SHRM Usability Study

R. Dean Colston, Ph.D.

November 4, 2017

SHRM Usability Study

Introduction

Website usability is a growing area of interest to web authors, designers, academicians, and business professionals. Many organizational leaders are beginning to invest in usability testing to ensure that their e-commerce websites are successful. Typically, website success is often measured by conversion and retention rates.

Since business professionals don't have a lot of time to waste, they are looking for sites that they can access with ease. So, website effectiveness and efficiency are key factors to ensure they return.

Most usability researchers would argue that even the most usable websites have problems. Because of this reality, usability tests are growing in importance. To gain greater insight into this practice, this paper will conduct a usability test on a website and offer recommendations for improvement.

This researcher selected The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) website for this usability study, because thousands of users visit it daily for vital business information and solutions. SHRM is "the leading provider of resources serving the needs of HR professionals and advancing the practice of human resource management" (SHRM, 2017, para. #1). SHRM has been around for 70 years.

This facilitator conducted this study to test for user satisfaction, website functionality and effectiveness, and overall visual appeal. The main features of the SHRM websites tested in this study were membership, HR jobs, certification, tools and samples, SHRM store, blog, and the seminar registration process.

The goal of this test, like most, is to fix all serious problems first. With this insight, this formal analysis outlines the project description, timeline, results, and recommendations.

Project Description

Study Purpose

The main purpose was to conduct a usability study on the SHRM website to determine how easy it is for visitors to use and to achieve specific goals.

Study Methodology

The sample population was a convenience sample, which consisted of three participants who have varying experience levels in human resources management (HRM). These individuals were male and ranged from 50-68 years old. One is involved in a function of human resources, and the other two own their own small business.

Although an understanding of human resources management is important in their work life, all three participants are not members of SHRM. In addition, two possessed very

good computer and mobile device skills; one had a working knowledge of computers and android devices. Altogether, the participants had educational levels beyond secondary school. As shown in Table 1, this researcher organized these socio-demographic variables for readability and comparison.

Table 1: Sample Population Demographics

Name	Age	Gender	Education Level	Computer Skills	HRM Experience
Marcus R.	67	Male	A.S.	Medium Level	15 years
George C.	50	Male	M.M.	Medium to High Level	17 years
Donovan C.	50	Male	B.S.	Medium to High Level	6 years

This facilitator conducted the test in his home office, which was a more comfortable setting than a controlled lab. To ensure consistency, the same tasks and scenarios were constructed for each participant (see Appendix A). Similarly, all participants used the same Fujitsu laptop that was connected to a 22-inch monitor. The laptop ran on Windows 7 with a 100 Mbps Internet connection. A keyboard with extra-large, high-color-contrast typeface on the key-caps was used to ease any potential eye strain.

As shown in Appendix K, Krug (2010) provided some guidelines on "Things a Therapist Would Say" (pp. 83-84). He suggested some common phrases that this facilitator used while interacting with the participants. His recommendations helped this facilitator remain neutral. Most of all, this facilitator reassured the participants that they were not being tested, but rather the site was being evaluated for quality improvement purposes.

To ensure that the rights and anonymity of the participants were protected, each e-signed and dated an online written consent (see Appendix B). And each participant tested at different times over a period of two days.

During each session, the facilitator sat next to the study participant and began by reading a modified version of Krug's (2010) usability test script (see Appendix J). This script discussed the instructions, conversational initials questions between the user and the facilitator, the home page tour, the tasks, and the probing and wrap-up phase. So, it explained how the test would work, and it also relaxed the participant.

Note: The facilitator read this script first to make sure the participants clearly understood the expectations. Each session lasted about an hour.

After some initial questions, participants were instructed to review the SHRM's home page. The facilitator encouraged them to verbalize what they thought this page was used for. Also, they were asked what struck them about this page.

Then, the facilitator presented the participants with a copy of the scenarios and their specific tasks (see Appendix A). The tasks were crafted based on what a new user visiting the SHRM site for the first time might need. They were asked to complete these tasks without the use of the search box. The following tasks were administered to each participant in this order:

1). Figure out how much a SHRM professional membership would cost per year.

