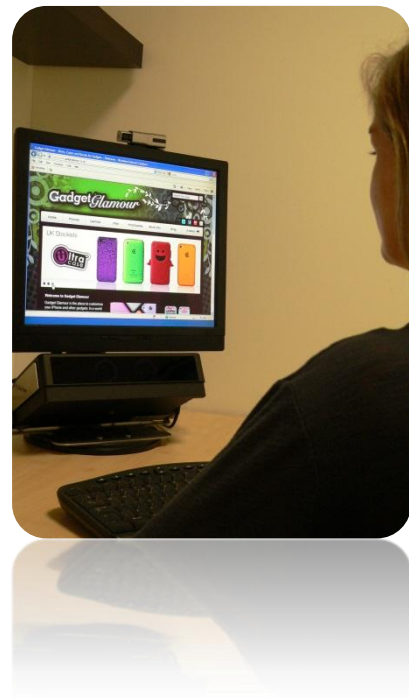


How to Buy Usability Testing & Eye Tracking

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Overview

Bringing usability testing in-line with the culture of an organisation, and convincing key stakeholders of the benefits of usability and engaging with a neutral usability partner can be difficult. There are many reasons for pushing back on usability from costs and timescales to not trusting the outcomes.

We have constructed a guide that provides answers to the more common barriers that we have heard in our experience. These will help you show that usability can give a significant return on investment, and by choosing the right type of methodology the findings can take the team and business forward and bring everyone together. We've also highlighted some things to look out for when engaging with an external usability agency.

How to Buy Usability Testing & Eye Tracking

If you are already reading this you're probably already aware of the world of usability. You may be looking for some more information or are looking for some convincing evidence to bring usability testing into the business. We'll start with the basics and then guide you through some more in-depth knowledge.

What is usability testing?

Usability testing puts the users at the heart of the design process with the emphasis being on testing participants who are representative of the target audience, rather than people already ingrained within the business. There are many different reasons for conducting usability testing such as finding out barriers to completion and key journey testing but in essence usability testing finds out how **useful, efficient, effective** a product is and how **satisfied** the user is when using it.

Why can't we just do it ourselves?

One of the main push backs from a project team is that they can do the usability testing themselves. There are a few things to look out for:

Although testing on anybody is better than testing on nobody, you have to guard against false findings. **Testing on people within the business** can be too close to the subject and may not be your actual target market. Testing on real users and the recruitment methods used is pivotal. There are many subtleties that an experienced user experience consultant will guard against when recruiting so that it doesn't affect the experiment. An example of this is people not knowing what they will be testing before they come along so that they don't research the product that they will be using.

Many design teams implement **remote methods** as their approach to usability. There are many tools out there that allow you to conduct studies without getting users

*"Usability is the extent to which a product can be used by specified users to achieve specified goals with **effectiveness, efficiency and satisfaction** in a specified context of use."*

ISO 9241-11: Guidance on Usability (1998)

into a usability lab. These methods have obvious cost savings and users can be from different locations. There are also tools that allow you to discover usability issues from web analytics. The issues arise with methodology and are you actually finding out what you need to know. Do you actually get to know why users are doing what they do, and is the feedback users are giving too considered? It is so dependent on the implementation of the experiment and there are risks involved at many of the stages, e.g. users recruited can be serial market research participants and have learned what feedback to give which may not be truly what they were thinking at the time.

At SimpleUsability, we often describe ourselves as Switzerland and talk on behalf of the users. A third party usability company can be **neutral** and this aids buy-in from the team about the findings. This is especially the case with an eye tracking study, where it creates evidence for each of the issues and power is passed to the key stakeholder of the project and gives them the tools for change.

It's **hard work!** There is an amazing amount of work that goes into test preparation, conducting the testing and analysing the results. Engaging with an external usability profession means that the usability testing can happen alongside the work being carried out by the team without them being distracted.

Isn't usability testing expensive, especially with eye tracking?

Before discount methods of conducting usability were advocated by many well-known usability professionals, the emphasis of usability research was on testing lots of users, creating a large study which was inevitably expensive. But methodology has evolved to make usability testing with an external company viable.

You **can test with 5 to 6 users** per segment of your audience, as long as this segment has shared behaviours. The importance of 'shared behaviour' is because you want to avoid the 'cookie cutter analysis' issue where the selection of 5 or 6 participants that you are looking at have such wide ranging needs and goals that you can't trust the outcomes of the research.

A common outcry from those against eye tracking is that it costs more, but here we have to fall back on the analogy of 'you get what you pay for'. Eye tracking is a tool that allows a natural methodology to be carried out. People don't know why they do what they do, and this is where traditional methods of users thinking aloud while they talk fall down. With an eye tracking study, users are left alone to carry out tasks without interruption and then the eye tracking is played back to the user. This gives them a visual cue to remember what they were thinking at the time. Issues are documented that can be trusted and puts the user at such ease that they give you valuable feedback

about the proposition of the product. Eye tracking will provide you with an **amazing amount of detail from a smaller sample size** of participants.

Why do usability testing?

