

CUE-10

Comparative Usability Evaluation 10

Moderation

Observing usability test moderators

Workshop: Boston, MA, USA, Wednesday 9 May 2018

Call For Participation – Comparative Usability Evaluation 10

CUE-10: Moderation

A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO ASSESS AND IMPROVE YOUR USABILITY TESTING SKILLS

The purpose of CUE-10 is to gather real-world data about usability test moderation from experienced UX professionals.

CUE-10 will assemble a number of experienced UX professionals to discuss best practices in usability test moderation based on a common experience in moderating at least 3 usability test sessions of a contemporary website.

To participate, you must:

- Conduct at least 3 usability test sessions of a prescribed website;
- Record test sessions on video. The videos must show both the usability test participant and the moderator;
- Write a short usability test report describing your findings;
- Submit your report and your videos;
- Review at least 3 reports and videos submitted by other participants;
- Meet experienced colleagues at the full-day CUE-10 workshop. Compare and discuss findings. Learn from the similarities and differences;
- Compare results with current best practices in the usability literature.

KEY WORKSHOP QUESTIONS

- What are the critical issues of moderation?
- What is good moderation practice?
- What are common moderation errors? How can we avoid them?
- How does the moderation technique influence the reported problems?

ABOUT THE WORKSHOP

CUE-10 will take place from February to May 2018, ending with a full-day workshop held on Wednesday 9 May 2018 at Bentley University near Boston, MA, USA. The workshop will be held just before the UX Boston conference.

Participation in CUE-10 is free, but you must invest 10-25 hours in preparation for the workshop and cover your own travel and accommodation.

INTERESTED?

Interested? Write to cue-10@dialogdesign.dk before 1 March 2018. For more information, see *Application*.

Questions about CUE-10? Contact Rolf Molich at the above address.

Up-to-date information about CUE-10 including workshop availability:
www.dialogdesign.dk/CUE-10.htm

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Detailed Description

OVERVIEW

CUE-10 will take a closer look at usability test moderation, which has never before been addressed explicitly in a CUE-study.

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INTRODUCTION

Usability testing is becoming more and more mainstream, to the point where it is a routine activity in some mature organizations. Increased demand for usability testing has led to an interest in risk assessment and quality assurance of usability tests.

The organizer and his colleagues have assessed usability tests carried out by others. Some of these assessments were commissioned by private and public organizations. Others were part of the evaluation of submissions by UX professionals who wanted to obtain the CPUX-UT certificate (see www.uxqb.org/en/).

During these assessments, we have observed interesting variations in usability test moderation. Our observations include: talkative moderator, no eye-contact between moderator and test participant, moderator and test participant struggle about the keyboard, and improper time management.

To probe these issues and many others we are now launching CUE-10. The main goal of CUE-10 is to get an impression of how experienced UX professionals moderate usability tests.

KEY QUESTIONS ADDRESSED

The key questions that CUE-10 will address are:

- What are the critical issues of moderation?
- What is good moderation practice?
- What are common moderation errors? How can we avoid them?
- How does the moderation technique influence the reported problems?

An additional goal of the workshop is to produce and publish a set of professional usability testing videos with associated findings for teaching purposes.

APPROACH

The approach is divided into

- Pre-workshop activities
- Workshop activities
- Post-workshop activities

PRE-WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT ACTIVITIES

The pre-workshop activities that must be completed by each CUE-10 participant are:

1. Conduct at least 3 usability test sessions of a prescribed website;
2. Record test sessions on video;
3. Write a short usability test report that describes your findings;
4. Submit your report and your videos to the organizer via Dropbox;
5. Review at least 3 submissions from other participants.

More information about each of these 5 activities is provided in the following sections.

1. Conduct at least 3 usability test sessions of a prescribed website

- a. Use 4 tasks for your usability test of the website. The usability test tasks will be provided by the organizer.
- b. Recruit the required test participants yourself at your own expense.
- c. Conduct at least 3 usability test sessions. You may conduct more than 3 sessions, but if you do so, you must only submit videos from 3 test sessions, and your usability test report must only contain findings from these 3 test sessions.
- d. Limit each session to at most 40 minutes, including briefing and interviews.
- e. Face-to-face usability test sessions are preferred. Remote test sessions are allowed, including test sessions where the moderator is in one room and the test participant in a neighboring room.
- f. Each usability test participant must sign a consent form where they agree that the usability test video from their session may be made available to others. Videos will be made available only to people who promise to treat them as required by ethical and privacy principles.
- g. The organizers select the website that will be used for the study in cooperation with participants who sign up early. The criteria for selecting the website are:
 1. It must be state-of-the-art with respect to usability. It must not contain a significant number of trivial usability problems. An example of a website we might use is u-haul.com
 2. The target group for the website must be the general public. Test participants must be easy to recruit.
 3. We will try to find a website whose project team, in particular UX specialists, are willing to send one or more representatives to the workshop. Suggestions from CUE-10 participants are welcome.
 4. The language of the website must be English.

2. Record test sessions on video

- a. Submitted video recordings must be raw – that is, uncut and unedited. Video recordings must show what happens from the moment the usability test participant has signed the video recording permission in the test room until the test participant has left the test room.

We recommend that you get the participants to sign before they arrive and then remind them of the recording and informed consent issues so you can start recording as early as possible.

