

# The State of Usability @ CBS Digital Media

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# User-ability or Usability?

"Usability is about human behavior. It recognizes that humans are lazy, get emotional, are not interested in putting a lot of effort into, say, getting a credit card and generally prefer things that are easy to do vs. those that are hard to do."

"[Move] usability thinking into our buildings, call centers, forms and products. It's common sense: If your business is easier to use than your competitor's, people will be more likely to do business with you.

**A usable business is a more competitive business."**

*-- David McQuillen in "Taking Usability Offline" Darwin Magazine, June 2003*

Usability is the degree to which something - software, hardware or anything else - is easy to use and a good fit for the people who use it.

*-- Usability Professionals Association*

# User Experience Group Mission

## **Make usability “usable”:**

Communicate, establish and embed the value of usability organization-wide.

Create a user-centric process that easily allows usability to touch every project, initiative and corporate decision making.

# Strategic Principles

## Quantify the user experience

Shift from incorporating usability as a theory up to measuring usability as a Key Performance Indicator (KPI).

Integrate the statistical information (Omniture, ForeSee) with usability testing results for a 3-D view of our users.

## Know who our users are and what motivates them

Capitalize on the understanding that our web site visitors are 100% in control of what they will and will NOT do. Each visitor is one click from leaving.

Acknowledge that our users are the site visitor, the advertiser, the business owners/stakeholders.

# What We Have Accomplished

## Innertube

- **Assessment**
- **Usability testing of “click model” (9 participants)**
- **Benchmark testing of CBS.com (14 participants)**
  - **NBC, ABC, Fox**
  - **Innertube**

# What We Have Accomplished

## **CBS Sportsline**

- **Postmortems/content plans for NHL, NFL, NBA, College Football, College Basketball, MLB**
- **Benchmark testing of CBSsportsline.com (18 participants)**

# What We Have Accomplished

## Golf Arena

### ■ Heuristic evaluation by 7 “experts”

- Experts in the industry, experts in the world of usability
- Evaluate 8 websites, using the 10 heuristics, in 4 categories: brand, content, usability, functionality

### ■ Competitive Analysis

- Assess current offerings, identify our opportunities and baseline for creating our golf arena on CBSsportsline.com

## PLUS...

Trivia Tower, GameCenter, Player Trades, Player Stats importance (survey), incorporation of usability touch points in to the Production team’s life cycle, News Video Player, “Watch it Now”.

# What's next?

## CBSnews.com

- **Benchmark testing tomorrow, October 18 at WAC/THE FOCUS ROOM (7 participants).**
- **Fantasy Football Commissioner product**
- **MMOD**
- **CBS.com redesign**
- **Innertube 4.0**
  
- **Personas**
- **Remote usability testing**



# Remote Usability Testing

## UserVue

- Web-based tool to test a customer
- Application ties a phone call in with the screen activity
- Up to 10 observers can watch, listen and communicate with the moderator

## Mobile lab

- Sturdy "carry on" sized case
- Digital camcorder and tripod
- Scan converter | Picture-in-Picture generator | SVGA Splitter | Cables and power strip
- 2 laptops (one for logging, one for the participant)
- Webcam

# Personas - example

Suzanne was an avid news consumer in her late 20's – she read the newspapers, industry/trade magazines, Newsweek Magazine, and Cosmopolitan. Felt that reading a broad range of publications kept her well informed in a variety of subjects – an important investment of her time as she cultivated her career growth.

Now 37, Suzanne starts her day at work scanning the headlines at several online news web sites. If she heard about a news story on the radio during her commute to work, she'll look for that story to see what other details were omitted. She has each news site bookmarked, but rarely uses it; the URLs are easy to remember, and her browser finishes the address before she knows it. Suzanne usually will visit her local newspaper's web site, CNN, and a couple of the major network's sites. She has a log in for each, but doesn't sign in unless prompted, and doesn't always sign in when prompted – unless it's for a good reason. Logging in for customized news seems more like a liability, as she might then miss "something important." She knows that by scanning the page for the first few lines after the headline, she can immediately decide if it is worth clicking on to read more.