2). Find a human resources position that you can apply for in Phoenix, AZ.

3). Order a book on diversity through the SHRM site.

4). Find the blog titled *The Awkward Dreaded Talk About Dress Code* by Eva Del Rio, SPHR, from July 29, 2016.

5). Register for the seminar *HR Analytics: Using Data to Drive Results* on November 14-15, 2017 in Denver, Colorado.

6). Locate the *Workplace Violence Training for Supervisors* presentation from Feb 13, 2017.

7). Apply for the SHRM-CP Exam.

Once completed, the facilitator administered subjective metrics (interview and survey questions) as shown in Appendix F. Finally, once the study ended, the facilitator asked each participant if there were any last-minute questions.

Timeline

Table 2 summarizes the timeline and displays the planning efforts of this project.

Table 2. Project Timeline

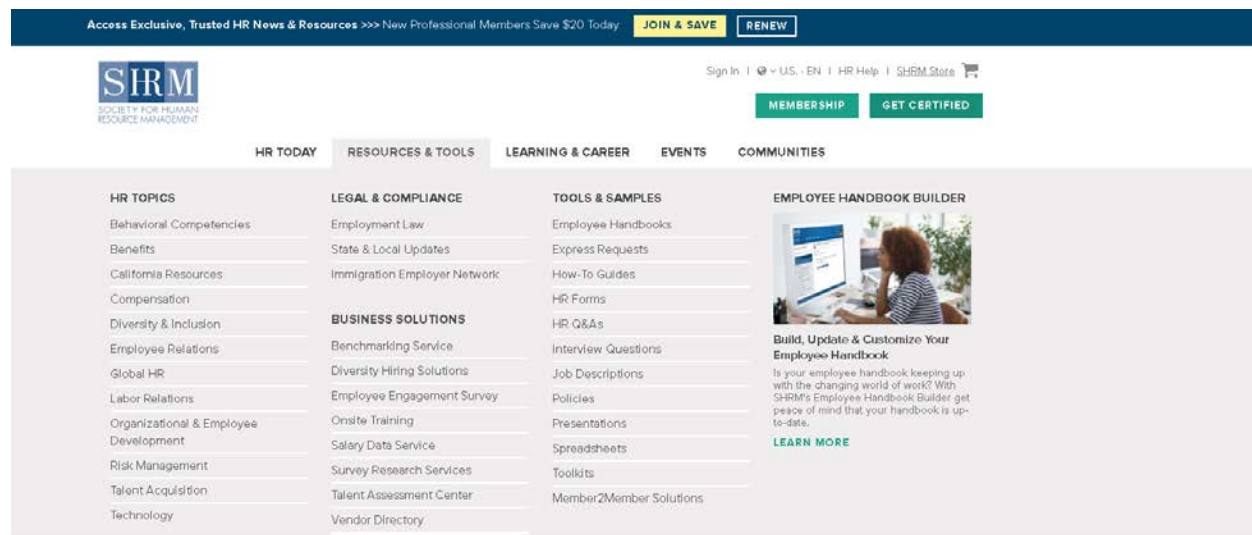| Activity	Deadline
Recruited 3 participants	October 28–30, 2017
Developed subjective metrics for usability testing	November 1-3, 2017
Collected data	November 4-5, 2016
Analyzed data	November 5-6, 2016
Reported research results with recommendations	November 7, 2017
Prepared submission of findings to Dr. Time Barrow	November 7, 2017

Results

After examining the interview and survey questions, the results revealed that all three participants felt that SHRM's site was easy to read. They also rated the site from nicely organized to marginally organized.

George commented that he "liked the news and trends area because it was laid out well" (Appendix H). Marcus reported that he thought the website was "user friendly" (Appendix G). He added that he "liked the drop-down menu for the most part." Similarly, Donovan noted that "the drop-down menu provided helpful hints for my search to accomplish some of my assigned tasks" (Appendix I).

