

# Alternative Evaluation Methods

By Richard Neves

There are quite a few less often used research and evaluation methods which can effectively complement the more traditional staples of user testing and interviews. The following are some examples of alternative approaches for design evaluation.

## Steve Krug's 'Get It' Testing

In this test, you simply put the user in front of the site or application and ask them to talk about what they think is its purpose, how does it work, how is it organised – what do they think they can do on the site?

- Particularly useful for testing forms – ask the participants to thinkaloud on how they would complete the form.

### Want to know more?

[http://sensible.com/downloads/DMMTchapter09\\_for\\_personal\\_use\\_only.pdf](http://sensible.com/downloads/DMMTchapter09_for_personal_use_only.pdf)

## Christine Perfetti's 5 Second Test

Another quick evaluation method, here participants are given 5 seconds to make rapid judgements on the purpose and utility of a site.

You provide the participant with a simple task, show the site page or a screenshot, and then ask them to write down everything they remember. Finally ask a few questions around what the participant felt was the most important information on the page.

The method is designed to elicit first impressions, whether the page is clear and concise enough to be recalled.

- Best used on pages with a single primary purpose and therefore not very useful for home or primary navigation pages.

### Want to know more?

[https://articles.ue.com/five\\_second\\_test/](https://articles.ue.com/five_second_test/)

## First-Click Testing

Similar to Perfetti's test, Optimal Workshop have created the online screenshot test, *Chalkmark*. Participants are given a simple task and then where they believe they need to click to initiate the task is recorded.

The results are transformed into a heatmap to give you an indication of whether or not your design is steering users in the right direction for a given task.

The only downside to this approach is that as it is conducted remotely, you don't have any qualitative data on why the participant clicked where they did.

- Can be used on most page types: landing, navigation and content.

### Want to know more?

<https://www.optimalworkshop.com/chalkmark>

## Product Reaction Cards

Created by Microsoft, this approach was set out to address the challenges of measuring intangible emotional responses like desirability and fun. This is done through the selection of positive adjectives (friendly, sophisticated, usable) and negative ones (annoying, confusing, overwhelming) that match how the participant feels.

The participant views one or more designs, or as part of a usability test, uses the system/prototype and is asked for their feedback. Each participant should choose five reaction cards that best express how they felt. They are then asked to explain why they chose the adjectives.

- Mainly of use in gathering feedback on a visual concept, but can be used on a working prototype at the end of a traditional user testing exercise.

### Want to know more?

<https://www.userfocus.co.uk/articles/satisfaction.html>

## Measuring User Experience – Emotions

SusaGroup has developed the PrEmo tool to instantly get an insight on user emotions. Instead of articulating how they feel they choose an expressive cartoon (comprised of an image, animation and sound).

In the test, the PrEmo character is introduced, and then the participant is exposed to a stimulus and asked something like: *to which extent do the feelings expressed by the characters correspond with your own feelings towards the product?*

As with First-Click because the testing is generally conducted remotely, you don't have an explanation as to why the participant selected the cartoon.

- Useful in gathering feedback on a visual concept, a working prototype or an existing product.

### Want to know more?

<http://www.premotool.com/>

## Measuring User Experience – Facial Expression

Created by Noldus, FaceReader is software used in the automatic analysis of facial expressions.

The participant's facial expressions are recorded as they are performing tasks in a usability test. The software analyses basic facial expressions: neutral, contempt, boredom, interest and confusion. It also calculates gaze direction, head orientation for insights into the effect of the different task journey stages on the participant. The output is an objective assessment of the user's emotions based on their facial expressions.

- Useful in gathering feedback on designs and working prototypes as part of traditional user testing.

### Want to know more?

<https://www.noldus.com/human-behavior-research/products/facereader>

## Comparison Testing – A/B Testing

Comparison testing is commonly used to incrementally improve sites without the need for a full-blown redesign.

One of the key aspects of A/B testing is that you change only one item at a time, e.g. a button colour or the button label. In a multivariate test it is possible to pit one button design against variations of it, e.g. changing the label and changing the colour. When

testing a button, the obvious measure is click rate. If you are testing the strength of a headline, the bounce rate or time spent on the clicked-through page may be better measures.

Before you begin, ensure you have the baseline click-through rate (to provide a control for your test). The variant designs are served at random to the visitors of your site and using web analytics you can determine which version resulted in more traffic, and therefore which design you should make a permanent change to your site.

- Generally applied to running sites in order to measure the variant effect on the baseline measure.

### Want to know more?

<https://www.invisionapp.com/blog/ab-testing-beginners-guide/>