
Please stand by for real time captions.

>> Good afternoon everyone. This is Darryl Diamond with DigitalGov University . We are excited to have our own Joanne McGovern . She is the cocaptain of GSA. A content team later for US.gov. Life from Pennsylvania, Joanne take it away.

>> Thank you Darrell. Thank you. This is something I really enjoy doing. I feel it is a -- an effective way to make instant improvement to your website. Today's webinar will focus on methods of debriefing after the test. This will also give you context. So you understand how the debrief this into the whole process, in case you are not familiar. The visibility testing, it is a rocket surgery made easy. It is easy teary at at GSA, we started the program about a year and a half ago. We do testing each month. We do testing the first Friday every month. Regular testing, one morning a month. With an established date everyone knows the schedule. This not only frees you from scheduling hassle, it makes it easy for other people in your organization to participate. They can plan to join next month.

>> We started with one team at GSA. The demand of our services became in demand. We are able to conduct to test each month. Each team has a different ever met website every month. So far we have tested enter not -- Internet sites. We alternate each month. And other government websites. Before each test, test before each test, we talk about the testing process and the method and to get an understanding of their top tasks an area of concern. We use this information to write a test. We have precast participants for each test. We ask the average person to test. Usually -- we invite people to serve a test. These are stakeholders and anyone who will implement and approve changes to the website. And anyone interested in.

>> The important component, is [Indiscernible]. It is a food. People like food. It is a powerful magnet for people to a 10 and two -- to participate. Our budget is very limited, we keep the food simple. We provide coffee, and fruit. We provide sandwiches. We have two conference rooms during a test. We have a small room for that test participant and that facilitator in training. Down the hall we have a larger facility. The people in the observation room can hear what the participants and the facilitator are saying. We started every day at nine in the morning. We tied that test -- we time that test to last about an hour.

>> We do not object to test like that, they are time-consuming. They are expensive and identify more problems that we can fix. The method of do it yourself has pros and cons. We do have problems with government websites. This method more testing can happen. Our program is for education, and develop user experience. There are drawbacks. Tests are being conducted by less [Indiscernible] hurried it is like this seeing at the wizard of Oz, when that curtain is drawn back. We have to devote time to coach are facilitators. To help them develop their skills. We wonder, if increase testing will reduce the comprehensible on government websites. We see the value in those types of test. We like this method of testing, it is cheap, quick and reusable. We agreed on solutions that can be implemented to improve these problems within 30 days. It gives us an opportunity to do some it are it didn't take -- testing. We have a website where we we can find free or low-cost publications. Last year it was going through a major redesign. We were able to test it three times. Even shortly after lunch. As we go through the whole design process we gained a whole lot of valuable information from those test. That is the quick version of how we plan and conduct the test.

>> Once we have our test done. After our third test participant. It is a new and we are hungry. We died into that debriefing session. We aim to keep that deep breathing session -- D. briefing session. It is structured simply. We go around the room and everyone has an opportunity to share three problems they have observed during the test. Observe during the test is key. The facilitator keeps the discussion focused on the problem. The other problem -- keep the conversation focused on the problem and not let the discussion moved into solution yet.

>> The facilitator can't write a problem -- correction can write the problem on the whiteboard. We do have a notetaker, who projects the document onto the screen so everyone can see. Once everyone in the room has a chance to list, a pattern will form. This is desirable. The facilitator should look for ways to combine or refine

similar problems. The notetaker can keep track how many times the problem was mentioned. When you are done, this will be a big help in determining your big [Indiscernible].

>> You go around the room and you have a list of problems. You can have 10 or more on your list. You will narrow would down to the three most serious problems. Put the three problems on the top. The facilitator will ask if these are the feasibility test. -- task. You can ask a few questions about the problems that were identified. Does this problem identify with that top tasks? Is this problem a serious problem? Or is it simply an inconvenience current went --. When you identify your top three problems, you identify the solution. They have the authority to authorize the change. It does not do any good come up with the solution, and find out you cannot make changes. Make sure you have a decision-maker in the room. The testing will turn out problems that had are too big or too costly to implement within 30 days. These will go to the back burner. And they will be improved upon in the future. It is to keep the discussion focused on how to improve the problem in 30 days. You may not pursue the ultimate solution. An example, a participant have problems locating a heading on the page. It would require a template change, and that would take two months. We would look for an alternative quick fix. Maybe change the wording in the header or the location or some other smaller change. Each of your top three items, the group will determine solution, estimate the time it would take to correct, and a person responsible for the fix. Then you are done.

>> Following that test. We have a brief report. It includes a few key items. The participant, that tasks, the top three most serious problems and the quick fixes, the top 10 problems, and the post test follow up meeting. And any other items discussed. We keep it simple. Who has time to read a giant report? This is easy and quick to produce. And who is responsible for the next step.

>> Here is one sample of the top three usability problems and solutions from whether.-- weather.gov. The problem water -- was the labels were difficult. The solution, to simplify the language. Into something people could understand. You can see, we assign who is responsible for the fix and the estimate of the amount of time it would take to fix the problem.