Conversely, the participants expressed some negative views about the website. For example, two participants mentioned that the navigation system (e.g., drop-down menu as displayed in Figure 1) was too crowded with too many choices.
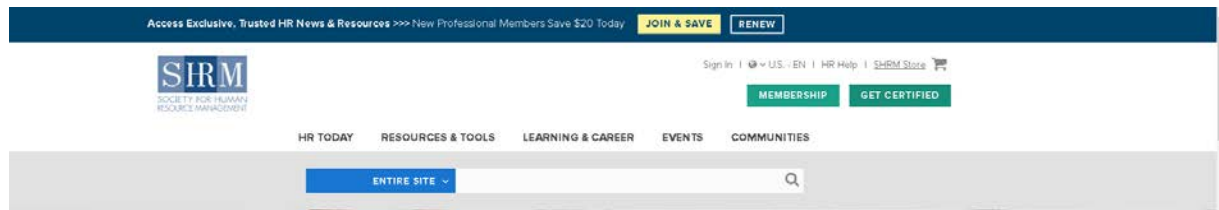
Figure 1. SHRM Drop-down Menu

Reproduced from SHRM website: Retrieved from https://www.shrm.org/pages/default.aspx

But Donovan indicated that the navigation system was helpful and was not affected by the drop-down menu's categories and subcategories. However, he added that the site had too much information on it.

Next, the visual aesthetic was lacking. In fact, George asserted that the color scheme was "washed out and dull" (Appendix H). Donovan had the same assessment. Third, the store shopping cart as shown in Figure 2 was challenging to see. Marcus remarked that it "needed more pop. It just blends into the site" (Appendix G).

Figure 2. SHRM's Home Page with Store Shopping Cart

Reproduced from SHRM website: Retrieved from https://www.shrm.org/pages/default.aspx

According to the surveys, all three participants rated their overall user experience while visiting the SHRM site as somewhat satisfied. Marcus reported that it was somewhat easy completing most of the assigned tasks. George and Donovan, on the other hand, said that it was neither easy nor difficult.

In conclusion, while Donovan probably would return to the site in the future, Marcus expressed that he would definitely return. But George would probably not revisit the site.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, a few suggestions emerged that may help improve the SHRM site. Although the drop-down menu had mixed reviews, some of the headings, such as learning and career, had numerous subcategories. It could be improved by separating it into three distinct categories on the main menu: one for employers, one for job seekers, and one for students. Or, the choices could be displayed with a minimalist web-design approach.

The color scheme was also problematic for the participants. More vibrant color choices are needed to get visitors engaged and excited about the website. In addition, the store shopping cart could be enlarged and bolded with a vibrant color to help it stand out. These suggestions may help the website become more functional and appealing to users. Altogether, these recommendations should increase the likelihood of user satisfaction and return visits to the SHRM website.

References

Krug, S. (2010). *Rocket surgery made easy: The do-it-yourself guide to finding and fixing usability problems.* Berkeley, CA: New Riders.

SHRM. (2017). About SHRM. Retrieved from https://www.shrm.org/about-shrm/pages/default.aspx

Seven Unique Scenarios

1). Your human resources management (HRM) job responsibilities have increased due to a promotion. You believe you need to connect with other HRM professional, and you need more information to help you succeed.

2). You want to apply to an HRM position in the Phoenix, Arizona area. You need a reputable site to apply online.

3). You are in charge of the diversity program in your workplace. You need more resources to help you create a powerful presentation.

4). You're interested in reading more blogs written by HRM professionals. Because of a dress code issue in your workplace, you, as the HR director, would like to read about how other experts are dealing with this issue.

5). Your organization has some personal development funds available. You would like to attend a highly-regarded HR analytics seminar that would be helpful to you. This training will also add value to your organization.

6). You missed an important SHRM presentation on February 13, 2017 on workplace violence training for supervisors. You need to access that presentation.

7). You are ready to take your HRM career to the next level, but you don't have time to earn a master's degree in HRM. So, you have decided to seek certification to obtain this well-respected credential.

The Corresponding Tasks

1). Figure out how much a SHRM professional membership would cost per year.

2). Find a human resources position that you can apply for in Phoenix, AZ.

3). Order a book on diversity through the SHRM site.

4). Find the blog titled *The Awkward Dreaded Talk About Dress Code* by Eva Del Rio, SPHR, from July 29, 2016.

