

Improve the Customer Experience

## Usability Testing: First Fridays “Discount” Method

Nicole Burton and Janelle Thalls

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**First Fridays Free Webinar Series**

Part 1: Jan 24 – Planning your Test  
Part 2: Feb 22 – Testing & Debriefing  
Part 3: Mar 20 – Fixing Problems

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## What We'll Cover Today

- Why “do-it-yourself” usability testing works
- Plan your test
- Recruit test participants
- Develop test scenarios



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## Why all websites need usability testing

“...Relatively few designers, developers, stakeholders, managers, and check-signers—who all have a hand in the design process—have actually spent *any* time watching how people use websites. As a result, we end up designing for our abstract idea of users, based for the most part on ourselves.”


— *Steve Krug*



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### What's the ROI?

- “... spending 10% of your development budget on usability should improve your conversion rate by 83%.” – Jakob Nielson

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### What are the Benefits?

- Improve customers' success
- Improve readability
- Reduce your customer service costs
- Reduce your development costs
- Shorten development time
- Strengthen your brand

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## Usability Testing Costs

- Option 1: Pay ~\$17,250 for each test, repeatedly
- Option 2: Learn to do it yourself and develop new and valuable skills



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GSA First Fridays =  
High quality usability testing  
in just one morning a month!



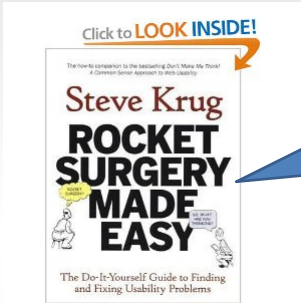
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## It's Not Rocket Surgery



Click to LOOK INSIDE!


Steve Krug  
**ROCKET SURGERY MADE EASY**  
The Do-It-Yourself Guide to Finding and Fixing Usability Problems

forum.sensible.com  
Talk Amongst Yourselves

### Steve Krug's Method

Commit to monthly product testing, same time each month:  
more observers, more testing, more buy-in

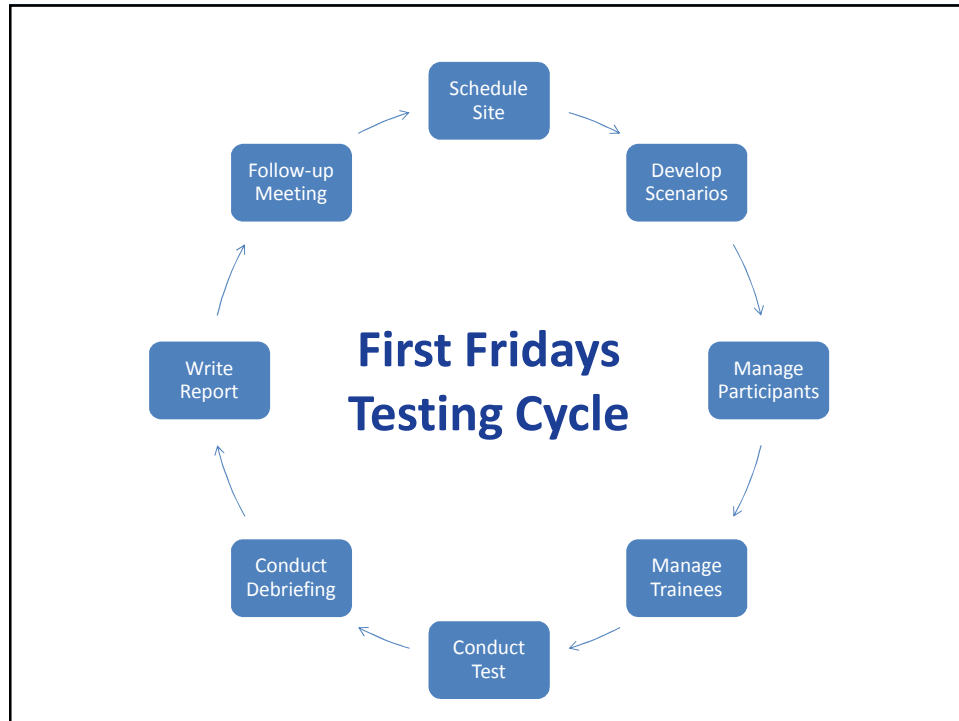
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## First Fridays Test Process


1. Choose a site to test
2. Recruit *three* customer participants to perform tasks with a facilitator
3. Have observers watch and take notes
4. Debrief over lunch and identify *three* serious problems + quick fixes
5. Write a one-page report and provide copy of test recordings
6. Follow up 2-3 weeks later on quick fixes

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## Alternative: Tweaks



**REDESIGN!**

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## Passports Application

### Before

**STEPS TO SUBMITTING FORM DS-11:**

Read and understand **Steps 1 and 2 before** leaving this page. Please note, there are **special requirements** for minors under age 16 and minors age 16 and 17 when submitting Form DS-11.

**STEP 1: Complete and Print Form**

**DO NOT SIGN** Form DS-11 until you are instructed to do so at the Acceptance Facility.

**When filling out Form DS-11 online**, make sure that all of the entered information is complete and correct before printing. Print the completed form using black ink on one-sided pages.

