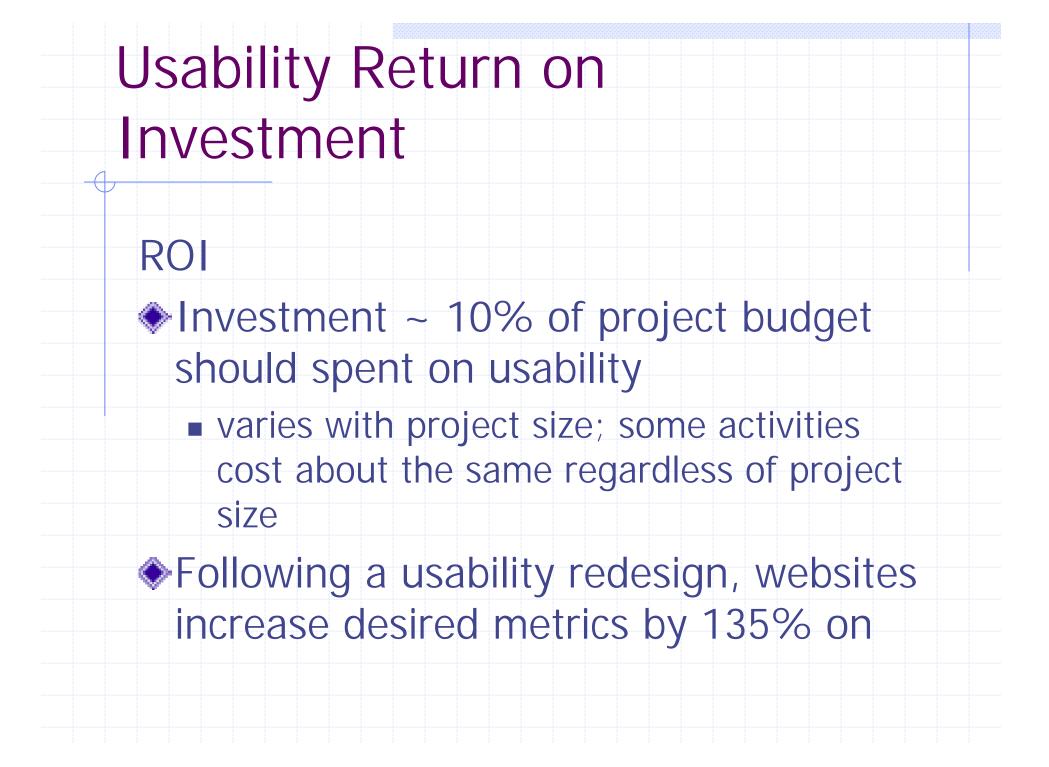
Web Conference: Usability and Information Architecture Best Practices for Online Assistance Resources

Andy Bray, NEWMOA May 23, 2006

What We'll Cover

Why is usability important?
The basics, but still worth mentioning
Site navigation – don't make me think
Feedback methods

Evaluating usability



Usability ROI (continued)

Sales / conversion rate100%Traffic / visitor count150%User performance / productivity161%Use of specific (target) features202%	Metric	Average Improvement Across Web Projects
User performance / productivity 161%	Sales / conversion rate	100%
	Traffic / visitor count	150%
Use of specific (target) features 202%	User performance / productivity	161%
1	Use of specific (target) features	202%

Heuristics

adjective

- enabling a person to discover or learn something for themselves.
- proceeding to a solution by trial and error or by rules that are only loosely defined.

noun

- the study and use of heuristic techniques.
- a heuristic process or method.
- (source: askoxford.com)