5). Register for the seminar *HR Analytics: Using Data to Drive Results* on November 14-15, 2017 in Denver, Colorado.

6). Locate the *Workplace Violence Training for Supervisors* presentation from Feb 13, 2017.

7). Apply for the SHRM-CP Exam.

Appendix B

Interview and Survey Questions Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a usability study. It will evaluate the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) website to determine how easy it is for visitors to use and to achieve specific goals. The study will be conducted to test for user satisfaction, website functionality and effectiveness, and overall visual appeal.

After completing the specific tasks without the use of "search," your results are reviewed by this facilitator, Dean Colston.

Confidentiality

Your results are regarded as confidential and will be shredded in two weeks. In the meanwhile, results will be temporarily stored in a secure laptop until the usability study is completed.

Instructions

First, e-sign and date this consent form if you are interested in participating in this study.

Second, your facilitator will guide you through the testing process.

Third, complete the interview and survey questions.

Fourth, you will need approximately one hour to complete this usability study.

Questions

If you have any questions, please contact Dean Colston at rdcolsto@asu.edu.

By signing below, you understand the purpose of this usability study and agree to allow Dean Colston to view your results from the interview and survey questions.

Date: _____

Electronic Signature: _____

Appendix C

Interview and Survey Questions Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a usability study. It will evaluate the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) website to determine how easy it is for visitors to use and to achieve specific goals. The study will be conducted to test for user satisfaction, website functionality and effectiveness, and overall visual appeal.

After completing the specific tasks without the use of "search," your results are reviewed by this facilitator, Dean Colston.

Confidentiality

Your results are regarded as confidential and will be shredded in two weeks. In the meanwhile, results will be temporarily stored in a secure laptop until the usability study is completed.

Instructions

First, e-sign and date this consent form if you are interested in participating in this study.

Second, your facilitator will guide you through the testing process.

Third, complete the interview and survey questions.

Fourth, you will need approximately one hour to complete this usability study.

Questions

If you have any questions, please contact Dean Colston at rdcolsto@asu.edu.

By signing below, you understand the purpose of this usability study and agree to allow Dean Colston to view your results from the interview and survey questions.

Date: _____**November 4, 2017**_____

Electronic Signature: ____**Marcus R.**_____

Appendix D

Interview and Survey Questions Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a usability study. It will evaluate the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) website to determine how easy it is for visitors to use and to achieve specific goals. The study will be conducted to test for user satisfaction, website functionality and effectiveness, and overall visual appeal.

After completing the specific tasks without the use of "search," your results are reviewed by this facilitator, Dean Colston.

Confidentiality

Your results are regarded as confidential and will be shredded in two weeks. In the meanwhile, results will be temporarily stored in a secure laptop until the usability study is completed.

Instructions

First, e-sign and date this consent form if you are interested in participating in this study.

Second, your facilitator will guide you through the testing process.

Third, complete the interview and survey questions.

Fourth, you will need approximately one hour to complete this usability study.

Questions

If you have any questions, please contact Dean Colston at rdcolsto@asu.edu.

By signing below, you understand the purpose of this usability study and agree to allow Dean Colston to view your results from the interview and survey questions.

Date: ___**November 5, 2017**_____

Electronic Signature: ___**George C.**_____

Appendix E

Interview and Survey Questions Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a usability study. It will evaluate the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) website to determine how easy it is for visitors to use and to achieve specific goals. The study will be conducted to test for user satisfaction, website functionality and effectiveness, and overall visual appeal.

After completing the specific tasks without the use of "search," your results are reviewed by this facilitator, Dean Colston.

Confidentiality

Your results are regarded as confidential and will be shredded in two weeks. In the meanwhile, results will be temporarily stored in a secure laptop until the usability study is completed.

Instructions

First, e-sign and date this consent form if you are interested in participating in this study.

Second, your facilitator will guide you through the testing process.

Third, complete the interview and survey questions.

Fourth, you will need approximately one hour to complete this usability study.

Questions

If you have any questions, please contact Dean Colston at rdcolsto@asu.edu.

By signing below, you understand the purpose of this usability study and agree to allow Dean Colston to view your results from the interview and survey questions.