[FILL OUT FORM DS-11 ONLINE](#)

- If completing Form DS-11 by hand, do so legibly and in black ink. Make sure that all of the entered information is complete and correct. Illegible applications may delay application processing times.

[PRINT A BLANK FORM DS-11](#)

**NOTE:** Form DS-11 can also be obtained from your local [Acceptance Facility](#) or a [Passport Agency](#).

### After

**STEPS TO SUBMITTING FORM DS-11:**

Read and understand **Steps 1 and 2 before** leaving this page. Please note, there are **special requirements** for minors under age 16 and minors age 16 and 17 when submitting Form DS-11.

**STEP 1: Complete and Print Form**

**Enter the information online and print Form DS-11.** Print the completed form using black ink on one-sided pages.

[Complete Online & Print](#)

OR


**Print a blank Form DS-11 and complete by hand.** Print the form on one-sided pages and complete with black ink.

[Complete by Hand](#)

**NOTE:** Form DS-11 can also be obtained from your local [Acceptance Facility](#) or a [Passport Agency](#).

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The screenshot shows the NSF SSTAT Home page. The header includes the NSF logo and the tagline "WHERE DISCOVERIES BEGIN". The navigation bar contains links: Home, Funding, Awards, Discoveries, News, Publications, **Statistics**, About, and FastLane. The left sidebar, titled "Data and Tools: SSTAT", lists links for About SSTAT, Variable Information, Technical Information, Survey Questionnaires, Publications, and a search bar. The main content area features a "NCSES Home" link, a "SSTAT" section with a description of the Scientists and Engineers Statistical Data System, and an "Access Data" section with a "Launch SSTAT Data Tool" button. A "New Releases" section is also visible.

NSF Web Site

Home Funding Awards Discoveries News Publications **Statistics** About FastLane

**Data and Tools: SSTAT**

About SSTAT  
Variable Information  
Technical Information  
Survey Questionnaires

**Publications**

Characteristics of Scientists & Engineers in U.S.  
Characteristics of Doctoral Scientists & Engineers in U.S.  
Doctoral Scientists & Engineers Profiles  
Characteristics of Recent College Grads

National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES)  
NCSES Home (formerly SRS)  
About NCSES (formerly SRS)  
Topics: A to Z  
View Staff Directory  
Contact NCSES

Search NCSES

**NCSES Home**

**SSTAT**  
Scientists and Engineers Statistical Data System

The Scientists and Engineers Statistical Data System (SSTAT) is an integrated data collection effort capturing information about employment, educational, and demographic characteristics of scientists and engineers in the United States. The data are collected from three national surveys of this population: the National Survey of College Graduates (NSCG), the National Survey of Recent College Graduates (NSRCG), and the Survey of Doctorate Recipients (SDR).

The data collected from these three surveys are combined in a comprehensive, integrated database: SSTAT. Data are available for download, or through the SSTAT Data Tool, which allows users to generate custom data tables.

**Access Data**

Launch SSTAT Data Tool

The SSTAT Data Tool is not available on Thursdays from 8AM to 10AM ET for purposes of technical maintenance.


Download Public Use Data

**New Releases**

Characteristics of Scientists and Engineers in the United States: 2003 (SSTAT) (NSF 11-318)  
Unemployment Among Doctoral Scientists and Engineers Remained Below the National Average in 2008 (NSF 11-308)  
The End of Mandatory Retirement for Doctoral Scientists and Engineers in Postsecondary Institutions: Retirement Patterns 10 Years Later (NSF 11-302)  
Incentive Experiments: NSF Experiences (SRS 11-200)

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This screenshot is identical to the one above, showing the NSF SSTAT Home page. The layout, content, and navigation elements are the same, including the NSF logo, navigation bar, sidebar, and main content area with sections for SSTAT, Access Data, and New Releases.

NSF Web Site

Home Funding Awards Discoveries News Publications **Statistics** About FastLane

**Data and Tools: SSTAT**

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## Plan Your Test

- Figure out what you're going to be testing
- Decide what kind(s) of users you want to test with
- Checklist
- Logistics (booking room, food, etc.)



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## Government Sites Tested

### GSA Sites

USA.gov  
 m.gobiernoUSA.gov  
 Data.gov  
 Apps.gov/NOW  
 Pueblo.gsa.gov  
 HowTo.gov  
 GSA CHRIS  
 m.usa.gov  
 GSA Insite  
 Publications.usa.gov

### Non-GSA Sites

Travel.state.gov  
 FCC.gov  
 NSF.gov  
 DOL.gov  
 DOI.gov  
 DOT.net  
 Weather.gov  
 OnGuardOnline.gov  
 Advisory Council  
 on Historic Preservation





## Recruitment

- What kind of people do you test with?
- How many people do you need?



