

**The Magnificent [Group] Seven:  
Usability Test Plan for Wikipedia.org**



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## 1 Document Overview

This document describes our test plan for conducting a usability test for the Wikipedia.org website. The goals of usability testing include assessing the length of time it and the number of web pages takes a user to perform a set of fourteen tasks, as well as the stress level of the users during the execution of those tasks. We use these performance measures, along with an Exit Interview, to identify potential design concerns in order to improve the efficiency and end-user satisfaction of the website, as well as to discover what aspects of the site are agreeable.

The usability test objectives are:

- To determine design inconsistencies and usability problem areas within the user interface and content areas. Potential sources of error may include:
  - Navigation errors – failure to locate functions, excessive keystrokes to complete a function, failure to follow recommended screen flow.
  - Presentation errors – failure to locate and properly act upon desired information in screens, selection errors due to labeling ambiguities.
  - Control usage problems – improper link usage.
- Discover how users feel about Wikipedia by presenting controlled test conditions with representative users.
- Establish baseline user performance and user-satisfaction levels of Wikipedia.

We define the average user as anyone who is looking for a brief summary of knowledge, similar to Ready Reference resources used by libraries to answer question quickly and simply. The mission of Wikipedia is to "... provide a free encyclopedia, written collaboratively by the people who use it. It is a special type of website designed to make collaboration easy, called a wiki."

Since Wikipedia users encompass groups that transect generational, educational, gender, and cultural boundaries (it does appear in many languages), there is no specific expression of attributes that comprise the 'typical user' of Wikipedia. "Anyone who uses the internet and can form a search query" fits our criteria for a suitable test subject.

We will test 15 users in one round of testing (3 people per each member of the group). Since assembling a subject group takes considerable time and effort, we will do our best, but time constraints will hamper efforts in launching any semblance of a bona fide testing run. The testing itself will not have trained/professional observation and will not occur in a usability lab. Instead, the observations will occur in a non-professional setting with untrained observers. The date range for testing is February 23<sup>rd</sup> through March 5<sup>th</sup> 2010.

## **2 Methodology**

The group will create scenarios and associated tasks/functions which will be evaluated as to the whether the user able to find the information and whether they found the correct information.

While normal usability plans allow time to review test plans and draft scenarios, time constraints prevent us from doing much review, and our usability goals must remain at the basic level. Because of the due date for this plan (2 weeks hence) there is no time to allow for a formally reviewed and refined usability plan.

The 15 participants will complete the Usability Test either in their own homes or at a public library setting. The subjects will be observed by group members while they perform the tasks, and they will be using Personal Computers on whatever monitor is available to the user. Computer type, Operating System, and Browser data will be collected.

For measurements, we will

- Record the time it took for the user to complete the above mentioned tasks
- Provide Satisfaction Assessments
- Provide Suggestions for Improvement

### **2.1 Participants**

Participants will be recruited based on their proximity to us (due to time constraints, formal recruitment is not possible), and it is expected that most participants will be either the 'average' user (they are comfortable in doing basic tasks such as opening e-mail, saving files they created, maneuvering on the internet to websites, etc.) to advanced users (people who are familiar with uploading and downloading files, adding software or hardware components, and other advanced skills. Users do not have to have any previous experience with Wikipedia.org; people who are very familiar with the site will also not be considered viable candidates. There is no other set of background skills required at this time, and they will have likely completed simple searches on their own and so will be familiar with the Search Tasks assigned.

The participants' responsibilities will be to attempt to complete a set of representative task scenarios presented to them in as efficient and timely a manner as possible, and to provide feedback regarding the usability and acceptability of the user interface. The participants will be directed to provide honest opinions regarding the usability of the application, and to participate in post-session subjective questionnaires.

### **2.2 Training**

The participants will receive an overview of the usability test procedure, equipment and software. They will not be shown how to perform a search at

Wikipedia.org, although the Observer will direct them to the home page at the beginning of the test.

## **2.3 Procedure**

Participants will take part in the usability test at either an available public library or other public setting, or the observer going to the home of the user and observing their interaction. The Web site will be used in a typical office/home computer environment. The participant's interaction with the Web site will be monitored by the facilitator seated in the area.

The facilitator will brief the participants on the Web site/Web application and instruct the participant that they are evaluating the application, rather than the facilitator evaluating the participant. Participants will sign an informed consent that acknowledges: the participation is voluntary, that participation can cease at any time. The facilitator will ask the participant if they have any questions.

Participants will complete a pretest demographic and background information questionnaire. The facilitator will explain that the amount of time taken to complete the test task will be measured and that exploratory behavior outside the task flow should not occur until after task completion.

At the start of each task, either the Participant or the Observer will read aloud the task description from the printed copy and begin the task. For those Participants who have short-term memory issues, a print version will be made available. Time-on-task measurement begins when the participant starts the task. Participants are encouraged to "think-aloud" so that observations can be taken as the any design flaws.

After all 14 tasks have been completed, the Participant will complete the Exit Questionnaire and elaborate on the session with the facilitator.

