: | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
| Headings, layout, and white space is effective: | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
| **Content** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Short bio is effective: | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
| News articles are effective: | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
| Job documents are effective: | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
| Overall, this document is effective in fulfilling its purpose: | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |

Is there any missing information? If so, what is it?

Do you have any specific (positive or negative) comments on this document?

Do you have any suggestions on how to improve this document?

What is your overall rating of this document (5 being the highest rating)?: 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5