>> These fit in with the most common problems we identified in our testing session. This slide shows you the top five problems. They are common problems. Too many words, confusing jargon, and navigation problems. As the facilitator, it is a good approach to remain impartial. Let the process work out for itself. If you are running this meeting and things get out of hand or people are missing and important piece of information, as the facilitator it is good to a sort -- assert authority. Keep things moving in the right direction. Afterwards say thank you. Move from one person to the next. Keep things on track. You can know is used time to move the conversation forward especially during the solution phase. Say, we really need to focus and if you want to end on time, we need to move forward. You need to refocus, these are great points, I want to make sure we get to everyone around the table. You can tell them -- what would you say that problem is here in one sentence? They will try to offer more than three ideas. Those are great points, but we want to make sure everyone has time to talk. We want to keep everything positive and constructive at the same time as the facilitator, you have to work hard to get the session moving. To keep it under an hour. If people were overly critical, you need to make sure it that no one is being attacked. Make sure it is constructive criticism. If people are defensive come up pull back control -- rather than have them argue with each other. Have them agree or disagree with you. You can say, I can tell you do not agree with Susan, but what do you think will work? Susan, if we implement that strategy and incorporate summer your ideas, do you think that could work? Try to be respectful of everyone. No matter what their rank is. That is my next point, a good idea is a good idea no matter who offers it. We do not want an executive to hijack the meeting. No one's ideas are more important than anyone else's. Do not have any bias color the process. Do not let one observer [Indiscernible] . We can say, I think we have evidence that this works. Get a group consensus. You want to make sure that all parties involved in the work -- and the approval are represented at the debriefing. That is especially with the IT people paper -- the

>> IT people can stop. If that person is in the room, and is getting all uppity assignment and they start looking to cluster -- plastered. Take a good look at that person. Decrease the scope of the suggestions until everyone agrees that it is doable. Your worker bees in the room may not be happy getting additional work.

>> I want to give you an example of the test. And problems we observed during the test. In Nepal we tested

>> In the fall we tested GSA Internet. We had our participants recruited from GSA employees. We had one that was around 8 days, one participant for 11 months and one with many years.

>> On the left, this is what the navigation look like when we conducted the test. Over here, this is what it looks like when we conducted -- this is what it looked like after we implemented the fixes. One problem we observed, the link labeling was not clear. I am speaking specifically of these link. Chris, employee express -- these are important links for any employee. CHRIS It's were refined our employee records. This is where we find payroll. This is important to any employee. We found, that this jargon -- was not meaningful to the new were -- newer employees. Our solution, was to have plain language. As you can see in the new version, it is CHRIS personal files, employee express would be payroll.

>> These links down here are expandable menus. If I were to click gone employees resources, the man you would expand underneath. And the quick link menu would ask that collapse. They did not understand that these menus -- they thought quick links was the heading for the entire box. They missed a lot to important information. The proposed solution had two parts, the first was to move agency topics and other insights up into this top Tab. By moving them we were able to reduce clutter. We also -- the team renamed and relocated the remaining sections. The third issue, the testers were confused what topic. The training link was included with agency topic. It was not intuitive grouping. Our solution had three parts. One to rename the headings. Redistribute topics and consolidate topics within the category. And to be sure that what was it represented -- represented was the top 10. As you can see, none of these are huge changes. They all could be done quickly.

>> That is what GSA first Friday is all about. We want to fix problems with government websites. We want to train and mentor are colleagues. And raise awareness of feasibility testing. If you would like a closer look, we welcome you to join us for future tests. We test the first Friday and the third Thursday. We are close to the New York Avenue. We are close to the New York Avenue, Metro stop. You can participate by webinar. Send us an e-mail. If you are going to be at that government web and me -- May 2012 we will be there doing some testing conference. I have -- will be happy to answer any questions at this time.

>> You mentioned, magic revealed. We you talk about that?

>> I am simply talking about the fact, we have been to websites that are easy and pleasant to use and we also been to websites and are difficult to use. Sometimes people do not understand why it summer easy and some are hard. There is no magic behind it. There are no accident that some websites are easier than others.

>> When you visit a website, you do not see it happen it is in the background. We are here to help people understand how easy it is to make improvements for your site.

>> We have questions about the process. The website is up with the participation with the audience. with the audience expectations.

>> That is an issue, that everyone who works on websites and calendar. We see it all the time. The best way, to be an advocate for and a user or your website, is to use data. Gather data, used studies -- use anything you can. If your management these people using your website and having travel -- trouble, they are being sidelined. It is powerful. My advice is to stand by your data.

>> How do you deal with in terms up observer the percentage of being IT or other areas? SMAC I do --

>> I do not think there is a magic number. You have to -- that decision-makers need to be in the room. These are the people who know how to do the work. They will be able to implement the fix. You do have more content people than I T. people. There is no absolute magic number. If I had to guess, one or two IT people, three or four content people. And management people. And that would be adequate.