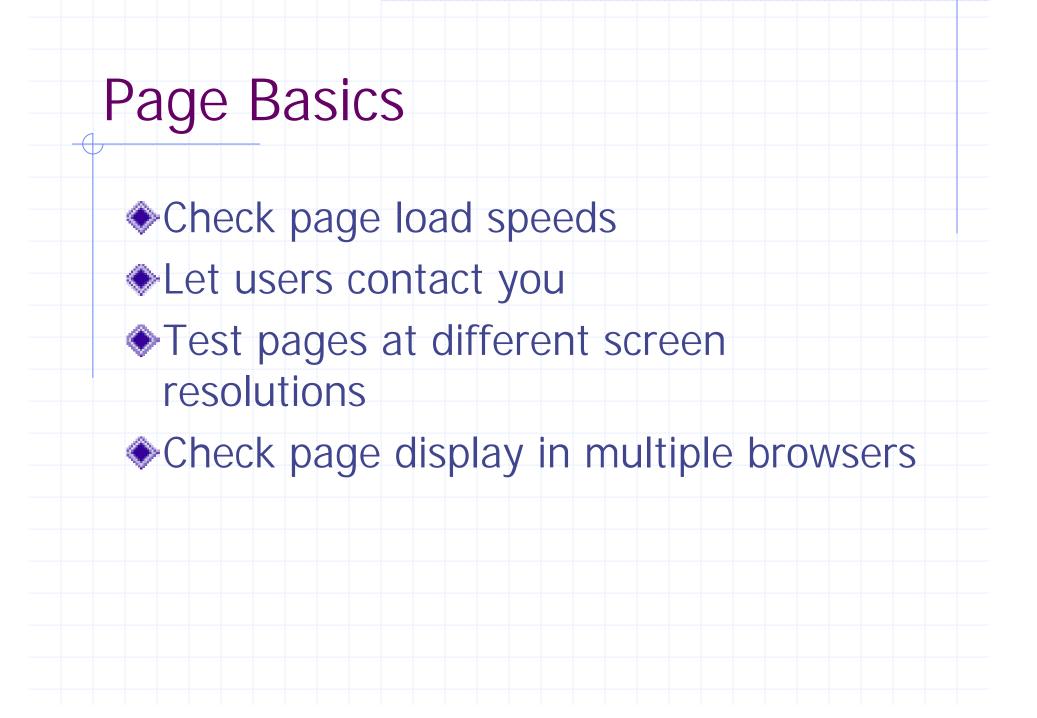
Usability Heuristics

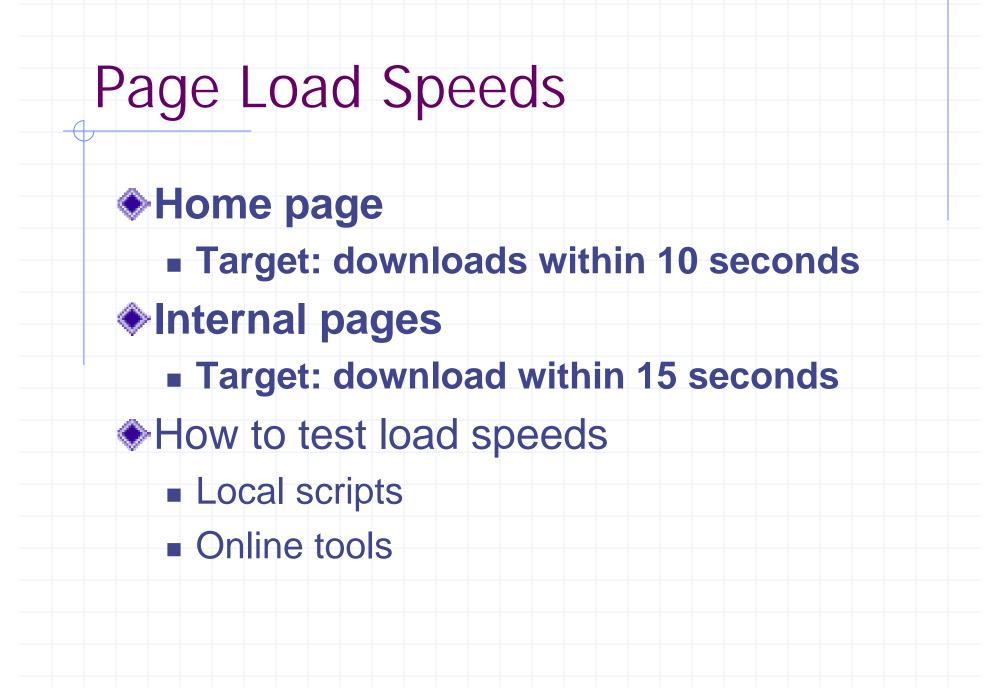
- Visibility of system status
 Match between system and the real world
- User control and freedom
- Consistency and standards
- Error prevention