# Personas

**Who are our personas?**

- **News**
- **Sports**
- **Entertainment**
- **Advertiser**

**How many do we have?**

## Define: Discuss



Along with defining scope, expectations, resources (point of contact for materials, technical requirements, branding, collateral, etc.) and timelines, ***interviews with the client to gain insight into the ideal outcome (both implicit and explicit)*** is key to the client's overall satisfaction.

## Discovery: Brainstorming

Who is the audience for this site? Take some time to know the users, from type of hardware, internet connection speed, browser, etc. to knowing what their needs are from the site. ***Take advantage of their existing habits online, and make sure that the most needed information is easy to access.*** A functional flow/site map is an excellent way to make sure all necessary paths are identified for the web site.



Contextual inquiries, competitive analyses, surveys and questionnaires are additional means to gather information that aid in this discovery.

Defining and writing up use case scenarios will also help to identify the various paths a specified website visitor may take. Knowing these paths will help to architect the site to avoid any pitfalls, as well as offer ways to self-correct.

# Design: Wireframe



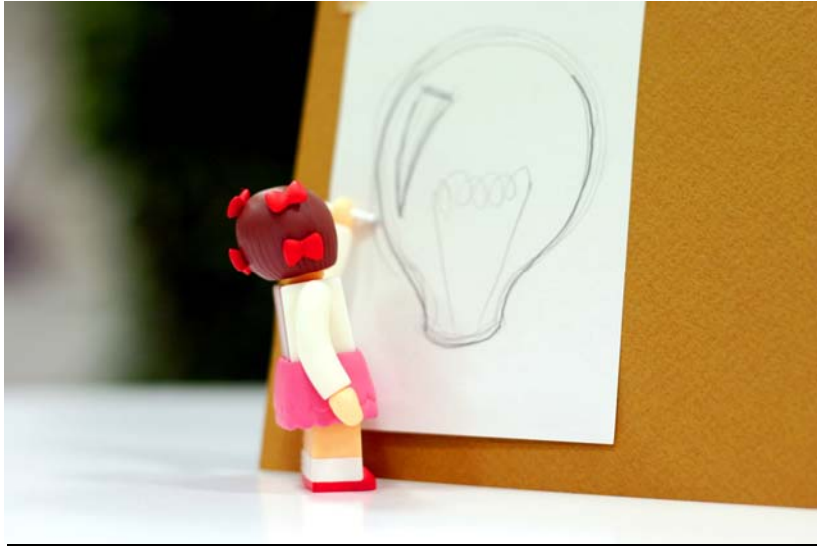
A wireframe is a simple grayscale/block diagram that maps out the structure of the page(s). Blocks of information such as navigation, content, functionality, is established, and should very easily communicate the context and hierarchy considerations for those decisions - although the location of each block could change. No visual images are in a wireframe. ***Creating several wireframes to illustrate the different formats of pages (i.e., landing page, content page, shopping cart) can help to catch any missing elements and functionalities.*** This will be the blueprint for content, design and development.

# Design: Planning the Content



Speaking from repeat experience... the more the client can identify and give you the content at this point, the better for everyone. Knowing how much content for each area of the site helps in creating manageable pages (no excessive scrolling, please!), and also helps to prevent that last minute scramble for meaningful content (or worse, last minute major changes to the navigation).

# Design: Initial Design



The same wireframes, messaging and content goals can get creative design ideas on its way. This collaboration will have significant impact on the user experience.



## Design: Client Feedback

When showing the client the creative comps, content placement and structure, and final wireframes, offer the rationale behind each decision – from size of images, to font color and style, to placement and functionality. ***Organizing your presentation to address the client's goals also will help him/her to be reassured that their objectives have not been ignored.***



When documenting the recommendations and comps, list each item and/or change. This makes it every easy to refer to and to address, especially if the meeting is conducted via conference calls. Detail to each item can be elaborated upon below the list of bulleted points, for the client's perusal when time allows.

## Design: Client Feedback



By organizing your presentation as noted in Step 6, the design revisions requests (yes, there will be revisions) will be more easily identified and communicated. This is the time to acknowledge the client's personal views, and also be sure to validate their comments even as you make note of any concerns that may arise from their requests (time issues, potential usability flaws, etc.).

