

## Usability Services

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Successful user interfaces are those that have incorporated a clear understanding of users, their tasks and their context of use. Such interfaces have been tested and redesigned so that they ensure quality – *quality in use*.

### The Benefits

- **Development**
  - User needs are specified in advance
  - Problems fixed before development
  - Less rework because the interface is usability tested before release
  - Improved user acceptance
- **Use**
  - Less time to learn
  - Effort is focussed on the task (not the interface)
  - Less errors
  - Motivated and satisfied users
- **Sales**
  - The competitive advantage of marketing usable products
  - Higher product ratings by the media
- **Support**
  - Less help-desk calls
  - Less user training
  - Users can help themselves

As a service to you, Test and Data Services can provide training on usability, and can also apply usability testing to your user interface.

### Usability Training

- **Introduction Course: Practical Usability Testing**

This 2 day course is an introduction to usability and usability testing. The challenge was to develop a course that would teach (those who know nothing about usability) the definitions and benefits of usability through to the practical testing techniques. The content of the course is:

  - Definition of Usability
  - The Benefits of Usability
  - The User-Centred Development Life Cycle
  - Techniques for Testing with Testers
  - Techniques for Testing with Users
- **Intermediate Course: Principles of Effective GUI Design**

This 2 day course was created when learners, who had attended the Practical Usability Testing course, felt the need to know more. Practical Usability Testing is a prerequisite to this course. The following steps in the design life cycle are taught:

  - Planning
  - Requirements Analysis
  - Design
  - Test

- **Support**  
International standards and guidelines are taught; learners are expected to apply these during a six-hour exercise during which they create their own website.

## Usability in Practice

Usability in practice will identify user requirements, improve design, and test user interfaces.

### Description

Applying usability does not impact project timelines, and delivers a high return on a relatively small investment. Maximum benefit is gained by applying usability early, and following through until after deployment. The flexible nature of usability means that clients can incorporate as much usability as is suitable for their situation.

### Services offered

- **User Requirements Analysis:**  
A number of techniques are used to understand users, their tasks, and their environment within the context of the project. The resulting requirements are then documented in a way that facilitates effective development.
- **Interface Design:**  
Participative methodology is used to bridge the gap between specification or ideas, and the actual user interface. Prototypes are iteratively designed, and tested.
- **Expert Review:**  
A flexible technique where interfaces are evaluated against accepted guidelines by experienced reviewers. Problems are categorised, and rated; recommendations are made. This is a very valuable technique that highlights most of the problems relatively quickly.
- **User Testing:**  
A scientific technique used to ensure that the interface allows users to do what is required. Actual end users are asked to perform typical tasks using the interface. Performance is measured, results are interpreted, and recommendations are made. User opinions and levels of satisfaction are also measured, and reported.

## Contact

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