

USER TESTING

OVERVIEW AND GENERAL PHILOSOPHY

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WHAT THIS DOCUMENT IS

THIS IS AN OVERVIEW OF MY WORK USER TESTING AT AGE OF LEARNING, PLUS INSIGHT INTO MY USER TESTING PHILOSOPHY.

AT ***AGE OF LEARNING*** WE TESTED OUR PRODUCT QUITE A BIT. THEY RAN TWO USER TESTING GROUPS A WEEK, AND I EVEN SPENT 3 MONTHS AS A DEDICATED USER TESTER.

THE DATA AND RESULTS ARE PRIVATE OF COURSE, BUT HERE IS AN OVERVIEW OF MY THOUGHTS, FOLLOWED BY A WALK THROUGH OF A SINGLE USER TEST'S LIFE CYCLE.

"THAT'S JUST ONE PERSON" AND "OUR REAL USERS AREN'T LIKE THAT" ARE COMMON OBJECTIONS TO FINDINGS FROM QUALITATIVE USABILITY TESTING. ADDRESS THESE CONCERNS PROACTIVELY TO ENSURE YOUR RESEARCH IS EFFECTIVE.

-JAKOB NIELSEN, WWW.NNGROUP.COM

QUICK OVERVIEW

HERE ARE MY QUICK THOUGHTS ON USER TESTING OVERALL

START EARLY

DON'T WAIT UNTIL YOU KNOW EXACTLY WHAT YOU WANT. FIND A DATE - AND THE MORE LEAD TIME, THE BETTER.

MAKE A PROTOTYPE, BUT AIM FOR A BUILD.

PROTOTYPES ARE GREAT, FROM PAPER PRINTOUTS TO FUNCTIONAL AXURE DEMOS. THEY CAN BOTH INFORM THE DEVELOPERS AND SERVE AS BACKUP IN CASE THE BUILD IS NOT READY ON USER TESTING DAY. BUT AIM TO TEST A BUILD - YOU'LL TEST YOUR OBJECTIVES, LOOK FOR BUGS AND ALSO FIND USER TENDENCIES YOU HAD NEVER EVEN THOUGHT OF TESTING.

BEWARE BIAS

BIAS IS EVERYWHERE, AND IS ESPECIALLY PREVALENT IN ON-SITE USER TESTS. YOU HAVE STAKEHOLDERS WHO NEED THE PRODUCT TO DO WELL, AND PRODUCT OWNERS WHO HAVE SPENT THREE MONTHS BRINGING THIS PRODUCT INTO BEING. BE OBJECTIVE, REMIND YOUR COLLEAGUES TO BE OBJECTIVE, AND BRING IN AN UNASSOCIATED OBSERVER IF YOU CAN.

NEGATIVE RESULTS ARE AN OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE

IF THE USERS DON'T LIKE WHAT YOU ARE TESTING - REJOICE! THAT IS WHY YOU ARE TESTING. TRY TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF WHAT THEY DON'T LIKE, ADDRESS IT WITHIN THE BUILD, AND TEST AGAIN.

LISTEN TO EVERYONE

LISTEN TO THE USERS, LISTEN TO THE STAKEHOLDERS. LISTEN TO YOUR DEVELOPERS, LISTEN TO YOUR TESTING TEAM. THIS IS NOT A UX AUDIT - THIS IS A USER TEST. LISTEN TO EVERYONE BEFORE MAKING YOUR FINAL REPORT.



BASIC STEPS OF A USER TESTING LIFE CYCLE

STEP 1

GET A DATE, THEN IDEATE

FIRST, GET A DATE FOR USER TESTING.

TRY TO GET AS MUCH LEAD TIME AS YOU CAN, AND KEEP IN MIND NOT ALL USERS ARE THE SAME. WHAT AGE ARE THEY? WHAT GENDER? ARE THEY FIRST TIME USERS? ARE THEY PROS WITH YOUR PRODUCT? MAKE SURE THE DEMOGRAPHIC IS RIGHT FOR YOUR TEST.

