

# LEARNING FROM YOUR PATRONS: AN INTRODUCTION TO USER RESEARCH

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# SOME KINDS OF USER RESEARCH

- Surveys
- Card sorting
- Focus groups
- Interviews
- Personas
- Suggestion boxes
- Web analytics
- Task analysis
- Usability testing
- Heuristic evaluations

# FOCUS FOR TODAY:

- Usability testing

# USABILITY TESTING: THE BASICS

- Recruit representative users
- Watch them do key tasks
- Ask them to “think out loud”
- See where they run into problems
- Fix those problems



“There’s no trick to it. It’s just a simple trick!”

# A QUICK DEMONSTRATION

# ANOTHER DEMONSTRATION

Steve Krug Usability Demo:

<https://youtu.be/QckIzHC99Xc>

# USABILITY TESTING: THE PROCESS

1. Planning the evaluation
2. Recruiting participants
3. Running the evaluation
4. Evaluating the results



# PLANNING THE EVALUATION

*What should you test?*

[ chat: what kinds of things would you like to test at your library?]

## PLANNING THE EVALUATION

### *What should you test?*

- Critical systems
- Known or suspected problems
- Things you can probably fix (unless they are critical)

## PLANNING THE EVALUATION

### *Specific tasks & good scenarios*

- What patrons might really do
- Plausible scenarios
- Specific tasks but generic language

## Question:

*How easy is it for patrons to use the e-resources list?*

## Task:

*Find a database on a particular subject.*

*Q: How easy is it to use the e-resources list?*

*T: Find a database on a particular subject.*

## **Scenario:**

You would like to find a database on a particular subject. Access the e-resources list, and choose a database for newspapers.

*Q: How easy is it to use the e-resources list?*

*T: Find a database on a particular subject.*

## **Scenario:**

You are looking for recent news stories about Colorado. Starting from the library homepage, find a database for recent newspaper articles.

*Q: How easy is it to use the e-resources list?*

*T: Find a database on a particular subject.*

## **Scenario:**

You are looking for recent newspaper articles about Colorado. Starting from the library homepage, find a resource relevant to your search.

# PLANNING THE EVALUATION

## *More Advice on Tasks*

Amy Schade, "Write Better Qualitative Usability Tasks:  
Top 10 Mistakes to Avoid,"

Nielsen Norman Group, 9 April 2017

<https://www.nngroup.com/articles/better-usability-tasks/>



# PLANNING THE EVALUATION

## *Technology & Setting*

- Match real-world setting
- But private and quiet if possible
- Record the session if possible
- Observers, or just you?

# PLANNING THE EVALUATION

## *Pilot Test the Session*

- Run the full test with someone
- Make sure your tasks make sense
- Test the equipment and recording

## RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS

### *Who should you recruit?*

- Try to get people who represent your users
- If you can't get them, get anyone you can

# RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS

*Who should you recruit?*

[ please chat about who you'd recruit and how ]

# RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS

## *How to recruit participants*

- Flyers, posters, friends
- Offer a reasonable incentive
- Consider remote testing if needed

## RUNNING THE EVALUATIONS

### *Be a good facilitator*

- Explain what will happen in the session
- Emphasize that you're testing the website, not the participant

## RUNNING THE EVALUATIONS

### *Be a good facilitator*

- Be friendly, but not too helpful
- Keep them talking



Savage Chickens, by Doug Savage

<http://www.savagechickens.com/2005/11/chicken-therapy.html>



## RUNNING THE EVALUATIONS

### *Be a good facilitator*

- Try to keep the session on track
- Try to leave time for follow-up questions
- End the session on time

## EVALUATING THE RESULTS

### *Review and record*

- Review your notes and the recordings
- Look for patterns, things more than one participant did or said

# EVALUATING THE RESULTS

## *Metrics*

[ chat about possible metrics ]

# EVALUATING THE RESULTS

## *Metrics*

- Basic metric is success or failure at completing the tasks
- Usually results are qualitative, so really more your judgement

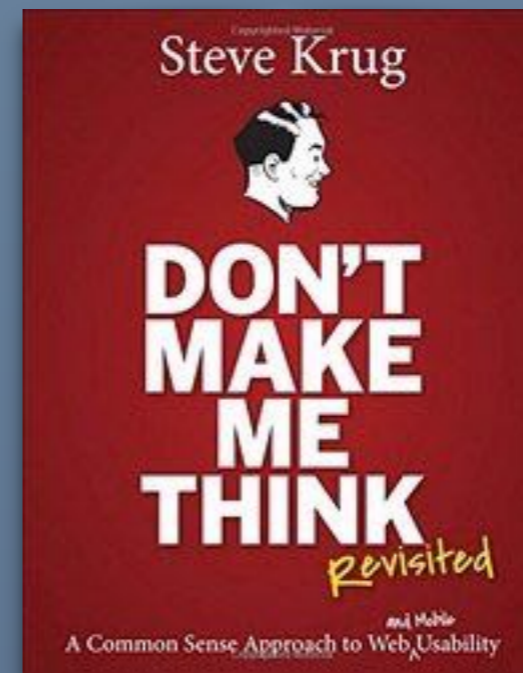
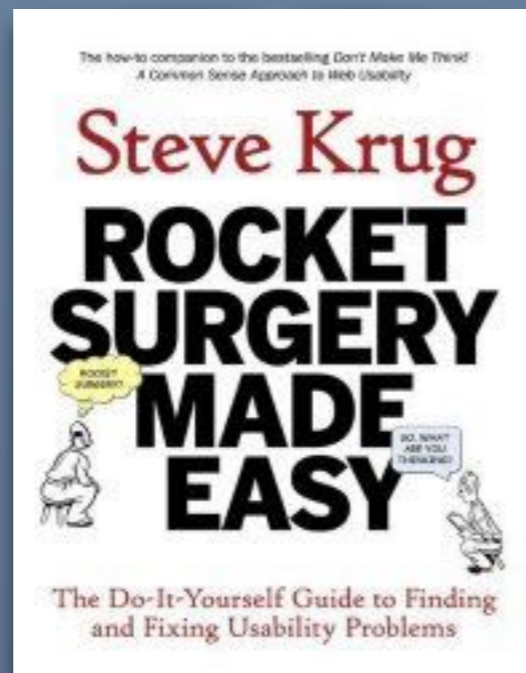
## FIXING THE PROBLEMS YOU FOUND

### *How to fix problems*

- Prioritize; fix critical problems first
- “Tweak, don’t redesign”
- Patch problems you can’t fix
- Test the fixes with another study

# SOURCES FOR MORE INFO

## Steve Krug's books



His company's website: <http://sensible.com/>

His [amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com/Steve-Krug/e/B001KHCFUU/) page: <http://www.amazon.com/Steve-Krug/e/B001KHCFUU/>

# SOURCES FOR MORE INFO

## Free info online

- **Usability.gov**  
(<http://www.usability.gov/>)
- **Nielsen-Norman Group**  
(<https://www.nngroup.com/articles/usability-101-introduction-to-usability/>)
- **Usability Body of Knowledge**  
(<http://www.usabilitybok.org/usability-testing>)

# SOURCES FOR MORE INFO

Free help from the State Library

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# SO.... WHAT NEXT?

- What kinds of usability tests do want to try?
- Anything you'd like to know more about?

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