# Design: Client Approval



*The more that this iterative process is followed, the better the project will flow; client approval (in writing, please...) for final design on which the next step development is taken must be ensured to avoid any surprises, not to mention huge costs as a result of having to redo design, programming, or architecture.*

## Design: Final Page Design



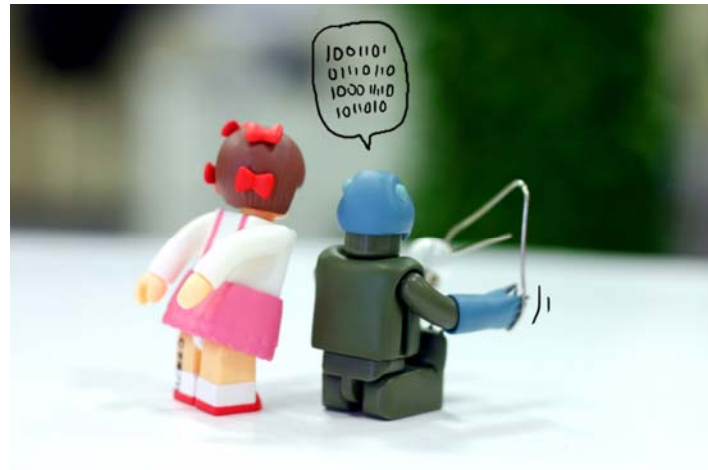
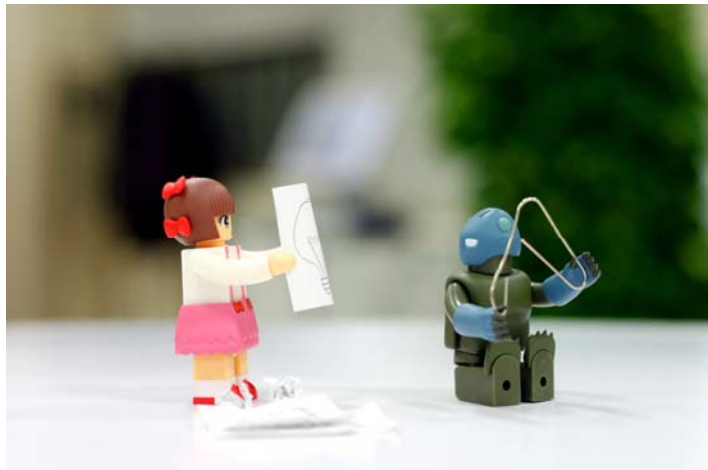
Now that the basic design has been determined and agreed upon, applying it to the secondary and tertiary pages is the final step. Storyboards (consider this the wireframes, colored in) with final versions of the logo, color, font type and style, for each page structure, will help the programmer/developer.

## Design: Confirmation



With approval in hand, the building of the site can proceed. And once again they are checked, reworked and then finally confirmed. Keep in mind that whatever is not documented, you will be leaving up to the discretion of the coder.

## Develop: Build the Pages



You can then begin to code the actual pages and build the agreed upon functionalities (such as shopping carts, eCommerce, flash, etc.)

## Develop: Present to Client



Using the iterative process,  
present, discuss, tweak, present...  
until you have a completed site.

# Develop: Test



- Quality Assurance (QA), User Acceptance Testing (UAT), Load testing, Usability testing...
- Proofread!
- Test from home, from work, from school. Test on IE, Mozilla, Mac, PC, Blackberry, cell phones.
- Always ask yourself: “Will this completely stop the user from completing their task?” “Will this error keep them from returning again?” Let those answers help to gauge decisions to launch or delay.



## Deploy: Launch



Monitor visits, elicit feedback from the site via forms and email links. Make use of log analysis tools such as Web Trends to see what users are doing. Set up a post launch meeting and determine next steps.

# My Favorite Quotes

**"Each problem that I solved became a rule which served afterwards to solve other problems. "**

*Rene Descartes*

**"Learning without thought is labor lost; thought without learning is perilous."**

*Confucius*

**"We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them."**

**"Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new."**

*Albert Einstein*

**Thank You**