There are measurable cost benefits of conducting usability testing. Recent studies have shown that companies who carry out frequent studies benefit from greater improved conversion rates than those who don't. Benefits range from:

- Increased conversion rates.
- Remove barriers for completion.
- Improve user journeys so that users are more satisfied and become returning customers.
- Reduce contact with the company – it's not just about making money but also saving money, e.g. reducing the amount of support contact that users need over the telephone to customer services.
- Gain valuable insight about the proposition of the product rather than just usability issues.
- Become the best in class for your particular area of business because you are putting the user at the centre and are evolving your space.
- Reduce guessing and arguing about decisions within the team, using the insight to inform the process.
- Increase the culture of usability within the company.

The benefits of eye tracking in usability testing

Objective – The majority of behaviour comes from your subconscious, so people find it

hard to verbalise at the time of doing a task what they are thinking.

Quantifiable – eye tracking data is accumulated for the users and therefore analysis and measurement can be found out dependent on sample size

Truth filter – the eyes don't give anything away and the feedback given is always backed up with what they actually looked at.

Respectful – because users aren't interrupted during their tasks they are able to act in a natural and relaxed manner. Users don't become stressed and therefore give more valuable feedback.

How to convince others?

Sometimes you just have to **get stuck in** and do some usability testing so that people can see what it involves and what the benefits are. You don't have to start with a large project. At SimpleUsability we provide a usability testing day service where the team comes in for one day, three users are tested in the morning and a workshop is run in the afternoon. The aim of this is to sell usability into the company and understand the types of issues that can be identified. Sometimes team members find it hard to visualise the process and what they would be getting involved with. Showing them **examples and samples** of eye tracking usability testing outputs may help them buy in to the process.

Usability doesn't have to stop production and doesn't kill creativity. Choose an agency that are **flexible** and will work alongside schedules and feed into the design process with **actionable findings**.

Proof is hard to be argued with, either use statistics from other companies or show how the company has benefited from previous usability studies. Grab their attention with some benefits of usability testing.

60% uplift in conversions
& increased basket size.
The Big Bathroom Shop

22.5% uplift in sales.
Bensons for Beds

48% of visitors on e-commerce websites don't buy due to lack of usability.

Involve key personnel in the process of deciding about usability rather than evangelising about it. This way you can address their needs and help them achieve what the usability testing has to do for them.

Target the concerns that some team members may have that usability is not **scientific**. The qualitative findings discovered from using eye tracking with usability testing means that users comment when they are shown a video of their own eye tracking. Therefore their comments are rooted in what they actually did and what they actually looked at. When testing with more users the eye tracking data can be measured and designs can be benchmarked against each other or used for comparison in the future.

How to get started / what do you need to know internally before approaching a usability company?

So if you have now decided to engage with an external company, a good agency will be able to guide you through the process but there are a few things that it's useful to document before initial conduct.

Timescales – when do the project outputs need to be delivered by in order for the team to progress with their deadlines.

Budget – this allows the external company provide a solution against what you are trying to achieve but still being realistic about spend.

Audience – who are your target audience? Don't worry if you don't know this, your chosen agency should have ways of helping you document this.

Scope – what do you actually want to test, e.g. a prototype website and two competitors website. More importantly what is out of scope? You may want to see people browsing but don't want the checkout process tested.

Objectives – what are you trying to achieve from doing the study?

How to buy eye tracking – some questions to ask your agency

There are a few things to look out for and be on guard against when commissioning an eye tracking study:

- **Do the users talk during the tasks?**

Traditional usability testing uses a method called 'Concurrent think aloud' which involves the users verbalising while completing the tasks. This doesn't work with eye tracking as the user is disrupted while eye tracking data is being recorded and will affect the results.

- **How are the main findings generated?**

You should be aware that some eye tracking solutions mean that an interview is not conducted with the user so findings are **inferred** from the eye tracking outputs. These may be false and not correlate with why the product was attracting attention from the user.

- **What are the delivery times of the report?**

It is a common misconception that eye tracking analysis takes months to interpret. Depending on the type of project embarked on, eye tracking can quickly make the issues clear and multiple types of reports should be offered. This could be from top line findings to quantitative in-depth analysis.

- **How long have you been doing eye tracking?**

Because the outputs are so truthful, experiment design for an eye tracking project is key to a successful project. A lengthier **experience** of using eye tracking means that they will be more likely to have evolved a rigorous methodology. This includes set-up of the testing environment, session structure and reporting process.

About Us

SimpleUsability works with major brands and organisations helping them understand the people who use their products and services through market research and usability. We then help evolve how their products and services might be made easier to use for existing customers and new customers alike.

We use specialist technologies, such as eye tracking, to capture conscious and subconscious behaviours of people interacting with printed material, web, video, packaging and in-store fixtures. Presenting back actionable findings to be used to build a more successful offering, increasing engagement, curtailing drop out, and ensuring ROI.

We are passionate about what we do and about making a positive difference to our customers businesses, don't trust your usability and research needs to anyone else until you've spoken to SimpleUsability.

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