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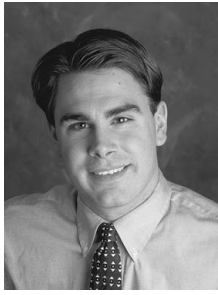
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Best Practices For Usability Testing

FORRESTER®

Helping Business Thrive On Technology Change

FORRESTER®



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Best Practices For Usability Testing

Global 3,500 companies have begun to adopt usability testing. But their early efforts are naive. To get it right, firms must master new skills and integrate usability testing throughout their Web development processes.

2 MARKET OVERVIEW

- Companies plan to keep spending on usability in 2002 . . .
- . . . but vendors struggle to get a share of client budgets.

4 ANALYSIS

- Seven common problems derail usability testing efforts.
- Cheap and dirty user testing beats no testing at all.
- Firms should use outside experts to build in-house skills.

8 WHAT IT MEANS

- Usability testing will sink into development processes.

9 RELATED MATERIAL

10 GRAPEVINE

11 ENDNOTES

RELATED MATERIAL

Expert Sources

Our experts included: David Bishop, Beth Blumenthal, Susan M. Dray, Theo Mandel, Larry Marine, Charles L. Mauro, Deborah J. Mayhew, Heather McQuaid, Jon Meads, Julie Nowicki, Whitney Quesenbery, Jeff Rubin, Eric Schaffer, David A. Siegel, Carolyn Snyder, Jared Spool, Phil Terry, and Melinda L. Weber.

Vendors Surveyed Or Interviewed For This Report

Aaron Marcus and Associates
www.amanda.com

Catalyst Group Design
www.catalystgroupdesign.com

Cognetics
www.cognetics.com

Cooper
www.cooper.com

Creative Good
www.creativegood.com

Deborah J. Mayhew & Associates
www.vineyard.net/biz/drdeb/

Diamond Bullet
www.diamondbullet.com

Dray & Associates
www.dray.com

Enervision Media
www.enervisionmedia.com

Human Factors International
www.humanfactors.com

i-on interactive
www.i-on.com

Interface Design and Development
www.interface-design.net

IntuitiveDesign
www.intuitivedesign.com

MauroNewMedia
www.mauronewmedia.com

MAYA Design
www.maya.com

Nelson Usability Associates
www.nelsonusability.com

Optavia
www.optavia.com

Performance Research and Design
www.prad.com

Snyder Consulting
www.snyderconsulting.net

Tec-Ed
www.teced.com

The TerraNova Group
www.terranova.tv

UI Wizards
www.uiwizards.com

uLab | PDA
www.participatorydesign.com

Usability Architects
www.usability-architects.com

The Usability Group
www.usability.com

Usable Products Company
www.usableproducts.com

User Interface Engineering
www.uie.com

UserWorks
www.userworks.com

the westport company
www.westportcompany.com

Related Research

May 2002 Forrester Report “Best Practices For Web Site Reviews”

April 2002 Forrester Report “Packaged Apps Fail The Usability Test”

December 2001 Forrester Report “You Get The Site You Deserve”

October 2001 Forrester Report “Site Development’s Fate”

June 2001 Forrester Report “Get ROI From Design”

G R A P E V I N E

BMW's 7 Series -- unusable at any speed?

Auto manufacturers have a long history of testing products with users. But when it comes to their online efforts, many auto OEMs have sacrificed usability for slick navigation that keeps users from getting to the information they want. According to the May 12, 2002, article in *The New York Times*, "Dazed by a Technical Knockout," designers at BMW have transferred these poor Web design practices to the new BMW 7 Series sedan. BMW replaced many traditional controls with a system called iDrive, which consists of a jogdial, buttons, and a computer screen and reportedly requires several frustrating hours to learn. Forrester's take: Bad usability is one thing on a Web site, but it's no laughing matter when it causes a crash -- as cell phone makers have learned.

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The good news is: It looks great. The bad news is: You can't use it.

One of the most common usability testing pitfalls cited by the vendors we interviewed was that clients often want tests to validate high-level site design concepts, not identify specific problems. But apparently site owners are not the only ones who become invested in their designs. Julie Nowicki, president of Optavia, found that during a usability test, even one of the test recruits was disappointed in the failure of a design: "I really liked it, but it's impossible to use!"

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And now a word from our interviewees.

As part of the research for this report, we emailed a questionnaire to Global 3,500 companies asking about their usability testing practices. At least one person found our email questionnaire "clunky" and recommended that we use an online application instead. However, we thought a format where people could check off their responses and quickly send them back to us without going to a Web site was easy to use. Perhaps some usability testing would have shown us otherwise.

Forrester's WholeView™ Research provides clients with unified guidance on customer trends, business strategy, and technology investments through Technographics®, TechStrategy™, and TechRankings™. WholeView Research drills down into the most important details of an issue while maintaining a holistic perspective of the impact of technology change on business.

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Financial Services

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Healthcare

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Forrester Events

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Salt Lake City, Utah
September 18-19, 2002

Register by July 15, 2002 and qualify for an early registration discount (Forrester clients: \$1,200; Nonclients: \$1,350).

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Television's On-Demand Transformation
New York, N.Y.

September 29-30, 2002
Register by August 1, 2002 and qualify for an early registration discount (Forrester clients: \$1,200; Nonclients: \$1,350).

Financial Services Forum Europe
Harnessing Technology For Profitable Innovation

London
October 7-8, 2002