Date: ____**November 5, 2017**_____

Electronic Signature: ____**Donovan C.**_____

Appendix F

SHRM Questionnaire

Name:_____

Age:_____

Education:_____

HRM Experience:_____

Computer Skill Level:_____

Interview Questions

1.) How did you find the layout of the SHRM site in terms of organization and logic? Please explain.

2). How intuitive was the SHRM navigation system? What did you think of the drop-down menu? Did you find it helpful or more of a distraction? Please explain.

3). What did you think of the color scheme? Discuss.

4.) Was the site easy to read? If not, elaborate.

5.) What aspects did you like most about the SHRM website?

6.) What aspects did you dislike about the SHRM site? What would you change to improve it? Please explain.

Survey Questions

1). How easy was it to complete most of your assigned tasks on the SHRM site?

○ Very Easy

○ Somewhat Easy

○ Neither Easy Nor Difficult

○ Somewhat Difficult

○ Very Difficult

2). How likely is it that you will return to the SHRM to seek business information or sign up for a seminar?

○ Definitely

○ Probably

○ Might or might not

○ Probably not

○ Definitely not

○ Never

SHRM Questionnaire

3). How would you rate your overall user experience while visiting the SHRM site?

○ Very Unsatisfied

○ Unsatisfied

○ Somewhat Satisfied

○ Very Satisfied

○ Extremely Satisfied

Appendix G

SHRM Questionnaire

Name: **Marcus R.**

Age: **68**

Education: **A.S.**

HRM Experience: **15 years**

Computer Skill Level: **Medium**

Interview Questions

1.) How did you find the layout of the SHRM site in terms of organization and logic? Please explain.

I found it nicely organized once I got a feel for the website.

2). How intuitive was the SHRM navigation system? What did you think of the drop-down menu? Did you find it helpful or more of a distraction? Please explain.

I thought the navigation system was (mostly) intuitive. The drop-down menu was very helpful.

3). What did you think of the color scheme? Discuss.

I liked it fairly well. It had a clean look but lacked vibrancy. The blue color choice for some photos was soothing on the eyes, however.

4.) Was the site easy to read? If not, elaborate.

Yes. The font type was easy on the eyes. A good choice.

5.) What aspects did you like most about the SHRM website?

It's user friendly. I liked the drop-down menu for the most part, but there were too many options under some headings of the drop-down menu.

6.) What aspects did you dislike about the SHRM site? What would you change to improve it? Please explain.

I did not like the location of the shopping cart. Actually, it needs to pop more. It just blends into the site. There were too many items on some of the drop-down menu to choose from.

Survey Questions

1). How easy was it to complete most of your assigned tasks on the SHRM site?

○   Very Easy

○   **Somewhat Easy**

○   Neither Easy Nor Difficult

○   Somewhat Difficult

○   Very Difficult

2). How likely is it that you will return to the SHRM to seek business information or sign up for a seminar?

○   **Definitely**

○   Probably

○   Might or might not

○   Probably not

○   Definitely not

○   Never

3). How would you rate your overall user experience while visiting the SHRM site?

○   Very Unsatisfied

○   Unsatisfied

○   **Somewhat Satisfied**

○   Very Satisfied

○   Extremely Satisfied

Appendix H

SHRM Questionnaire

Name:__**George C**____

Age:__**50**___

Education:__**M.M.**__

HRM Experience:__**17 years**__

Computer Skill Level:__**Medium to High**

Interview Questions

1.) How did you find the layout of the SHRM site in terms of organization and logic? Please explain.

I thought it was average. I'm not overly impressed.

2). How intuitive was the SHRM navigation system? What did you think of the drop-down menu? Did you find it helpful or more of a distraction? Please explain.

There were too many links/choices under the resources and tools and the learning and careers headings. The learning and careers heading should be broken down into three separate categories: one for employers, one for job seekers, and one for students.

3). What did you think of the color scheme? Discuss.

 It was washed out; dull.

4.) Was the site easy to read? If not, elaborate.

 Yes, it was acceptable.

5.) What aspects did you like most about the SHRM website?

I liked news and trends area. It was laid out well. But the site seems like it is geared more towards employers rather than job seekers or students.

