

# Evaluating usability & User experience (UX) Test methods and pitfalls to avoid

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## **About Usability Partners**

- Independent usability consultancy company based in Sweden, operating internationally
- Started in 2001 (founding partners consulting since the early 90s)
- ISO-based work practice, tools & methods
- User-centred design approach in all projects
- Knowledge from hundreds of usability tests
- Purpose built usability 'test lab'
- Experienced consultants dedicated to making it easier to use!



#### Web sites/applications

- Arla
- D-link
- Eniro
- Euroflorist
- Fidelity International
- Handelsbanken
- ICA
- Kuoni
- Nordea
- Trygg-Hansa
- Viasat

#### **Software applications**

- Folksam
- Ikea
- Raysearch
- Regeringskansliet
- Siemens
- Sjukvårdsrådgivning
- SL
- Södersjukhuset

#### Mobile

- Betsson
- DanskeBank
- Nordea
- Sanoma
- Scania
- Skandiabanken
- Svenska Spel
- TeliaSonera
- TUI
- TryggHansa
- Unibet
- Vodafone

#### Industrial products/systems

- DeLaval
- Ericsson
- Kockums
- Saab Tech

#### Intranet

- DeLaval
- Electrolux
- Lärarförbundet
- Metall
- Posten
- Swedbank
- Vattenfall
- Vetenskapsrådet

#### Home appliances

- Boxer
- Electrolux
- Samsung
- Securitas
- TeliaSonera



#### Partners in:

The Baltics, Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, Norway, Germany, Poland, Spain, UK, ...



## What is Usability?

Usability is about creating products and systems which are "easy to use" - meeting the needs of intended users.

 The effectiveness, efficiency and satisfaction with which specified users can achieve specified goals in particular environments. (ISO 9241)



## So, the critical factors are...

- Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Satisfaction

Factors that can be **MEASURED** 

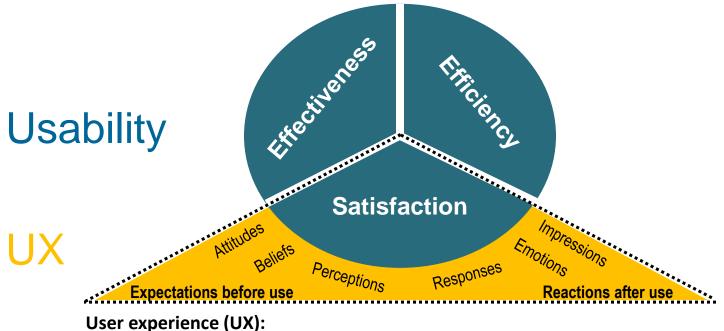
### Affected by:

- Who the user is
- The user's situation (environment)
- What the user wants to do





## Usability & User experience (UX)



"A person's perceptions and responses resulting from the use and / or anticipated use of a product, system or service" (ISO 9241-210)



### When might you need to test usability/UX?

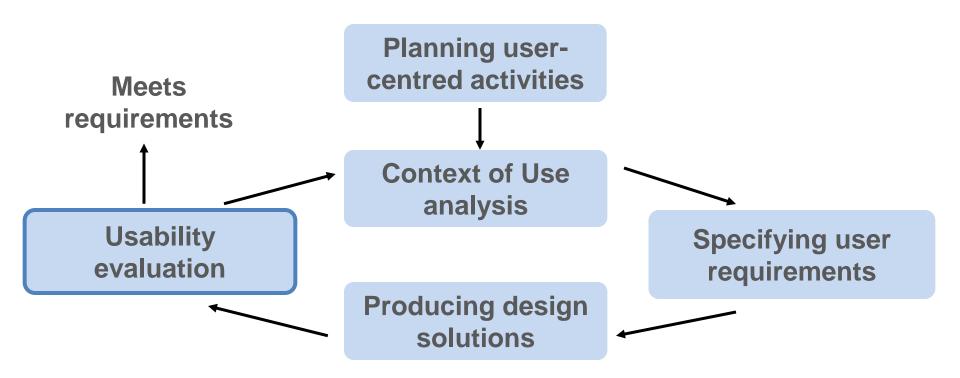
### 1. During development of something new

- As part of a user-centred development process
- In the past usability testing was done as a 'quality check' near the end of development.
- Today, iterative testing starts early and is used to keep UI development on track, answer design questions, and ensure a usable end result.



