



# Guiding Ohio Online

## Level Up: User Experience

The library's website is no good if no one can use it! User experience is the study of how patrons behave online and designing web content based on that usage. You can learn a lot about usability at <http://www.usability.gov/>

Let's get started with the basics:

Obtain the permission of three library users to observe their use of the library's web site. Create 1-2 scenarios to test the usability of the website such as "You would like to book a meeting room, where would you start looking", "Where would you click to download an ebook" or another task.

- Treat participants with respect and make them feel comfortable.
- Remember that you are testing the site not the users. Help them understand that they are helping us test the website.
- Remain neutral – you are there to listen and watch. If the participant asks a question, reply with "What do you think?" or "I am interested in what you would do."
- Do not jump in and help participants immediately and do not lead the participant. If the participant gives up and asks for help, you must decide whether to end the scenario, give a hint, or give more substantial help.
- The team should decide how much of a hint you will give and how long you will allow the participants to work on a scenario when they are clearly going down an unproductive path.
- Take good notes. Note-takers should capture what the participant did in as much detail as possible as well as what they say (in their words). The better the notes are that are taken during the session, the easier the analysis will be.

### Example Usability Test Session

Here is an example test session.

1. Welcome the participant and explain the test session.

2. Explains thinking aloud and asks if the participant has any additional questions. The facilitator explains where to start.
3. The participant reads the task scenario aloud and begins working on the scenario while they think aloud.
4. Take notes of the participant's behaviors, comments, errors and completion (success or failure) on each task.
5. The session continues until all task scenarios are completed or time allotted has elapsed.
6. Ask thoughtful follow-up questions like "Instead of Digital Resources, what would you call that section of the website?"

Afterwards, evaluate. What were common themes you heard?