AOIT Web Design

Lesson 11

Preparing a Website for Launch

Student Resources

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Resource | Description |
| Student Resource 11.1 | Characteristics Chart: Usability and Accessibility |
| Student Resource 11.2 | Test Log: Usability and Accessibility |
| Student Resource 11.3 | Reading: User Testing |
| Student Resource 11.4 | Guide: User Testing Plan |

Student Resource 11.1

Characteristics Chart: Usability and Accessibility

Student Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Follow your teacher’s instructions to categorize the features that make a website easy to use as “usability” or “accessibility.” A couple of samples for each are provided to get you started.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Usability** | **Accessibility** |
| All buttons and links work and navigate to the correct place.  All text is accurate and grammatically correct. | Fonts are readable, high-contrast, and stationary.  All color information can be converted into black and white and still be understood. |

Student Resource 11.2

Test Log: Usability and Accessibility

Student Names:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Directions: First, work with your group to decide how you will complete each of the following testing tasks for your culminating project website and record your answer in the second column. Next, assign each member of your group to a specific task. Each group member should then complete a thorough usability test and, in the Errors Found column, report any errors or problems. Finally, make appropriate fixes or modifications to your site and report your changes in the last column. Review the assessment criteria at the end of this resource before you begin work.

| Testing Task | How It Will Be Tested | Errors Found | How Errors Were Fixed |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Links:** Every link is functional and navigates to the proper location. |  |  |  |
| **Text:** All text is accurate, spelled correctly, and grammatically correct. |  |  |  |
| **Images:** All images appear, are aligned properly, and contain <alt> attributes in the <img> tags. |  |  |  |
| **Browser compatibility:** Site validated on many platforms, browser types, versions, and connection speeds. |  |  |  |
| **Accessibility:** Code adheres to as many Section 508 guidelines as is appropriate (for example, site map, <alt> attributes, page titles, link titles). |  |  |  |
| **Directory structure:** Directory structure is organized and used efficiently; unused files are deleted. |  |  |  |
| **Navigation:** Navigation is consistent and well organized and makes sense to end users. |  |  |  |
| **Tables:** Tables contain a caption. Sample:  <table> <caption>Shopping List</caption> <tr><td>...</td></tr> </table> |  |  |  |

Make sure your usability and accessibility test meets or exceeds the following assessment criteria:

* There is a clear description of how each item will be tested.
* A thorough usability test is completed for each item, and all errors found are recorded.
* All site modifications are properly recorded in the test log.
* The resulting website includes all the necessary changes and bug fixes; proper version control is maintained during testing.

Student Resource 11.3

Reading: User Testing

Your site may seem to work perfectly for you, but will it work for your actual users? As a website designer, you have now become so familiar with your site that there may be issues you don’t notice or would not even think to look for or improve. If you want a good website, you must first conduct **user testing** before launching your site to the public. User testing involves sitting people down to actually try your site and observing how easily they can use the site to complete tasks or find information, and if they find it appealing. Without user testing, you won’t know if your site has problems or if your users will have a positive experience.

Formulating a testing plan is the first step in user testing. A plan will help you identify your testing goals, audience, methodology, recording mechanism, and means of evaluating and using the results.

Ideally, you would recruit at least 7–10 testers who represent your target audience. The more people and the more varied the people you recruit to test the site, the more information you will get and the more accurate your results will be. When a problem or an opinion is repeated, it has more weight because personal bias and skill are minimized. But remember, a large, targeted audience can be difficult to find in a short amount of time, and testing with even one user from any segment is better than no testing at all!

User testing may need to be extremely formal and scientific for a large company with a large complex site, but a simple site may need only a small-scale, informal test. Testing on a working prototype is best, as you want your users to see and experience a basic working site. You should attempt to test your site over a web connection by publishing your site to a test server. This will be the most accurate test you can do, because it is most representative of the response time your users will experience. If publishing your site to a server is not an option, testing locally on a hard drive is also acceptable, but keep in mind that the user experience will be faster than it will be on the final site. Think about the range of platforms, browsers, and connection speeds you are able to test. The more browser compatibility checks you can do, the more you can validate your site’s functionality. And there are tools online that can analyze website accessibility, like the WAVE accessibility tool (<http://wave.webaim.org/>).

Recording your test results is critical for when you later evaluate the data and modify the website accordingly. Determine in advance if you will record your test observations via notes or video, but remember that videotaping can be intimidating to some people, and a release form is usually needed. Always remind testers that it is the site that is being tested, not them. Also, plan ahead for how you will compensate or thank your testers.

Your testing plan should contain the method you will use to instruct testers to use the site. One efficient method is a **task-oriented** test, where you instruct people to complete specific tasks on the site. (For example, “Locate the...,” “Find and read the...,” etc.) Create a list of two to five appropriate tasks for your site, and then observe how your testers complete those tasks. Ask questions as they proceed through the tasks and/or create a questionnaire for testers to complete after they are finished. Rating questions works well on questionnaires. For example, “With 1 being easy and 10 being difficult, how easy was the site to use?” or “Rate the graphics and color scheme of the site” or “How likely are you to return to the site?” Also provide opportunities for open-ended commentary (e.g., “What did you like about the site?” or “What would you change about the site?” or “Do you have any other comments or suggestions?”).

Review your results right after the test and add any other notes that come to mind. Think about how you will summarize and most efficiently use the results to improve your site; options include a table, a report, a chart, or another tool.

Remember, user testing should not be considered an extra or a luxury only done if time and money permit. It is a critical component of the web design process. Use the list in Student Resource 11.4, Guide: User Testing Plan, to help formulate your own user testing plan.

Student Resource 11.4

Guide: User Testing Plan

Directions: Working with your group, use the following guide to write a user testing plan for your client’s website. Write or type your test plan on a separate sheet of paper, using the format shown in the headings and bullets in this resource. Before you begin work, review the assessment criteria so that you are clear on how your teacher will assess your plan.

**Testing Goals:**

* What are the goals of your user testing?

**Target and Number of Users:**

* Will your users be within a specific age range?
* Will your users be a specific gender?
* Will your users be within a specific job type?
* Will your users have a particular level of technology skills?
* How many testers will you recruit to test your site?

**Testing Method:**

* Will you use a task-oriented approach? If so, what tasks will you assign the testers?
* How will testers access the site?
* What platforms, browsers, and connection types will you test with users?
* How will you record the test: notes, video, other?
* Is a signed release needed?
* How will you compensate and/or thank your testers?

**Recording the Test:**

* Who will observe the test, who will take notes, and who will answer user questions?
* Will you create a written questionnaire for users? If so, what questions will you ask?
* How will you record bugs such as missing images, errors, broken links, or spelling errors?
* How will you record where users got stuck, struggled, or needed your help?
* What else will you record during this test?

**Evaluation and Revision:**

* Will you create a report summarizing your test results?
* How will you integrate the test results into your site?

Make sure your user testing plan meets or exceeds the following assessment criteria:

* The user testing plan identifies clear goals for testing the site.
* The user testing plan defines the proposed number of testers and includes a detailed and accurate description of the target audience’s age range, gender, job type, and technology skill.
* The user testing plan contains clear descriptions of the testing method; the ways that testers will access the site; the computer platforms, browsers, and connection types to be used; the method for recording the test; and the plan for compensating the testers.
* The user testing plan clearly explains how you will observe the test, how you will record information, and what information you will record.
* The user testing plan explains how you will summarize the test results and how you will integrate the results into the website.