## User-centred design

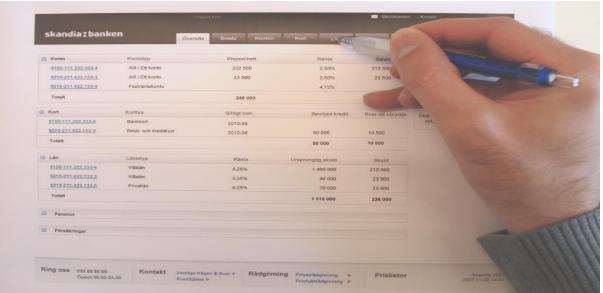
ISO 9241-210: Human-centred design for interactive systems



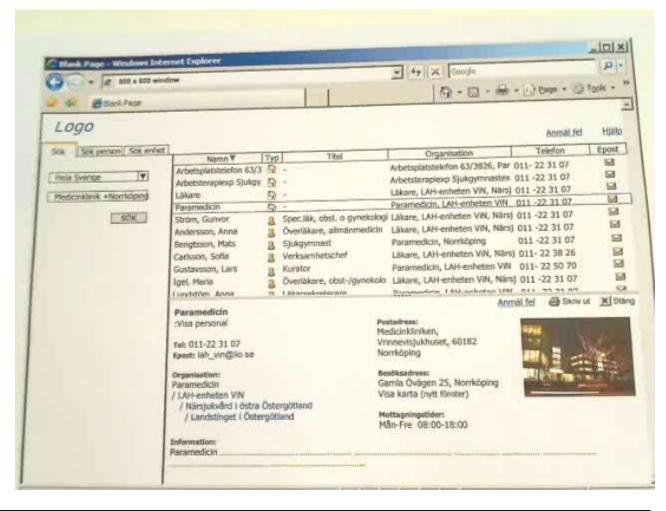


## Testing an early prototype on paper

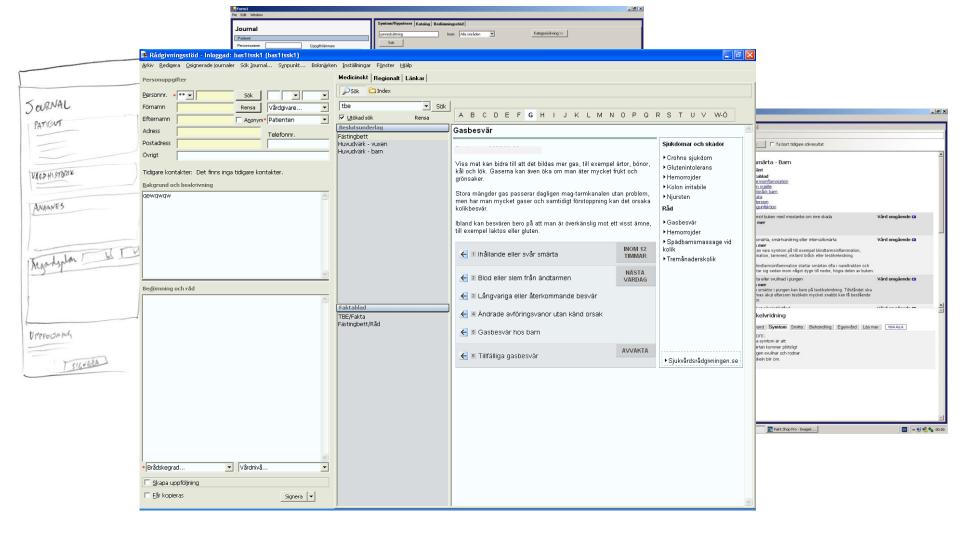












### When might you need to test usability/UX?

### 1. During development of something new

### 2. When procuring a new standard product/system

- Which will best suit our users?
- How does productivity compare between the different products/systems available?
- Are they 'good enough'?



### Procuring a standard solution

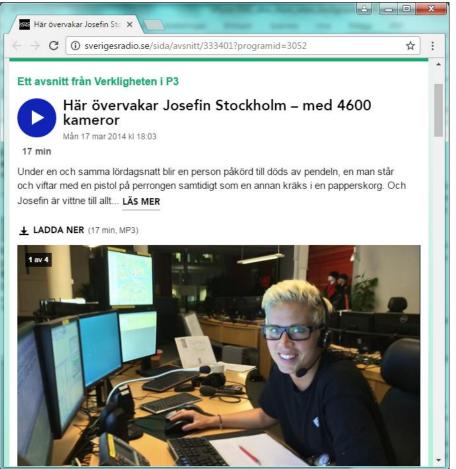
- "Easy to use" isn't a feature or function most suppliers would say their solution is easy to use!
  - Has it been usability tested for your intended use?
- Specify and follow-up measurable usability and user experience criteria, e.g.
  - User effectiveness and efficiency for key tasks
  - User satisfaction ratings (standardised)



38% of people couldn't use this solution!



