Victoria University of Wellington
School of Mathematical and Computing Sciences

# Software Usability Testing
# Information Sheet

## Introduction

Usability testing is a way of finding out how easy it is for users to use a computer system. A "test user" is asked to use the software, and the researchers observe what happens. At all times it is the software that is being studied, not the test user.
The goal is to make computer systems easier to use, either specifically for some software, or by establishing general principles. Test users are helping software researchers work towards this goal.

## Procedure

A test user is given tasks to accomplish using an ordinary desktop or laptop computer system. The user can ask for clarification at any time. Sometimes the software may be difficult to use, or even break down. However, the test user is helping discover these problems, and is not under pressure to complete tasks. The test user may decide to stop at any time.
While the test user works with the computer, they may be observed and recorded. There may be an observer taking notes, the session may be video or audio taped, and the computer itself may record what happens. Test users and observers may communicate in a natural way. The test user may ask questions and discuss the tasks. The observers may also ask the test user to talk about what they are doing, so that they can better understand what is happening.

## Results

The purpose of usability testing to improve software design and improve understanding of its principles. Sometimes testing may affect the design of some specific software, and sometimes the results of testing are written up in reports. Test users may have access to any reports or publications based on testing they helped carry out.
The identity of test users is not important in usability testing. In any reports or publications, the identify of test users will be made anonymous by using code names or numbers. Only the researchers involved in the test will have access to any material that allows individual test users to be identified. This material will be securely stored by a VUW staff member, and securely destroyed when no longer of use for its original purpose.

## No Payment

Test users are helping to develop better computer systems, and we are thankful for their help. However, there is no payment for test users. Any reimbursement of expenses must be agreed in writing beforehand.

Title and Brief Description of Specific Project:

Location, Date, Time and Duration of Testing:

Software Engineers and Researchers:

VUW staff supervisors of project: (Name and Contact Details)

Other VUW staff: (Names)

VUW students: (Names)

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# Software Usability Testing
# Test User Consent Form

Title of Project:

Location, Date, Time and Duration of Testing:

VUW staff supervisors of project:

Test User Consent:

I agree to take part as a test user on the terms described on the information sheet.

Printed Name:

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Signature:

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Date:

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Would you like access to any reports or publications that directly result from your involvement in usability testing?
Please circle: — YES — NO —
Email Address:

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Other Contact Address:

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