

LEARNING FROM YOUR PATRONS: AN INTRODUCTION TO USER RESEARCH

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SOME KINDS OF USER RESEARCH

- Surveys
- Card sorting
- Focus groups
- Interviews
- Personas
- Suggestion boxes
- Web analytics
- Task analysis
- Usability testing
- Heuristic evaluations

FOCUS FOR TODAY:

- Usability testing

USABILITY TESTING: THE BASICS

- Recruit representative users
- Watch them do key tasks
- Ask them to “think out loud”
- See where they run into problems
- Fix those problems



“There’s no trick to it. It’s just a simple trick!”

A QUICK DEMONSTRATION

USABILITY TESTING: THE PROCESS

1. Planning the evaluation
2. Recruiting participants
3. Running the evaluation
4. Evaluating the results

PLANNING THE EVALUATION

What should you test?

PLANNING THE EVALUATION

What should you test?

- Critical tasks
- Known or suspected problems
- Things you can probably fix (unless they are critical)

PLANNING THE EVALUATION

Specific tasks & good scenarios

- What patrons might really do
- Plausible scenarios
- Specific tasks but generic language

Question:

How easy is it for patrons to use the e-resources list?

Task:

Find a database on a particular subject.

Q: How easy is it to use the e-resources list?

T: Find a database on a particular subject.

Scenario:

You would like to find a database on a particular subject. Access the e-resources list, and choose a database for newspapers.

Q: How easy is it to use the e-resources list?

T: Find a database on a particular subject.

Scenario:

You are looking for recent newspaper articles about Colorado. Starting from the library homepage, find a database for recent newspaper articles.

Q: How easy is it to use the e-resources list?

T: Find a database on a particular subject.

Scenario:

You are looking for recent newspaper articles about Colorado. Starting from the library homepage, find a resource relevant to your search.

PLANNING THE EVALUATION

Technology & Setting

- Match real-world setting
- But private and quiet if possible
- Record the session if possible

PLANNING THE EVALUATION

Pilot Test the Session

- Run the full test with someone
- Make sure your tasks make sense
- Test the equipment and recording

RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS

Who should you recruit?

- Try to get people who represent your users
- If you can't get them, get anyone you can

RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS

How to recruit participants

- Flyers, posters, friends
- Offer a reasonable incentive
- Consider remote testing if needed

RUNNING THE EVALUATIONS

Be a good facilitator

- Explain what will happen in the session
- Emphasize that you're testing the website, not the participant

RUNNING THE EVALUATIONS

Be a good facilitator

- Be friendly, but not too helpful
- Keep them talking



Savage Chickens, by Doug Savage

<http://www.savagechickens.com/2005/11/chicken-therapy.html>

RUNNING THE EVALUATIONS

Be a good facilitator

- Try to keep the session on track
- Try to leave time for follow-up questions
- End the session on time

EVALUATING THE RESULTS

Review and record

- Review your notes and the recordings
- Look for patterns, things more than one participant did or said

EVALUATING THE RESULTS

Judgement, not proof

- Basic metric is success or failure at completing the tasks
- But results are qualitative, so really more your judgement

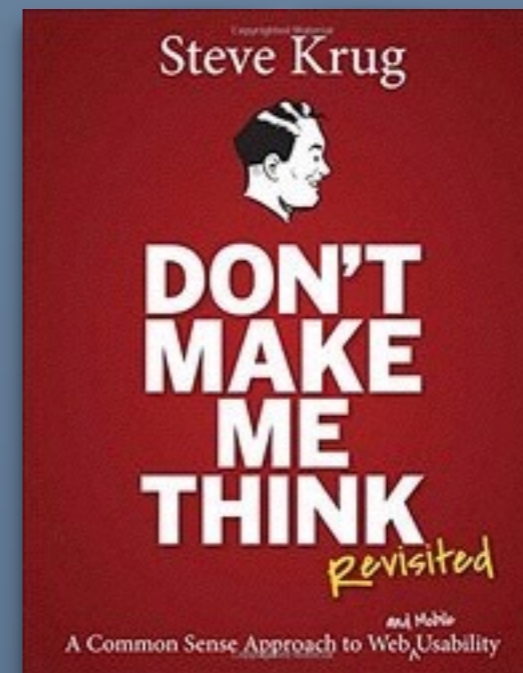
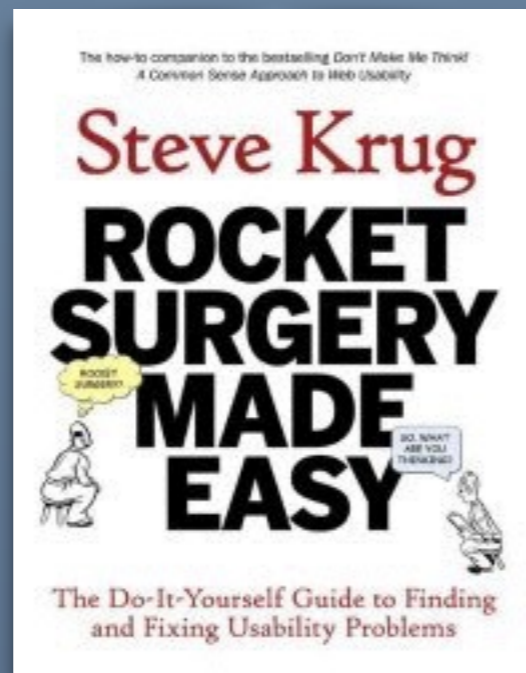
FIXING THE PROBLEMS YOU FOUND

How to fix problems

- Prioritize; fix critical problems first
- “Tweak, don’t redesign”
- Patch problems you can’t fix
- Test the fixes with another study

SOURCES FOR MORE INFO

Steve Krug's books



His company's website: <http://sensible.com/>

His [amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com/Steve-Krug/e/B001KHCFUU/) page: <http://www.amazon.com/Steve-Krug/e/B001KHCFUU/>

SOURCES FOR MORE INFO

Free info online

- **Usability.gov**
(<http://www.usability.gov/>)
- **Nielsen-Norman Group**
(<https://www.nngroup.com/articles/usability-101-introduction-to-usability/>)
- **Usability Body of Knowledge**
(<http://www.usabilitybok.org/usability-testing>)

SOURCES FOR MORE INFO

Free help from the State Library

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RECENT PLA PRESENTATION

Steal this UX:

Improving Your Collection with
Content Strategy and User Research

Annabelle Mortensen

*Skokie Public Library
Skokie, IL*

Stephanie Anderson

*Darien Library
Darien, CT*

RECENT PLA PRESENTATION

Steal this UX: Research Examples

- One-on-one Interviews of Patrons
- A/B Testing of Signs at Desk
- Card Sorting to find better ways to group & display books

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