

Usability test script – Desktop software

Adapted from *Rocket Surgery Made Easy*

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THE INSTRUCTIONS

- ☐ **The program you are testing should not be open on the screen. Show something neutral like the desktop instead.**

Hi, _____. My name is _____, and I'm going to be walking you through this session today.

Before we begin, I have some information for you, and I'm going to read it to make sure that I cover everything.

You probably already have a good idea of why we asked you here, but let me go over it again briefly. We're asking people to try using a program that we're working on so we can see whether it works as intended. The session should take about an hour.

The first thing I want to make clear right away is that we're testing the *program*, not you. You can't do anything wrong here. In fact, this is probably the one place today where you don't have to worry about making mistakes.

As you use the program, I'm going to ask you as much as possible to try to think out loud: to say what you're looking at, what you're trying to do, and what you're thinking. This will be a big help to us.

Also, please don't worry that you're going to hurt our feelings. We're doing this to improve the site, so we need to hear your honest reactions.

If you have any questions as we go along, just ask them. I may not be able to answer them right away, since we're interested in how people do when they don't have someone sitting next to them to help. But if you still have any questions when we're done I'll try to answer them then. And if you need to take a break at any point, just let me know.

You may have noticed the microphone. With your permission, we're going to record what happens on the screen and our conversation. The recording will only be used to help us figure out how to improve the program, and it won't be seen by anyone except the people working on this project. And it helps me, because I don't have to take as many notes.

Also, there are a few people from the design team observing this session in another room. (They can't see us, just the screen.)

If you would, I'm going to ask you to sign a simple permission form for us. It just says that we have your permission to record you, and that the recording will only be seen by the people working on the project.

- ☐ **Give them a recording permission form and a pen**
- ☐ **While they sign it, START the SCREEN RECORDER**

Do you have any questions so far?

THE QUESTIONS

OK. Before we look at the site, I'd like to ask you just a few quick questions.

First, what's your occupation? What do you do all day?

What kinds of PC or Mac programs do you use most often?

Roughly how many hours a week altogether—just a rough estimate— would you say you spend using the Internet, including Web browsing and email, at work and at home?

Do you have any favorite Web sites?

THE FIRST SCREEN TOUR

OK, great. We're done with the questions, and we can start looking at things.

☐ **Take the mouse and open the program.**

First, I'm going to ask you to look at this first screen and tell me what you make of it: what strikes you about it, what you think the program does, what kinds of things you think you can do with it. Just look around and do a little narrative.

You can scroll if you want to, but don't click on anything yet.

☐ **Allow this to continue for three or four minutes, at most.**

THE TASKS

Thanks. Now I'm going to ask you to try doing some specific tasks. I'm going to read each one out loud and give you a printed copy.

I'm also going to ask you to do these tasks without using Search. We'll learn a lot more about how well the site works that way.

And again, as much as possible, it will help us if you can try to think out loud as you go along.

- ☐ **Hand the participant the first scenario, and read it aloud.**
- ☐ **Allow the user to proceed until you don't feel like it's producing any value or the user becomes very frustrated.**
- ☐ **Repeat for each task or until time runs out.**

PROBING

Thanks, that was very helpful.

If you'll excuse me for a minute, I'm just going to see if the people on the team have any follow-up questions they'd like me to ask you.

- ☐ **Call the observation room to see if the observers have any questions.**
- ☐ **Ask the observers' questions, then probe anything you want to follow up on.**

WRAPPING UP

Do you have any questions for me, now that we're done?

- ☐ **Give them their incentive, or remind them it will be sent to them.**
- ☐ **Stop the screen recorder and save the file.**
- ☐ **Thank them and escort them out.**