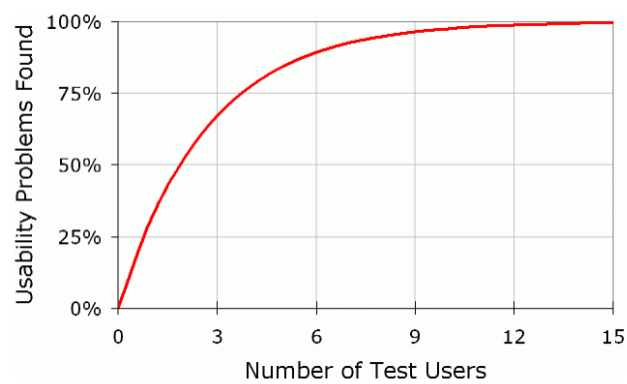
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## Why our method works



The most striking truth of the curve is that zero users give zero insights.



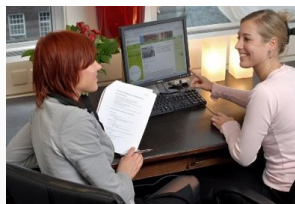
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## Recruitment – how do we find participants?

- Word of mouth
- Use Twitter, email, Craigslist, office, listservs, friends and family
- Site stakeholders help – they know their audiences
- Three back-ups, one for each time slot
- \$5 gift card



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## How do we develop test scenarios?

- Choose tasks to test
- Expand the tasks into scenarios by addition some details that help the participant do the task

Repeat for each task or until time runs out.

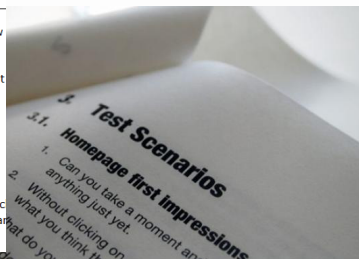
You've been putting off getting prepared for an emergency, but now you've decided you want to finally get started.

1. Find the Family Emergency Plan form so that you can start emergency in the home.

*Make a Plan > Plan to Protect Yourself & Your Family*

Participant #1 Succeeded: ☐ Succeeded w/ difficulty: ☐ Failed: ☐  
 Participant #2 Succeeded: ☐ Succeeded w/ difficulty: ☐ Failed: ☐  
 Participant #3 Succeeded: ☐ Succeeded w/ difficulty: ☐ Failed: ☐

2. You're concerned about the level of preparedness of your daycare and school. Find the list of questions to ask daycare officials about their plans.



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## How We Develop Test Scenarios

1. Ask web team for a list of top & critical tasks
2. Use metrics & customer feedback
3. Craft your test scenarios
4. Ask participants *not* to use the site search
5. Pilot test the tasks
6. Aim for 35 minutes of tasks
7. Cut down on wait time
8. Create two printed versions

Writing Great Task Scenarios,

[http://www.howto.gov/sites/default/files/writing-great-usability-test-scenarios\\_0.pdf](http://www.howto.gov/sites/default/files/writing-great-usability-test-scenarios_0.pdf)



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## Examples of Task Scenarios

HowTo.gov/ WebManagerUniversity.gov

- Find a previously-aired webinar on customer service and register to view it

Weather.gov

- Are there any severe weather warnings currently in effect in Tampa, Florida?

ConsumerFinance.gov

- Submit a credit card complaint



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## What's Next?


**Webinar #2: Usability testing and Debriefing Best Practices**

Date: Wednesday, February 22, 2012  
 Time: 1:30pm – 2:30pm ET  
 Fee: Free – open to all

**Webinar #3: Fixing Problems**


Date: Tuesday, March 20, 2012  
 Time: 1:30pm – 2:30pm ET  
 Fee: Free – open to all

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## First Fridays Challenge


- Make a short video and you could win a FREE website testing package.
- Visit <http://websitetest.challenge.gov/> to see the video and instructions on how to enter




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### What Works for us

- Teaching non-UX professionals 
- Facilitator-in-training program & mentoring process
- Alternating GSA and agency sites
- Low-tech method
- Letter of Intent
- No “honkin’ great findings report”
- Making small changes within 30 days

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### Facilitator-in-Training Program

Learn to conduct First Friday tests at your agency!

- Participate in 4 tests over 3 months
- Get experience in facilitating
- Facilitator mentor for guidance
- Support for your own agency test team
- \$100 at [Web Manager University](#)

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## Resources

- First Fridays Product Testing Program: [HowTo.gov/FirstFridays](http://HowTo.gov/FirstFridays)
  - Testing Checklist
  - Writing Great Scenarios
  - Templates for scripts, reports, handouts, etc.
- Steve Krug (sensible.com) and The Book
- AlertBox (best usability newsletter out there - <http://www.useit.com/alertbox/>)




**Steve Krug**  
**ROCKET SURGERY MADE EASY**  
The Do-It-Yourself Guide to Finding and Fixing Usability Problems

Click to **LOOK INSIDE!**

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## Questions?

Nicole Burton  
[nicole.burton@gsa.gov](mailto:nicole.burton@gsa.gov)

Janelle Thalls  
[janelle.thalls@gsa.gov](mailto:janelle.thalls@gsa.gov)

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