

General Usability Study Instructions

Introduce yourself.

- My name is _____, and I will be giving you instructions on what to do and will answer any questions you may have.

Show participant the control room behind the glass so they can be more comfortable with it.

Tell them about the experiment.

- We're exploring the design of the new web site interface for Hotwire.com, a travel booking web site that lets you book airline tickets, hotels, cruises, and rental cars. You are helping us by evaluating the design in its early stages. We want to know where the design is difficult to use and where we need to improve it. I'm going to show you the interface and then ask you to perform a series of tasks with it. We're looking for places where the design may be difficult to use.
- You will be using experimental software so there is a chance that the site may crash. As well, if you have any difficulties performing these tasks, please remember that it is the fault of the design and not your own. Remember, we are testing the design, not you.
- As you perform the tasks, I will be making observations and recording notes. You will also be audio-recorded so that I can later go back and listen to your comments as you used the system. All data that we record about your session will be kept confidential and anonymous. This means that none of the data will reveal your identity. We will also use pseudonyms in reports that describe our study.

Tell the participant that it's OK to quit at any time.

- If you feel uncomfortable at any time, you are free to quit without repercussions.
- Do you have any questions at this point?

Explain Think Aloud or Constructive Interaction (whichever is being used)

- *Think Aloud:*
While you perform your tasks, I encourage you to think-aloud and describe what you are thinking and your justification for your answers. At times it may be embarrassing or uncomfortable and while you are free not to think-aloud I would still encourage it. If you forget to think-aloud, I will simply remind you to keep talking. Would you like me to demonstrate? *If the person wants an example, show him or her by using the 'think aloud' protocol while trying to understand how to use the light switches in the room you are located.*
- *Constructive Interaction:*
While you perform your tasks, you will be working together as a team. I am going to assign one of as the 'coach' and the other as the person who interacts with the interface. The coach should be the person who has more experience with this type of interface. *Let them decide who the coach is.*

As the coach, you will not be allowed to touch the computer's keyboard or mouse. Your role is to help out your partner as s/he tries to use the interface. I encourage the two of you to talk together as you complete the tasks.

Give the participant the pre-test questionnaire. Wait for it to be completed

Play Time – Show the participant the interface being evaluated (but don't explain how it works). Tell them to look around and try a few things out.

Once the participant is ready, proceed to the tasks. Give each task to the participant one at a time, each on a separated piece of paper.

Give the participant the post-test questionnaire. Wait for it to be completed

Debrief the participant by thanking him or her and emphasizing that you learned a lot about the interface and how it needs to be improved.