6.) What aspects did you dislike about the SHRM site? What would you change to improve it? Please explain.

First, the color needs improvement. Color needs to be added for excitement and appeal. Second, the grocery cart needs to be included in the regular menu. Lastly, the menu needs to be horizontal rather than vertical. I don't like drop-down menus.

Survey Questions

1). How easy was it to complete most of your assigned tasks on the SHRM site?

○   Very Easy

○   Somewhat Easy

○   **Neither Easy Nor Difficult**

○   Somewhat Difficult

○   Very Difficult

2). How likely is it that you will return to the SHRM to seek business information or sign up for a seminar?

○   Definitely

○   Probably

○   Might or might not

○   **Probably not**

○   Definitely not

○   Never

3). How would you rate your overall user experience while visiting the SHRM site?

○   Very Unsatisfied

○   Unsatisfied

○   **Somewhat Satisfied**

○   Very Satisfied

○   Extremely Satisfied

Appendix I

SHRM Questionnaire

Name:__**Donovan C.**_____

Age:__**50**____

Education:__**B.S.**_____

HRM Experience:_____**6**_____

Computer Skill Level:__**Medium to High**_____

Interview Questions

1.) How did you find the layout of the SHRM site in terms of organization and logic? Please explain.

It seemed logical but being unfamiliar with the site made it harder to navigate.

2). How intuitive was the SHRM navigation system? What did you think of the drop-down menu? Did you find it helpful or more of a distraction? Please explain.

I thought it was more helpful because it helped me zone in on my search. I thought the menu has the right amount of subcategories.

3). What did you think of the color scheme? Discuss.

I thought the color scheme was boring and flat.

4.) Was the site easy to read? If not, elaborate.

Yes, I thought it was easy to read.

5.) What aspects did you like most about the SHRM website?

The drop-down menu provided helpful hints for my search to accomplish some of my assigned tasks.

SHRM Questionnaire

6.) What aspects did you dislike about the SHRM site? What would you change to improve it? Please explain.

The website appeared to have too much information.

Survey Questions

1). How easy was it to complete most of your assigned tasks on the SHRM site?

○   Very Easy

○   Somewhat Easy

○   **Neither Easy Nor Difficult**

○   Somewhat Difficult

○   Very Difficult

2). How likely is it that you will return to the SHRM to seek business information or sign up for a seminar?

○   Definitely

○   **Probably**

○   Might or might not

○   Probably not

Appendix I (Continued)

SHRM Questionnaire

   ○   Definitely not

   ○   Never

3). How would you rate your overall user experience while visiting the SHRM site?

   ○   Very Unsatisfied

   ○   Unsatisfied

   ○   **Somewhat Satisfied**

   ○   Very Satisfied

   ○   Extremely Satisfied

THE INSTRUCTIONS

> ❑ **Web browser should be open to Google or some other "neutral" page**

Hi, _____. My name is _____, and I'm going to be walking you through this session today.

Before we begin, I have some information for you, and I'm going to read it to make sure that I cover everything.

You probably already have a good idea of why I asked you here, but let me go over it again briefly. I'm asking people to try using a Web site, so I can see whether it works as intended. The session should take about an hour.

The first thing I want to make clear right away is that I'm testing the *site*, not you. You can't do anything wrong here. In fact, this is probably the one place today where you don't have to worry about making mistakes.

As you use the site, I'm going to ask you as much as possible to try to think out loud: to say what you're looking at, what you're trying to do, and what you're thinking. This will be a big help to me.

Also, please don't worry that you're going to hurt my feelings. I'm doing this to improve the site, so I need to hear your honest reactions. If you have any questions as we go along, just ask them. I may not be able to answer them right away, since we're interested in how people do when they don't have someone sitting next to them to help. But if you still have any questions when we're done I'll try to answer them then. And if you need to take a break at any point, just let me know.

If you would, I'm going to ask you to e-sign a simple consent form for me. It just says that you have been invited to participate in this usability test and understand the purpose of the study. It also explains that your results are regarded as confidential and will be shredded in two weeks. Do you have any questions so far?