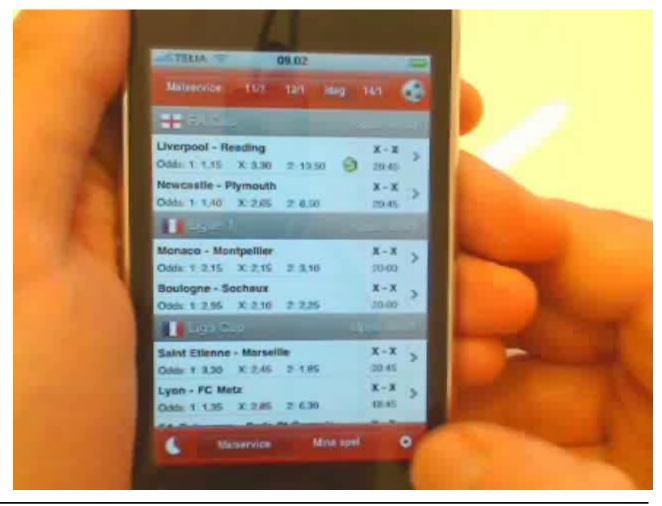




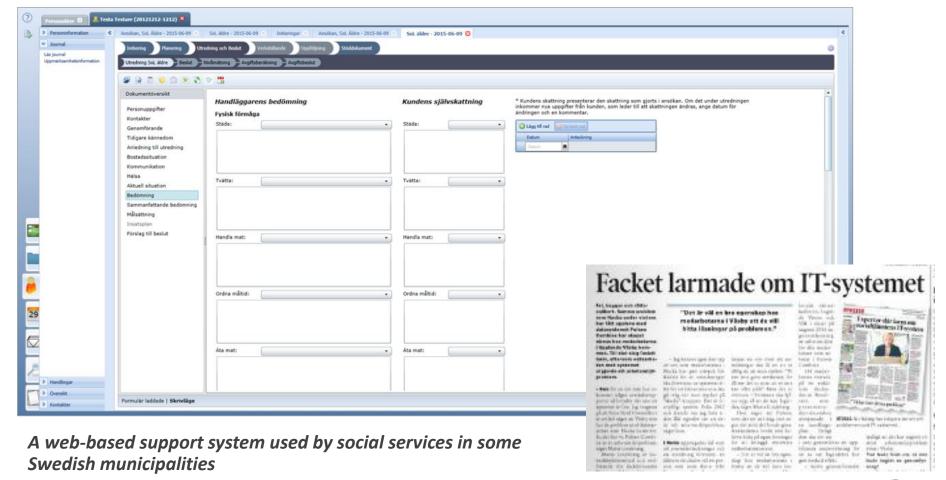
### When might you need to test usability/UX?

- 1. During development of something new
- 2. When procuring a new standard product/system
- 3. To analyse weaknesses in an existing product/system already in use
  - Why isn't it working for users? How can we fix it?
  - Can we help users/customers be more productive/successsful?











### **Common evaluation methods**

- Expert inspection/assessment
- Iterative prototype testing during development
- Usability lab testing (in-depth)
  - With and without eye-tracking
- Field studies observing existing usage
- User satisfaction surveys



### Expert assessments/inspections



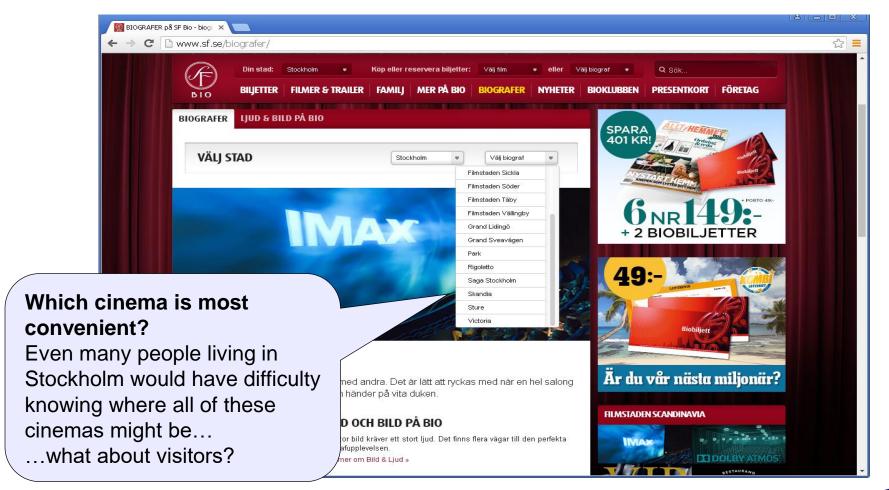
- Usage walkthroughs
- Heuristics-based reviews (e.g. Nielsen)
- Standards-based assessments (e.g. ISO 9241-110)
- Style guide conformity reviews (e.g. Windows UX)
- Accessibility audits (e.g. W3C)

