

# PROJECT 1

## web site evaluation and recommendation

To critically assess a commercial web site in terms of usability guidelines and produce a report recommending a set of improvement ideas

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<b>mark</b>	20% of the module mark	<b>groups</b>	Single person project – no groups allowed
<b>submission deadline</b>	<b>16 November (Monday)</b> A penalty of 10% per week will be deducted from all projects not submitted by given deadline.	<b>how to submit</b>	Printed report (plus any other additional materials if used) to be handed in to the lecturer.

- objectives**
1. To be able to make informed usability assessment of a website according to design principles and guidelines
  2. To plan and conduct an evaluation of a website by applying the evaluation techniques learned

**Project description** Scenario:  
You are a usability expert specialising the evaluation of commercial web sites.

Choose one of the following e-Commerce websites: **Amazon.co.uk** (<http://www.amazon.co.uk/>), **USIT Travel** (<http://www.usit.ie/>), or **eBay** (<http://www.ebay.com/>)

Your choice of the company has hired you to evaluate their website to enhance their sales in the future.

Thus your responsibility is to evaluate the company's website, by:

- (1) determining appropriate evaluation technique(s) according to the company's situation (reputation and sales of the company, etc.) and to your situation (resources available to you: deadline imposed by the company, money, equipment, access to real users, etc.);
- (2) planning & conducting the evaluation;
- (3) analysing the results;
- (4) reporting the analysis with a set of recommendations for the website improvement.

## MARKING CRITERIA

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- Criteria**
- Demonstrating the understanding of design principles and guidelines;
  - Demonstrating the understanding of available evaluation techniques, their pros and cons;
  - Rationale on the choice of the evaluation techniques employed;
  - Description of the evaluation conducted;
  - Analysis
    - How well the results are collected and organised;
    - How the results are actually used to draw the conclusions

- (recommendations);
- Recommendation
  - Whether the found “themes” are categorised;
  - Whether recommendations are practical, reasonable and persuasive;
- Documentation
  - Readability & presentation

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Nielsen, J. (1993) *Usability Engineering*. Academic Press.

The book contains most of the necessary background and practical guidelines on usability testing. In relation to our project 2, check:

7.6 Choosing Usability Methods (pp223 – 226): describes which method(s) to use in your evaluation, compares advantage & disadvantages of major methods.

5.11 Heuristic Evaluation (pp155 – 163): describes one of the evaluation techniques conducted by an expert (yourself), without involving test users.

6.8 Thinking Aloud (pp195 – 200): describes a simple user-based testing you might want to try in Project 2.

7.1 Observation (pp207 – 208): another relatively cheap method you might want to use.

7.2 Questionnaires and Interviews (pp209 – 214)

Chapter 6. Usability Testing (pp165 – 206): a chapter on lab testing – background, how to set up, and what to be careful about.

Shneiderman, B. (2005) Chapter 4: Evaluating Interface Designs. In: *Designing the User Interface: Strategies for Effective Human-Computer Interaction (4th Ed.)*. pp139 – 172. Addison-Wesley.

Preece, J., Sharp, H. and Yvonne, R. (2007) *Interaction Design: beyond Human-Computer Interaction (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.)*. John Wiley & Sons.

Useful categorised explanation on evaluation techniques.

12. Introducing evaluation (pp585 – 622)

13. An evaluation framework (pp625 – 643)

14.2. Usability Testing (pp646 – 666)

15.2. Inspections: Heuristic Evaluation (pp686 – 702)

Design principles and guidelines and more useful tips will be mentioned throughout the lectures.

*\*Note that the use of DCU computers and the material placed on them is subject to the rules and regulations of the University. For more detail, see: <http://www.computing.dcu.ie/current/support/labrules.html>*