Usability Test Script

Adapted from Rocket Surgery Made Easy

© 2010 Steve Krug

THE QUESTIONS

OK. Before we look at the site, I'd like to ask you just a few quick questions.

First, what's your occupation? What do you do all day?

Roughly how many hours a week altogether—just a rough estimate—would you say you spend using the Internet, including Web browsing and email, at work and at home?

What kinds of sites (work and personal) are you looking at when you browse the Web?

Do you have any favorite Web sites?

THE HOME PAGE TOUR

OK, great. We're done with the questions, and we can start looking at things.

> ❑ **Click on the bookmark for the site's Home page.**

First, I'm going to ask you to look at this page and tell me what you make of it: what strikes you about it, whose site you think it is, what you can do here, and what it's for. Just look around and do a little narrative.

You can scroll if you want to, but don't click on anything yet.

> ❑ **Allow this to continue for three or four minutes, at most.**

Usability Test Script

Adapted from Rocket Surgery Made Easy

© 2010 Steve Krug

THE TASKS

Thanks. Now I'm going to ask you to try doing some specific tasks. I'm going to read each one out loud and give you a printed copy.

I'm also going to ask you to do these tasks without using Search. We'll learn a lot more about how well the site works that way.

And again, as much as possible, it will help us if you can try to think out loud as you go along.

❑ **Hand the participant the first scenario, and read it aloud.**

❑ **Allow the user to proceed until you don't feel like it's producing any value or the user becomes very frustrated.**

❑ **Repeat for each task or until time runs out.**

PROBING

Thanks, that was very helpful.

❑ **Ask the observers' questions, then probe anything you want to follow up on.**

WRAPPING UP

Do you have any questions for me, now that we're done?

Appendix J (Continued)

Usability Test Script

Adapted from Rocket Surgery Made Easy

© 2010 Steve Krug

> ❑ **Give them their incentive.**
>
> ❑ **Thank them and escort them out.**

Appendix K

Things a Therapist Would Say

Reproduced from Rocket Surgery Made Easy

© 2010 Steve Krug

While the participant is doing the tasks, to maintain your neutrality you're going to be saying the same few things over and over, which turn out to be the same kind of non-directive things a therapist typically says to a patient. Here's a handy chart of "permissible" phrases.

When this happens:	Say this:
You're not absolutely sure you know what the participant is thinking.	"What are you thinking?" "What are you looking at?" "What are you doing now?"
Something happens that seems to surprise them. For instance, they click on a link and say "Oh" or "Hmmm" when the new page appears.	"Is that what you expected to happen?"
The participant is trying to get you to give him a clue. ("Should I use the _____?")	"What would you do if you were at home?" (Wait for answer.) "Then why don't you go ahead and try that?" "What would you do if I wasn't here?" "I'd like you to do whatever you'd normally do."
The participant makes a comment, and you're not sure what triggered it.	"Was there something in particular that made you think that?"
The participant suggests concern that he's not giving you what you need.	"No, this is very helpful." "This is exactly what we need."
The participant asks you to explain how something works or is supposed to work (e.g., "Do these support requests get answered overnight?").	"What do you think?" "How do you think it would work?" "I can't answer that right now, because we need to know what you would do when you don't have somebody around to answer questions for you. But if you still want to know when we're done, I'll be glad to answer it then."
The participant seems to have wandered away from the task.	"What are you trying to do now?"

There are also three other kinds of things you can say:

- **Acknowledgment tokens.** You can say things like "uh huh," "OK," and "mm hmm" as often as you think necessary. These signal that you're taking in what the participant is saying and you'd like them to continue along the same lines. Note that they're meant to indicate that you understand what the participant is saying, not that you necessarily agree with it. It's "OK." Not "OK!!!"

- **Paraphrasing.** Sometimes it helps to give a little summary of what the participant just said ("So you're saying that the boxes on the bottom are hard to read?") to make sure that you've heard and understood correctly.

- **Clarifying for observers.** If the user makes a vague reference to something on the screen, you may want to do a little bit of narration to make it easier for the observers to follow the action. For instance, when the user says "I love this," you can say, "The list over here on the right?" (Since you're sitting next to the participant, you sometimes have a better sense of what they're looking at.)