ONCE YOU HAVE THE DATE, CALL A MEETING WITH PRODUCT OWNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS, AS WELL AS MEMBERS OF YOUR TEAM.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO TEST? IF YOU DON'T KNOW, THAT'S OK. SOMETIMES A RUN THROUGH OF THE BUILD WITH A TALK ALOUD IS GOOD. AT AGE OF LEARNING, I LED A MEETING WHERE WE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT WE WANTED TO TEST. WE EVENTUALLY FIGURED OUT THAT WE WANTED TO IMPLEMENT A TUTORIAL TO TEACH CHILDREN HOW TO ROTATE THE TUBES.

I KNEW I COULD MAKE A PROTOTYPE QUICKLY, AND WHEN I ASKED DEV IF THEY COULD BRING A BUILD BY THE USER TESTING DATE, THEY SAID ***PROBABLY.***

NOTE - SOMETIMES YOU CAN'T GET LEAD TIME FOR A USER TEST.

SOMETIMES A SLOT OPENS UP THE NEXT DAY, OR EVEN THAT DAY. THAT'S OK! SOMETIMES YOU CAN BRING SOMETHING QUICKLY - LIKE A PAPER PROTOTYPE.



STEP 2

MAKE THE DEV BUILD, BUT ALSO MAKE THE PROTOTYPE.

A GOOD PROTOTYPE IN AXURE, OR OTHER SOFTWARE, CAN SERVE TWO FUNCTIONS

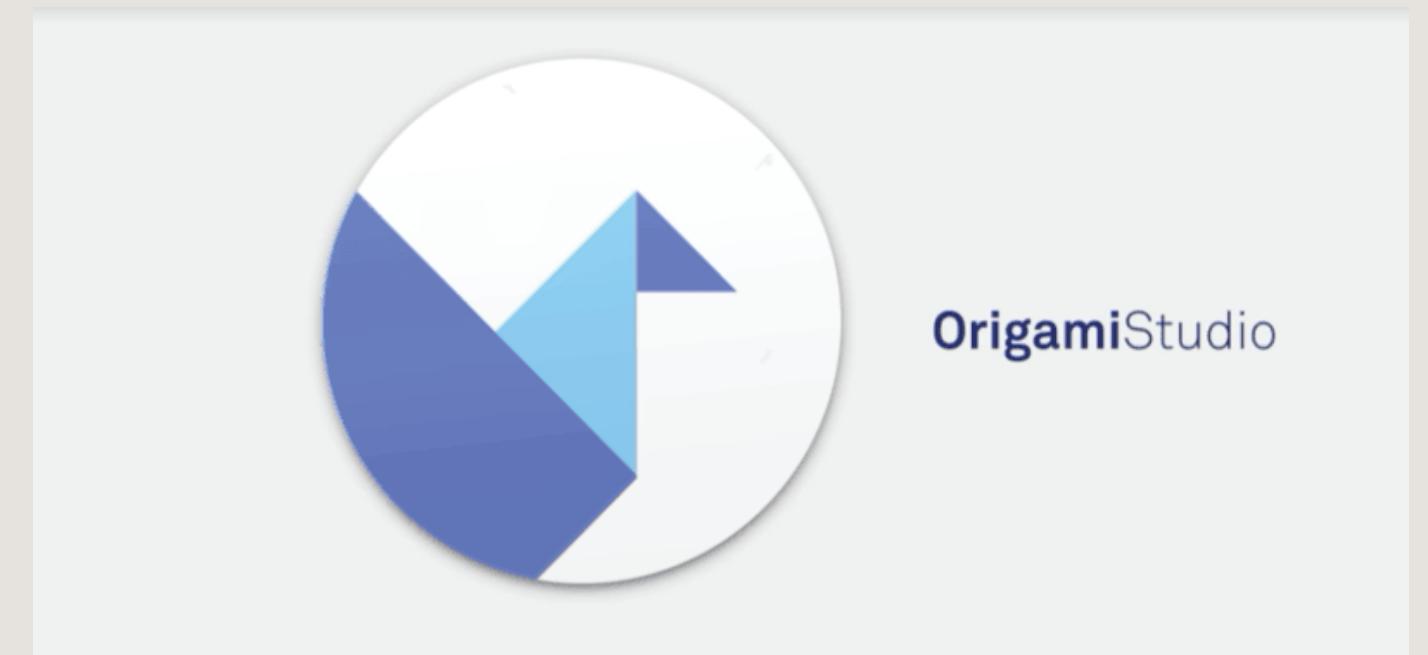
- IT MAKES A GOOD BACKUP IN CASE THE BUILD IS LATE, OR BREAKS ON TESTING DAY
- IT SERVES TO INFORM THE DEVELOPERS HOW TO BUILD IT. THE PRODUCT OWNER AND EVEN STAKEHOLDERS CAN TWEAK IT AS WELL.