## **3 Ethics**

All persons involved with the usability test are required to adhere to the following ethical guidelines:

- The performance of any test participant must not be individually attributable. Individual participant's name should not be used in reference outside the testing session.
- A description of the participant's performance should not be reported to his or her manager.

## **4 Usability Tasks**

The usability tasks were derived from test scenarios developed created by the group members. Due to the range and extent of functionality provided in the application or Web site, and the short time for which each participant will be

available, the tasks are the most common and relatively complex of available functions. The tasks are identical for all participants of a given user role in the study.

There are 14 tasks to be completed, and each of these 14 tasks fall into 1 of 3 pre-determined areas. We consider these tasks general in nature, and that they should be executable by novice users. The 3 objectives are listed below, and the specific tasks are detailed in the Appendix.

Purpose 1: Find general information about the site itself

Purpose 2: Find information within a Wikipedia article

Purpose 3: Effectively use links provided within Wikipedia

## **5 Usability Measurement**

Usability measurement refers to user performance measured through the number of pages and the time-to-completion for each task. Scenario completion success rates will be rated through the simple method of whether or not they were able to complete the task. Time-to-completion of scenarios will also be collected. There will also be a "stress-level" measurement for each task, recorded upon that task's completion, as well as an overall "stress" measurement once the testing session is complete.

### **5.1 Scenario Completion**

Each scenario will require, or request, that the participant obtains or inputs specific data that would be used in course of a typical task. The scenario is completed when the participant indicates the scenario's goal has been obtained (whether successfully or unsuccessfully). A completion rate of 100% is the goal for each task in this usability test.

### **5.2 Subjective Evaluations**

Subjective evaluations regarding ease of use and satisfaction will be collected via questionnaires, and during debriefing at the conclusion of the session. The questionnaires will utilize free-form responses and rating scales.

## **6 Reporting Results**

The Usability Test Report will be provided at the conclusion of the usability test. It will consist of a report of subjective evaluations, specific usability problems, and recommendations for resolution. The report is anticipated to be delivered to Dr. Bonnici through both Elearning and our personal websites by March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

## Appendix

### 1 List of Tasks – Created by the Magnificent [Group] 7

Below are the 14 tasks created by the group. There are 3 sections that cover the 3 areas we believed a novice user should be able to perform. Within each section, there appears a scenario, wherein the tasks are defined, and that is followed by the path the task creator envisioned. The Testing Question that follows each task description reflects the order of the task. For example, #2 under purposes was really task #4 for the user. We didn't want to group like tasks sequentially, lest a discernable pattern developed for the user.

#### **Purpose 1: Find general information about the site itself**

1. Assume you've never used Wikipedia before, but you've heard of it. You decide to go to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page to find out about it. (Testing Question # 1)

*(Get people to find the page: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:FAQ>)*

2. You are using Wikipedia for a source on a paper, and need to determine if the author of the article can be trusted and whether the information is valid. See if you can find a disclaimer on the "telephone page". (Testing Question # 4)

*(Get people to find the page: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:General\\_disclaimer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:General_disclaimer))*

3. You need to contact Wikipedia with a question concerning the use of the site. Can you locate a telephone number and physical address for Wikipedia? (Testing Question # 7)

*(Get people to find the page: [http://wikimediafoundation.org/wiki/Contact\\_us](http://wikimediafoundation.org/wiki/Contact_us))*

4. You did a Wikipedia search on a topic that interests you, but you still need to know more about the topic. Find the reference desk, where you can search reference desk archives or ask for assistance from a Wikipedia volunteer. (Please note that you do not actually have to search the archives or ask a volunteer, but merely find the reference desk area.) (Testing Question #10)

*(Get people to find the page: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Reference\\_desk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Reference_desk))*

#### **Purpose 2: Find information within a Wikipedia article**

1. You are writing a paper on Emory Remington, and need to find information about people who were influenced by him. Find that information. (Testing Question # 2)

*(Get people to find the page: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emory\\_Remington](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emory_Remington) and the section "Remington's Effects")*

2. You're writing an English paper on Beowulf and have used information from Wikipedia. Go to the Wikipedia article on Beowulf at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beowulf> and find a link to display an MLA citation of the page. (Testing Question # 5)

*(Get subjects to discover the "cite this page" link, navigate to the citation page, and find the selected information on the page.)*

3. You want to refresh your memory of Harry Potter characters, but don't have a book handy. You decide to use Wikibooks to see if there is anything available to help you remember the names of all the Weasley children. Using the WikiBooks links on the main page (<http://www.wikipedia.org/>), search for Harry Potter. Is there a character guide available? (Testing Question #8 )

*(Get people to find and use the Wikibooks link at the very bottom of the page, which will take them to <http://www.wikibooks.org/>; scrolling will usually be necessary. Then the page: [http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Harry\\_Potter](http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Harry_Potter) )*

4. Getting ready for spring planting and reading through your seed catalog, you want to know some general information about cantaloupes. For the melon we know as cantaloupe, please find the scientific classification for the Class and Order to which this plant belongs. (Testing Question # 11)