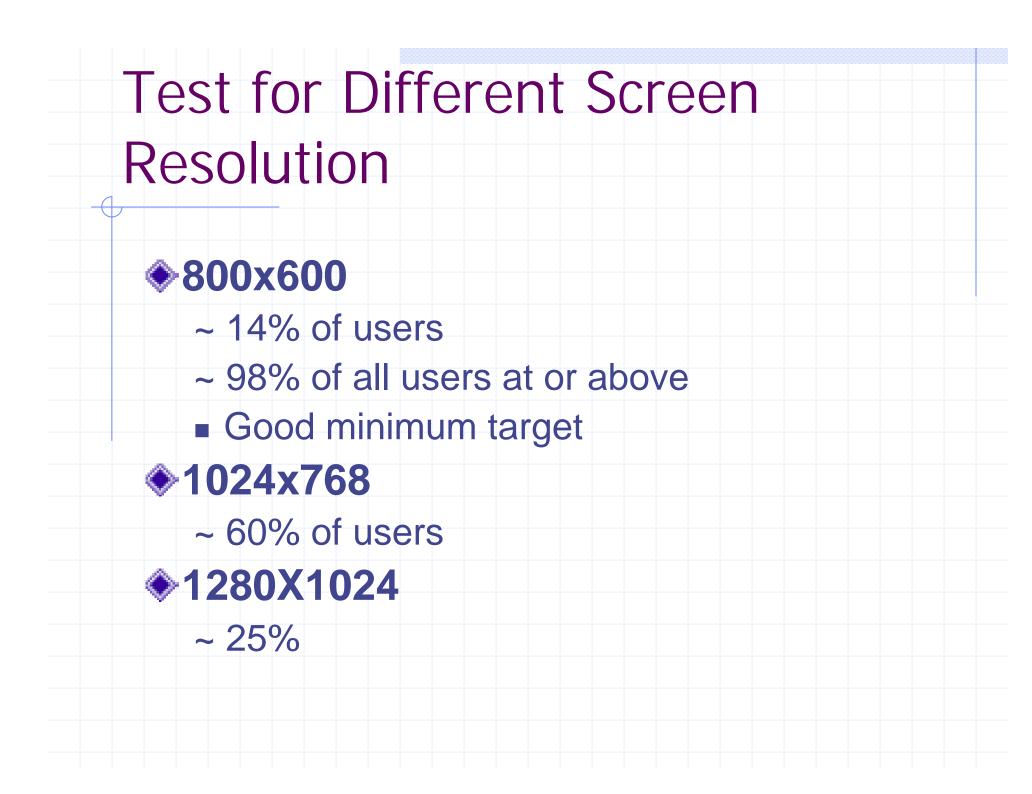
Usability Heuristics (continued)

 Recognition rather than recall
 Flexibility and efficiency of use
 Aesthetic and minimalist design
 Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors

Help and documentation







Test for Different Browsers



Site Navigation

Clear and simple navigation

- Basics general rules to live by
- Navigation Dos and DON'Ts

Clear and Simple Navigation

A good navigation system should answer three questions:

- Where am I?
- Where have I been?
- Where can I go?

(Jakob Nielsen)

Navigation Basics

Be consistent
Use appropriate text for links
Use CSS to emphasize links

"well, that's nice to look at, but..."

Always include text links

accessibility

Navigation Basics (continued)

Text-based site map
Include a home page link in main navigation
Link logo to home page
Include a site search box
Custom error pages

Navigation DOs

- DOs
 - Keep site navigation consistent throughout
 - Separate global navigation from local navigation
 - Brand site throughout
 - Link to HOME
 - Support know item searching and browsing

Navigation DON'Ts

DON'Ts

- Excessive text links
- Inconsistent page design or navigation scheme
- Disabling the browser's navigational features
- Orphans pages
- Multiple navigational devices

Clear and Lean Content

- Less is more
 - Writing for the web
 - Pages are scanned, not read
- Don't save the best for last
 - Put the most important information above the fold
- Every item on a page competes equally with the most important items