- b. For face-to-face test sessions, the videos must show both the usability test participant and the moderator (you). For remote test sessions, the video must show the usability test participant; the voice of the moderator must be clearly discernible.
- c. Use picture-in-picture to show the usability test participant and the moderator during the test session.
- d. Submit one video per test session. Separate videos of the moderator, the usability test participant and screen contents will not be accepted.
- e. Use a separate webcam for recording. Do not use the camera that is built into your laptop.
- f. Test the quality of your video and audio recording carefully by conducting a short pilot test before you start recording test sessions.
- g. Video recordings must be in mp4- or wmv-format; they must be viewable in the Windows operating system.
- h. The length of the video of a usability test session must be 20-40 minutes. Videos that are longer than 40 minutes will not be accepted.

3. Write a short usability test report that describes your findings

Each CUE-10 participant must submit a usability test report. The usability test report can be a document in Word or PDF-format or a PowerPoint presentation.

The usability test report must contain at least:

- a. An executive summary of at most one page or slide
- b. List of usability findings
 - Findings must be classified. You must rate usability problems on a commonly used scale.
 - For each finding the video locations supporting the finding must be provided, possibly in an appendix.

If you notice a problem that is not verbalized by the participants, it's up to you whether that problem should be reported. If you decide to report problems that are not verbalized, please report for each finding whether it is based on heuristics, your observations or your problem analysis.

- c. **Methodology.**
A short description of how the evaluation was carried out and how the issues were determined. Point out examples of your best moderation practices and any mistakes that you made.
- d. Other information considered relevant for the study (optional)
- e. Resources used:
 - Number of person hours that you spent on the evaluation

4. **Submit your report and your videos to the organizer via Dropbox**

- a. The total size of your submitted deliverables (report and videos) must be 500 MB or less. If necessary, compress the videos. If you compress the videos, check the video and audio quality carefully after compression. If you have doubts regarding the video or audio quality, contact the organizer.
- b. You accept that your deliverables – that is, report and videos – will be made available to other CUE-10 participants and to other UX professionals.
- c. Your report may be anonymous.

Videos of face-to-face usability test sessions will obviously not be anonymous. If your videos should be made available only to CUE-10 participants, please state so clearly in your application

For remote videos requests to remain anonymous will be respected.

5. **Review at least 3 submissions from other participants**

- a. Submissions for review will be assigned by the organizers.
- b. During the review, focus in particular on
 - 1. Moderation;
 - 2. Pre- and post-moderation activities;
 - 3. Correspondence between videos and reported findings;

The setup and contents of the usability test report are of less interest in this study. They have been addressed by previous CUE-studies.
- c. Precise review criteria are deliberately not prescribed. Make notes of any issues that you consider interesting – positive as well as negative.
- d. Our estimate is that each review will take you 2-4 hours.

PRE-WORKSHOP ORGANIZER ACTIVITIES

Workshop organizers will

- Select the website
- Suggest four mandatory usability test tasks

- Pre-process participants' reports and videos and perform a preliminary analysis of results ahead of the workshop.
- Handle communication with participants

WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES

Detailed workshop activities will be defined in cooperation with the participants. We expect at least the following activities:

- a. Introduction to workshop. Brief presentation of each participant.
- b. Participants split into groups, for example 4 groups of 4 participants each. Each group creates
 1. A list of the top-10 lessons of dos and don'ts regarding moderation that they have learned from this study. Participants should bring up only issues from the moderation of others, not from their own moderation.
 2. A list of the ten most important usability findings from all reports from group participants.
- c. A plenum session compares the lists from the groups.
- d. Lessons learned.
- e. Note about how current usability practices compare to the findings from CUE-10

POST-WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES

We will publish the results of CUE-10 as one or more articles in UX Magazine, the Journal of Usability Studies or another refereed journal.

Previous CUE-workshops have resulted in papers accepted in refereed journals and magazines such as Behaviour and Information Technology (BIT), The Journal of Usability Studies (JUS), and UX Magazine.

APPLICATION

Participants must have at least two years of relevant, practical usability experience. They must have moderated at least five usability tests. We will consider a limited number of applications from people who have less experience, including students.

Participation in CUE-10 is basically free, but you must invest 12-25 hours in preparation for the workshop and review of 3 other submissions, for example

- 6 hours to prepare and conduct 3 usability test sessions @ 30 mins,
- 5 hours to write usability test report
- 6 hours to review 3 submissions from other participants @ 2 hours
- = 17 hours.

You must also cover your own travel and accommodation.

An application is required. The application should be short. One page should do. The position paper should contain the following information:

- Name and address;
- Current affiliation;
- Relevant experience in usability evaluation;
- Previous CUE experience
- A brief description of why we should prefer you if CUE-10 is overbooked. We expect to admit up to 16 people to CUE-10. The minimum number of participants is 8.

Moderation is about individuals. Submissions where evaluations are carried out by different people will not be accepted. Advice from colleagues regarding moderation and the usability test report is permitted and encouraged. We are willing to accept two or more individual participants working for the same organization.

Applications are due before 1 March 2018.

ABOUT CUE

CUE-10 is the tenth in a series of Comparative Usability Evaluation (CUE) studies. Previous studies were conducted from 1998 to 2011.

The essential characteristic of a CUE study is that a number of organizations (commercial and academic) involved in usability work agree to evaluate the same product or service and share their evaluation results at a workshop.

Previous CUE-studies have focused mainly on qualitative usability evaluation methods such as think-aloud testing, expert reviews, and heuristic inspections. CUE-8 focused on usability measurement. CUE-9 focused on the Evaluator Effect.

For an overview of the nine previous CUE-studies and their results see www.dialogdesign.dk/CUE.html.

ORGANIZER

- Rolf Molich, DialogDesign, Denmark, molich@dialogdesign.dk
CUE-10 website: www.dialogdesign.dk/CUE-10.htm

ADVISORS

- Chauncey Wilson, independent consultant