#### **Advantages**

- Quick and efficient
- Throughout development
- At development location

- Requires experts
- Can miss real usage issues
- Difficult to prioritise findings







### Iterative prototype testing





#### **Advantages**

- Fairly quick
- Captures real usage issues
- Helps steer design decisions

- Requires regular access to users
- Requires experienced moderator
- Not possible to measure usability



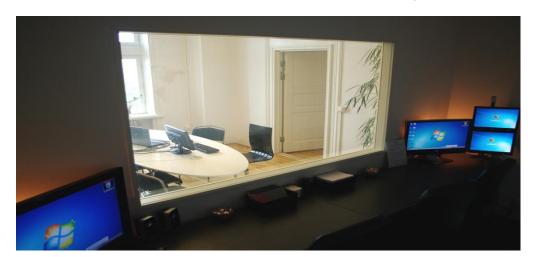
## Scheduling iterative usability tests

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7
Planning & preparation							
Participant recruitment							
User-based tests							
Analysis and report work							

- Tests are scheduled in advance and recruited for well before test content is ready.
- **Iteration and incrementation** the next test can follow up on changes made since the previous one and/or evaluate new content/functionality.
- Design/development work in parallel designers can observe tests but otherwise continue their work (and shouldn't be testing their own designs with users anyway!)



### Usability 'lab' testing





#### **Advantages**

- Designers can observe. Recorded.
- Effectiveness & efficiency measures
- Indepth analysis (e.g. eye-tracking)

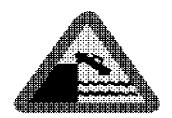
- Requires equipment
- More expensive
- Requires experienced moderator



### Categorising problems by severity

#### 1: Showstoppers (=Critical!)

- users unable to proceed
- correct results cannot be achieved
- performance severely degraded
- major errors very likely



#### 2: Degraded performance (=Major problem)

- results can only be achieved by work-arounds
- unintuitive operating routines



#### 3: Minor problems

- irritating effects
- cosmetic faults





### What can you learn from a test?

 "One week's testing with users identified more usability problems than we usually find in a whole year of operation."

- A project manager working on improving an internal bank application with over 1500 users



### Field studies / existing usage



#### **Advantages**

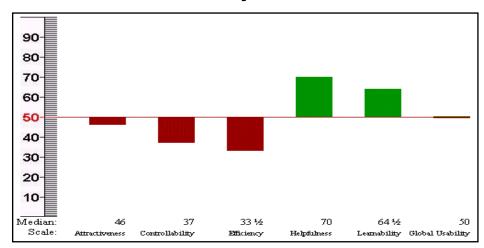
- Real/natural situation
- Indepth analysis
- Can explore new requirements

- Difficult for others to observe
- Can be very time consuming
- Recording can be problematic



### User satisfaction surveys

Statements 1-10 of 20	Strongly Strongly Agree Disagree
This web site has much that is of interest to me.	00000
It is difficult to move around this web site.	00000
I can quickly find what I want on this web site.	00000
This web site seems logical to me.	00000
This web site needs more introductory explanations.	00000
The pages on this web site are very attractive.	00000
I feel in control when I'm using this web site.	00000
This web site is too slow.	00000
This web site helps me find what I am looking for.	00000
Learning to find my way around this web site is a problem.	00000



#### **Advantages**

- Quick and efficient
- Easy to administer
- Reflects real user satisfaction

- Getting users to answer…!
- Requires valid & reliable questions
- Results easily misinterpreted



## Mistakes you don't want to make...

- Not doing user testing ("we have a UX designer so the design will be fine!"), or only testing once the design is 'ready'.
- 'Testing' in a focus group style activity
  - OK for requirements, hopeless for usability testing
- Interviewing users in a user test
  - You might ask a few questions before/afterwards, but a user test isn't an interview.
- 'User' testing with:
  - Local office staff
  - Members of a "reference group"
  - The project sponsor
  - People from a regular panel of users
- Having a design stakeholder evaluate the design or run user tests



## Questions?

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