

Major assignment two: Usability study option

Assignment rationale

Practitioners do not evaluate interfaces by intuition. They use structured methods that produce evidence other people can examine and use. A usability study puts the artifact in front of real people and reports what happens. This assignment moves you from noticing a principle to evaluating an artifact against a defined set of criteria, using a real-world research method.

Where to start

First, familiarize yourself with a usability test through the assigned readings as well as:

- Krug, S. (2010). *Usability test demo* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1UCDUOB_aS8]
- UXBoost. (2021, May 4). *How to write a usability testing report [Get a free template]* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5RYuIU5jq8>
- UXBoost usability report template [PowerPoint], in Canvas, from the UXBoost video.
- Hayhoe and Brewer Chapter 7 and Chapter 12.

Then, choose your artifact. Strong candidates include a self-checkout kiosk, a patient portal, tax or banking software, an EV charging interface, assembly instructions, or even a game's onboarding or HUD. Confirm that you can access the artifact enough to evaluate it thoroughly.

What is due

Submit a usability study report that:

- Provides a brief description of the artifact
- Clearly explains the study procedure (3-5 tasks, 2-3 participants, how you recruited the participants), citing any published method that was followed or template that was used
- States findings in clear, organized way (tables and bullets are helpful here)
- Provides a short analysis or list of problems based on the observations
- Provides actionable recommendations to remedy the problems
- Uses APA format for citations

Tips and resources

- Tasks are goal oriented: "Refill your prescription" rather than "Click the refill button."
- Let participants struggle. The struggle is the data. *Do not coach your participants.*
- Keep a record as you go. Take lots of notes, recording verbatim what participants said.
- "Increase the font size of the heading" is actionable. "Improve clarity" is vague.

Grading Rubric

Criterion	Expectation (Full marks)
Artifact selection (5 points)	An artifact rich enough to surface real issues, and accessible enough to evaluate thoroughly.
Method documented (15 points)	The method is documented well enough to be repeated. For a heuristic evaluation, the heuristic set with its source and the scope inspected. For a usability study, the participants, the tasks as given, and the procedure.
Findings supported by evidence (25 points)	Every finding is specific and tied to evidence a reader could confirm: a screen, a step, an observation, or a participant quote.
Severity rated and cited (10 points)	A severity scale is named, cited, and each level defined. Every finding is rated.
Recommendations (15 points)	Each finding is paired with a specific, actionable recommendation, ordered by severity.
Organization and APA (10 points)	Logically organized headings, findings in a table or well-organized list, and APA used throughout, including the template and any source adapted.
Total possible	80 points