Feedback Methods

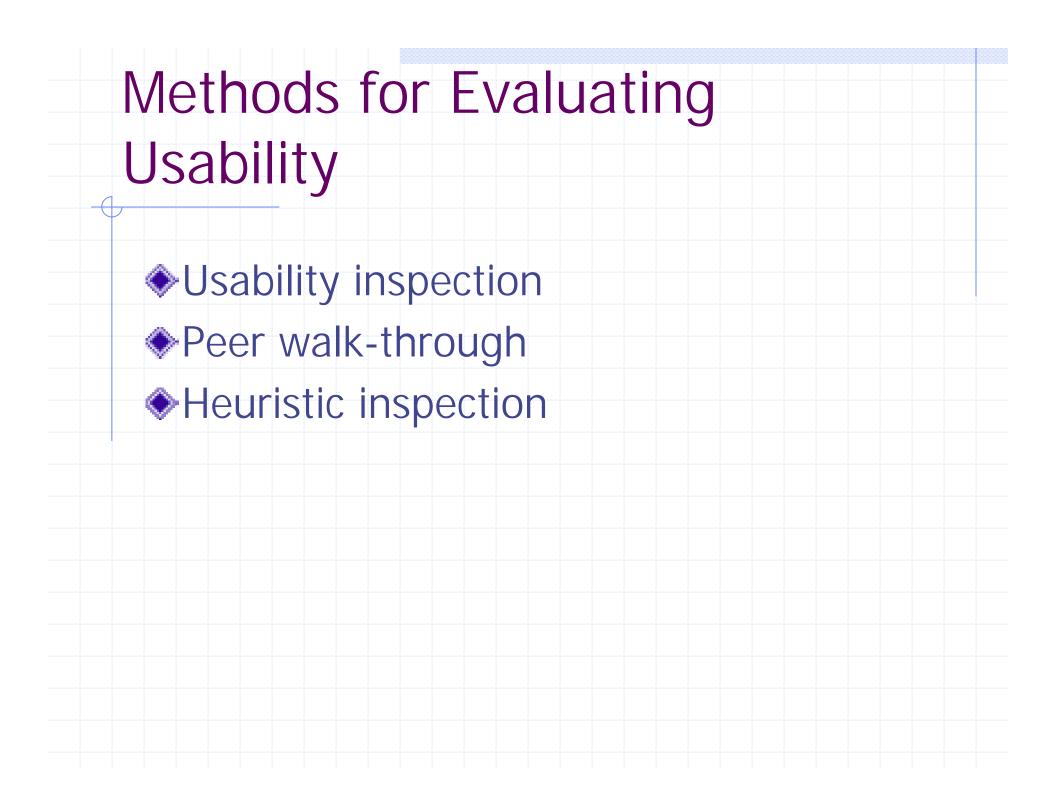
User satisfaction surveys
 Rate this resource
 Allow visitors to report broken links
 "Contact Us"/feedback on every page
 Forms – keep them simple

Evaluating Usability

Methods for evaluating usability

Usability testing misconceptions

Low-cost usability testing

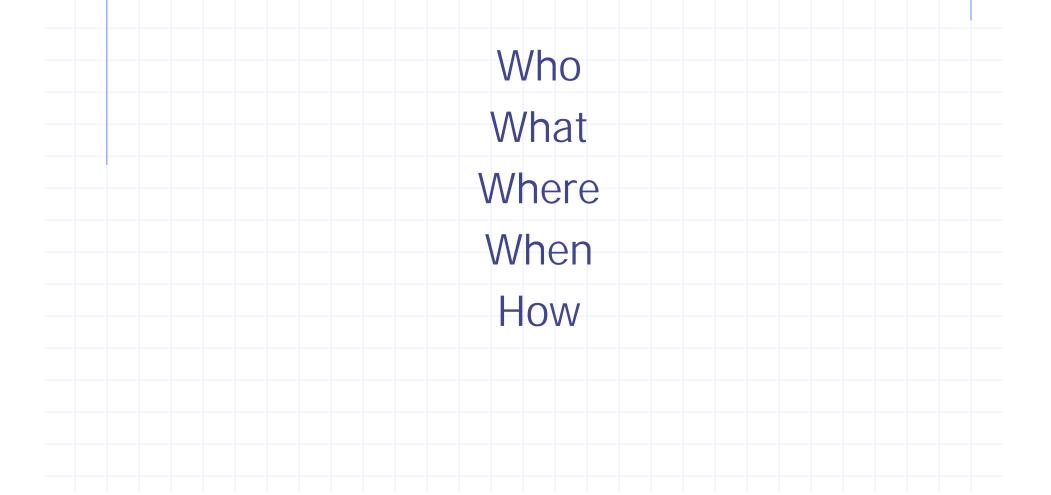


Usability Testing Misconceptions

Focus groups are not usability tests

 Usability tests are trying, not brainstorming
 Don't have the expertise
 Don't have the testing facilities
 Testing is expensive

Low-cost Usability Testing



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