

# UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-RIVER FALLS

Division of Technology Services, Web Team

## ***How to conduct a “task oriented” usability test of your UWRF.edu web site***

### **Keep in mind...**

- Test often. (Six to 10 times per year)
- Testing is iterative. Test, then fix, test again, then fix, test again...
- Test any time
- Memories are short, debrief and create a summary report based on observations on the same day
- Focus groups are not user tests
- All of the steps presented here should take about 3-5 working hours.

### **Preparation**

1. Decide what you wish to measure. (Example: How do visitors find housing information)
2. Choose 5 to 7 audience members to sample and schedule them accordingly. Or prepare to choose random users upon availability. Each test should take less than ten minutes.
3. Create about 4 to 7 tasks or questions for the participant to react to.
4. Study questions for objectivity.

Are the questions biased toward certain keywords instead of concepts? For example, instead of saying “How would you find the lunch menu.” Ask, “It’s noon, you’re hungry and you want something to eat, how would you find out what is available.”

5. Choose a workstation location to conduct the test. (Testing in the University Center at a public work station works well for asking passing students to participate.)

### Execute the usability test

- Choose the location and open a browser to the appropriate starting page.
- Call on the participant to sit in front of the work station at the keyboard and mouse. If applicable pick a random participant.
- Tell the participant he/she will remain anonymous. You don't even have to ask for his/her full name.
- Ask some basic questions about his/her background. "How familiar are you with the site?" "What year are you in college? Sophomore? Senior?"
- Tell the person he/she will be asked to find content based on the scenarios and questions provided.
- Tell the person to take his/her time when choosing options.
- Tell the person he/she is not being tested, but rather, the site is being tested. Tell the participant there is no right or wrong way to find the content.
- Tell the person to explain his/her thought process when choosing the options they click.
- Ask the person questions and note the click path and amount of time it took to get to the place where he/she was satisfied with the result.

Example: **Home > Menu:About Tuition > Plus sign > Undergraduate tuition > stopped. 15 seconds.**

- Ask them to provide some impressions of the site. Avoid leading questions.

"How would you describe the ease or difficulty of finding what you are looking for in this section? Why?"

"Do the menu options make sense? Is this what you would expect? Why or why not?"

"What would you say about this site compared to other campus sites?"

**Debrief ON THE SAME DAY**

1. Review what was observed
2. Write a summary report and action plan
3. Send summary of the report to [webmaster@uwrf.edu](mailto:webmaster@uwrf.edu)

**Sample** summary report and action plan:

<b>Observations of Financial Aid Site</b>	<b>Resolution</b>
Perkins loans appear in the navigation separate from general loans. Visitors would click on it thinking it would take them to other loan options too.	Move Perkins loans link under the general loans options.
Determining scholarship eligibility was difficult for users. Participants only wanted to see the scholarships they were allowed to apply for.	Create a sorting script to deliver the scholarship info based on eligibility. (This project will require more IT support and planning)
When participants were asked to contact a person in the financial aid office two said they would call but could not find the phone number.	Put phone number on each page.

For more information contact [webmaster@uwrf.edu](mailto:webmaster@uwrf.edu)