>> In terms of -- you would talk about testing being fun. We have a few people here who think it is frustrating. How do you treat that?

>> I can relate to that. I am continually torturing people to get them to go through a test they cannot complete. The way I handle it, I always make sure that a reinforced the point that the test participant is not the one being tested but it is the website. I use constant positive reinforcement. Even when they fail, I tell them the test was great it was helpful. we really appreciate them. At the end, even if a

participant they'll -- failed, they came out of it that it was a positive experience. As a facilitator number you have to make sure that your participant does not feel like a failure, because they are not. Every time they fail you can learn something from it.

>> People have heard that five is the magic number.

>> I think it goes back to the method -- there is nothing wrong with doing a large scale test where you are trying to get something -- significant results. We have from time to time these -- usability test. Those tests are great. They are very comprehensive and you learn a lot. The method we used them a -- we are not looking at finding every single problem. We are not looking to have a significant result. We are looking for the top three problems. I will tell you, three test participants will help you identify that. It will be obvious. You will see all three of them encounter the same problem. Again, we are looking for the top problems we can find quick solutions for. And three does the job.

>> A big problem with any ever meant agency is money. Food is a great incentive. I will talk about compensating the test participants with a small gift card. How do you get this approved?

>> That is certainly a problem a lot of agencies will face. In fact it is something we face. We are fortunate now, verse Friday is not only a testing but a trading program. We are able to work through the DigitalGov University . We do have a small budget. We are allowed to spend a little bit of money on food and expenses. That being said, that is not always the case for every test. Some ways, when we began -- we had employees bringing in food out-of-pocket. If you want to do it in-house, you could have a potluck lunch. It would feed everybody. As far as incentives are concerned, when we recruit or participants, they feel they are volunteering. We never tell them there is any kind of incentive. When they finish, we give them a gift card. And then they are thrilled. In the past, I have done -- I haven't looked around for promotional items -- correction I have looked around for per -- promotional items to give out.

>> This session is long. You go from nine in the morning to one in the afternoon. You could lose people at lunch. They pop out, and not come back.

>> what are the types of sites we have tested. One is a testing mobile site. How do you test mobile sites? Are there any special techniques for conducting the test? Do you ask a participant to bring in their own mobile device?

>> We have done a few tests for mobile devices. with the popularity of mobile devices, it is more important. I think the biggest -- the biggest thing we had to overcome was the technology issue. How can we conduct a test where we have out participant and a facilitator and observation -- we have a clever solution. He bought a \$70 video camera. These set it up to a desk lamp. It was projecting down on the desktop. He outlined on the desktop itself. were the participant needed to keep the device. Other than that, it was just like any other test. We did take a look -- as we screened at participant. We look at their devices. If they were coming mostly from iPhone's or and dried -- androids. We recruited people that had the same type of device. The iPhone and user -- I would be confused with an android or a Blackberry. We wanted people to be comfortable with the technology in their hand. We did have one problem, where someone device -- the battery went dead. Someone had a similar device on hand. Someone always carry something like that. Someone involved with the test was able to give them an alternate device. It worked out fine.

>> If you are testing mobile devices, to bring their device and a power charger. To avoid that challenge.

>> Make sure it the battery is charged. Swimming --

>> In terms of testing sites with wire frames.

>> I definitely test sites in envelopment -- development. We tested a site that was developed today. It was already complete and it was functional. In the past, I have done test -- I do want to say wireframes -- but there's no reason why you can't. I've done test that tests were there no more than just an image. You are limited on what you can test. You can definitely learn a lot. Mostly, it is first click testing. You want to contact the secretary of our culture, where would you click? You can go through steps like that. what you can gain from that, is the knowledge -- if a person starts with the current -- right path.

>> Should I test an old site to see where it is lacking? Or should I test a new site?

>> I think you should have test all along the hallway. whole way. After you launch

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your redesign, you can do the same test and compare the result. That is how you will know if people are more successful are less successful with the new design. In the middle, I would encourage you to do at least one test. As you go through the design process. It is easier to make changes to a website while you're still in the design process.

>> In terms of users would disabilities. Do you have any experience with them as testers?

>> I have never done that. I have been looking forward to that opportunity. As they come along, we pilot with doing remote testing. This is using a remote facilitator and remote participant at any location. I at least think, if you are testing with somebody with a test -- disability they have custom devices. If they are working with equipment they are comfortable with, this is a good environment for testing. Have a remote facilitator and tester. This is what I look forward to in the future.

>> We talk about the testing process. If I am a first time user, how can I learn more about what you do so I can do it at my agency? Smart I would

>> SMAC --

>> For that method we use, it is outline an easy and short -- it is written I Steve grew -- Gred. It is a step I step manual. I would also recommend user ability -- user ability courses.

>> As a reminder, if you go over to howto.gov. We have on demand training. And on DigitalGov University , there is overview classes. It is available for you on demand. I want to thank you Joanne for your great presentation. You can send an e-mail to, firstfriday@usa.gov

>> Thank you once again.

>> [Event concluded]

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