PROTOTYPING CAN TAKE MANY FORMS

SOMETIMES ON SHORT NOTICE, A PAPER PRINTOUT CAN MAKE A GREAT USER TEST. SOMETIMES A DEMO IN AFTER EFFECTS CAN TELL THE DEVELOPER WHAT TIMING THEY NEED. THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS TO ALWAYS THINK ABOUT SOME SORT OF PROTOTYPE. THEY TEND TO HELP!

ONCE THE BUILD IS MADE, DEV AND QA ARE YOUR FRIENDS

TELL YOUR SCRUM MASTER TO PUT SOME HOURS ON THE BOARD FOR DEV AND QA. THINGS OFTEN GO WRONG - IE THE TESTING SERVER DOES NOT WORK ON TESTING DAY, OR THE FIRST USER TESTER CRASHES THE SYSTEM INADVERTANTLY. MAKE SURE DEV AND QA HAVE HOURS TO ASSIST AND FIX.



STEP 3

TESTING DAY

FOR THE FIRST USER TEST - MAKE SURE THE MECHANICS OF THE TEST ARE OK

FIRST MAKE SURE THE TEST IS GOING WELL - IE THE BUILD IS FUNCTIONING, AND THE USER IS ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS. IF THERE ARE PROBLEMS, ADDRESS THEM BEFORE THE NEXT USER COMES IN.

WATCH EACH AND EVERY USER

YOU MIGHT HAVE A MEETING. CAN YOU WATCH THE FEED? IT'S ALWAYS DIFFICULT TO BE IN TWO PLACES OR ONCE, BUT WITH USER TESTING SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO DO THIS.

WATCH FOR BIAS

REMOVE BIAS, OR AT LEAST BE AWARE OF IT. YOU'RE IN THE ROOM, AND EVERYONE IS ROOTING FOR THEIR PRODUCT TO DO WELL. CAN YOU BRING IN SOMEONE OUTSIDE OF YOUR TEAM TO OBSERVE? AT THE VERY LEAST, LEARN TO APPRECIATE USER CRITIQUES - THEY GIVE A CHANCE TO IMPROVE.



STEP 4

ANALYSIS AND FINAL REPORT

GATHER ALL THE DATA YOU CAN, AND LISTEN, LISTEN LISTEN.

MAKE YOUR OWN OBSERVATIONS, BUT INTERVIEW EVERYONE INVOLVED. EVERYONE SEES SOMETHING YOU DON'T AND, GATHER ALL THE VIEWPOINTS.

BEWARE PRESENTING DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND DATA.

YOUR READER MIGHT HAVE AN MBA, BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN THEY UNDERSTAND STATISTICAL ANALYSIS. TRY TO PHRASE IT IN APPROACHABLE WAYS - '4 OUT OF 6 USERS UNDERSTOOD THE FEATURE IMMEDIATELY, AND THE REMAINING 2 UNDERSTOOD IT AFTER A MODERATOR PROMPT.'

FOR THE FINAL REPORT, TRY TO PHRASE NEGATIVE FEEDBACK AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE.

IF ONLY 1/6 USERS IMMEDIATELY UNDERSTOOD THE FEATURE YOU ARE TESTING, SAY '1/6 USERS UNDERSTOOD THE FEATURE IMMEDIATELY, AND 5/6 REQUIRED A MODERATOR PROMPT. CONSIDER IMPLEMENTING A TUTORIAL IN BUILD.'

ALWAYS KEEP AN EYE ON YOUR NEXT STEPS.

THIS IS WHY YOU USER TEST - WHAT ARE YOUR NEXT STEPS?

AND FINALLY - SHOW THE FINAL REPORT TO YOUR PRODUCT OWNER, AND OFTEN STAKEHOLDERS BEFORE SUBMITTING.

THESE REPORTS END UP BEING SEEN BY MORE PEOPLE THAN YOU KNOW, AND IT OFTEN IS WISE TO COMMUNICATE THE FINDINGS BEFORE SUBMITTING.



THAT'S IT!

CONTACT ME AT ANY TIME!

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