Usability Testing: What? Why? & How?

Usability Testing is a [Black Box Testing Technique](). Usability testing is done with users point of view. It is a technique implemented in user-centred interaction design to evaluate a product or service by testing it with representative users. On the Web page the usability is a most important and required condition for survival. If the website is difficult to use then peoples will not stay on the page. If the page content or details are hard to read or understand then also peoples will leave the page. So Usability testing plays an important role which assesses how easy user interfaces is to use.

Usability Testing Definition:

The testing aim is to recognize any usability problems, gather qualitative and quantitative data and establish the participant's fulfillment with the product.

Usability testing is an essential element of quality assurance. It is the measure of a product's potential to accomplish the goals of the user. Usability testing is a method by which users of a product are asked to perform certain tasks in an effort to measure the product's ease-of-use, task time, and the user's perception of the experience. This look as a unique usability practice because it provides direct input on how real users use the system. *Usability testing* measures human-usable products to fulfill the users purpose. The item which takes benefit from usability testing are web sites or web applications, documents, computer interfaces, consumer products, and devices. Usability testing processes the usability of a particular object or group of objects, where common human-computer interaction studies try to formulate universal principles.

Usability features like "Look and feel" cannot be measured at all time because they are subjective in nature. In usability testing mostly testers test the ease with use of user interface. Tester can test user-friendly or non- friendly applications or the products too. Usability testing is a true test of how people actually use a web site & determines that whether user is feeling comfortable with other applications or Web sites according to different parameters like; the flow, browsing and layout, speed and content.

Usability testing checklist is divided into three parts Accessibility, Navigation and Content.

Section I: Accessibility

- Check about the load time of Website is realistic.
- Check if Adequate Text-to-Background Contrast is present.
- Check if font size & spacing between the texts is properly readable.
- Check if website has its 404 page or any custom designed Not Found page.
- Check if appropriate ALT tags are added for images.

Section II: Navigation

- Check if user is effortlessly recognizes the website navigation.

- Check if navigation options are understandable & short.
- Check if number of buttons/links are reasonable
- Check if the Company Logo Is Linked to Home-page
- Check if style of links is consistent on all pages & easy to understand.
- Check if site search is present on page & should be easy to accessible.

Section III: Content

- Check if URLs Are Meaningful & User-friendly
- Check if HTML Page Titles Are Explanatory
- Check if Critical Content Is Above The Fold
- Check if Emphasis (bold, etc.) Is Used Sparingly
- Check if Main Copy Is Concise & Explanatory
- Check if Major Headings Are Clear & Descriptive
- Check if Styles & Colors Are Consistent

Key Benefits of Usability Testing:

- Decrease development and redesign cost which increases user satisfaction.
- Help to determine the real requirements and tasks of the user before time in the design process.
- Analysis of your website design's strengths and weaknesses.
- Limit graphics with functions of design.
- User productivity increases, cost decreases.
- Increase business due to satisfied customers.
- Reduces user acclimation time and errors.
- Provide better quality software to the end user or the customer.
- Software will be easy to understand and use by end user or the customer.
- Software is more gladly accepted by users.
- Shorten the learning curve for new users.

Advantages of Usability Testing:

- Usability testing finds important bugs and potholes of the tested application which will be not visible to the developer.
- Using correct resources, usability test can assist in fixing all problems that user face before application releases.
- Usability test can be modified according to the requirement to support other types of testing such as functional testing, system integration testing, Unit testing, smoke testing etc.
- Planned *Usability testing* becomes very economic, highly successful and beneficial.
- Issues and potential problems are highlighted before the product is launched.

Limitations of usability testing:

Planning and data-collecting process are time consuming. It is always be confusing that why usability problems come. Its small and simple size makes it unreliable for drawing conclusions about subjective user preferences. It's hard to create the suitable context. You can't test long-term experiences. Unplanned social connections cannot be replicated. People act in a different way when they know they're being observed.

Source:

http://www.softwaretestingclass.com/usability-testing-what-why-how/