*(Get people to locate basic information about cantaloupes on the page: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cantaloupe>)*

5. You would like to use Wikipedia for a source on a paper you are writing about Barack Obama, and you need to know when an article was last updated. Please find this information. (Testing Question #13 )

*(Get people to find the page: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Obama> )*

### **Purpose 3: Effectively use links provided within Wikipedia**

1. You are writing a paper for biology class. See if you can find a picture of *Sauvagesia erecta* on Wikipedia. (Testing Question # 3)

*(Get people to find the page: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ochnaceae> or <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sauvagesia>)*

2. You decide that you'd like to be able to edit Wikipedia pages. Find the appropriate link on the main page and register for a free Wikipedia account. NOTE: You will not have to supply any personal information. (Testing Question

#6)

*(Get people to find the page:*

*[http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Special:UserLogin&type=signup&returnto=Main\\_Page](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Special:UserLogin&type=signup&returnto=Main_Page) and use the site's webform to create a valid Wikipedia username account and arrive at a Welcome page.)*

3. After reading *Huckleberry Fin*, you wonder if there are other things named after the berry. From Wikipedia's main page, search for the term "Huckleberry." When your search takes you to an article about a kind of berry, use the link above the



article ("For other uses") to find a different term that is related to a railroad.  
(Testing Question # 9)

*(Get people to navigate efficiently from the Main Page to the first hit page, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huckleberry>, to the disambiguation page, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huckleberry \(disambiguation\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huckleberry_(disambiguation)), to the ultimate target page, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huckleberry Railroad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huckleberry_Railroad). Ideally this should happen in three clicks.)*

4. After seeing the griffin in *Alice in Wonderland*, you decide you want to edit the "Possible Origins of Griffin Stories" section. Find the link to edit that section.  
(Testing Question # 12)

*(Get people to see the [edit] link)*

5. Your uncle is crazy about genealogy, and has located your family coat of arms, but doesn't know what it means. You would like to print information about it to show him. Go to the "coat of arms" page and find the link for a printable version so you may print it. (Testing Question # 14)

*(Get people to see the printable version link in the toolbox area.)*

**2 Copy of our Consent and Waiver Form**

**The University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa  
CONSENT AND WAIVER**

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:**

I hereby grant full permission to the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa to take notes of my comments during the usability test for **Wikipedia.org website**.

I understand that other University of Alabama students involved with **Wikipedia.org website** may review these usability notes.

I understand that I may be quoted directly in internal University of Alabama documents, with or without reference to my name.

I understand that usability notes, my name, address, phone number and e-mail address will **not** be shared with external third parties.

This consent and waiver will not be made the basis of a future claim of any kind against the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa and any of its agencies.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto set my hand and seal this

\_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ A.D. 20\_\_.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature : \_\_\_\_\_

Address : \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### 3 Demographic Information Questionnaire

The purpose of this test is to evaluate how user-friendly Wikipedia is. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers. Your ability or inability to accomplish requested tasks provides us with valuable information about how well Wikipedia has been designed.

*(Please note, your information will **not** be sold or given to outside entities. It is for internal use only. Please circle the correct answer.)*

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Years Using the Web: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Would you consider yourself comfortable with using the internet? Y N

4. Do you normally use a Mac or a PC? Mac PC

5. Age Group: 11-20 21-30 31-40 41-50 51-60 over 60

6. Gender: Female Male

7. How often do you use the internet?  
Daily Weekly Monthly Occasionally Never

8. How often do you use Wikipedia?  
Daily Weekly Monthly Occasionally Never

9. On Wikipedia do you usually:

- Go there from an outside source (like Google) and then leave
- Go directly to Wikipedia and search for information
- Go to Wikipedia for fun and go from place to place inside it

9. What do you usually do on the internet? (*e.g., email, use reference materials such as encyclopedias and dictionaries, read news, curriculum activities, games, entertainment etc.*)

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10. May we contact you about your input at a later date?

If so, please provide your e-mail address. \_\_\_\_\_

**Test Facilitator:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Test Subject:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Test Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Test Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Specific Computer/Software used for this Test:**

PC or Mac:

Operating System:

Browser and Version:

Screen Resolution:

**Take user to the Wikipedia starting page before beginning each task.**

#### 4 Exit Questionnaire

1. How does the fact that you can personally edit most articles within this online encyclopedia affect your opinion of the site (circle one)?

Very unfavorable   Unfavorable   Neutral   Favorable   Very Favorable

2. Would you return to Wikipedia to find answers for your own questions (circle one)? Y/N

3. On a scale of 1-5, how easy did you find it to navigate on Wikipedia pages (circle one)?

1   2   3   4   5

4. What was your comfort level while completing these tasks (1=not stressed at all, 5=highly stressed; circle one)?

1   2   3   4   5

5. As regards links, pictures, and information within the site, did you feel that the site was (circle one):

Too busy information   Not busy enough   Had the right amount of links, pictures and information