

## Regular User testing and research/feedback analysis by eddie james

### Why?



### What?

We need regular, consistent user feedback on both the Comcast products that are currently live and the concepts that we are working on within our core teams. We also need to regularly be feeding the core and MR teams user needs, user problems, and bugs found before launch.

Now that we are also working on patterns, we need to validate that what we are recommending is in fact a working pattern.

### Budget/Needs Gorilla budget: \$100-150 a month

For the first couple tests, we are going to do some quick and dirty validation exercises, but as we move into more high-level user data gathering, we will need to pull together a support system to make user testing and research easier for the team.

Here are some needs that I see based on the plan outlined below.

**Method of recruiting users.** Do we just grab from the street? Formal recruiting? **Price:** ?

**Money for participants** if we every go to Starbucks or some other place to recruit on the fly for quick and dirty tests. We should at least buy the participant coffee or give them a gift card. My suggestion is at least **\$10 a person.**

**Internet access** when at Starbucks or other place. Is this just a T-mobile or Earthlink account? **Price: \$20 a month?**

**Digital camera** (or other device) to record sessions. **Price: \$100-200**

**Usability resources** to facilitate usability sessions and a lab (could be conference room) to conduct tests. **Price: \$0-?**

**Resources for remote testing** (there are many tools that we could use). Because our user base is national, we should take advantage of remote testing. In fact, this could replace many of our in-lab user tests and could be more valuable since we will encounter real-world problems of home users.  
**Price: >\$50 a month.**

### Plan

#### When will we test?

Usability testing will be ongoing. It will start out being scheduled once a month, starting in mid-January. If there is not enough Evolution stuff to test for each scheduled session, we will invite other core teams to submit projects to be tested.

#### Format of test:

One half of test will be Listening Lab (testing the entire site by allowing the user to freely explore the site and think aloud.). This can inform future projects for the Evolution queue. It will also allow us to see how our projects are affecting the site as a whole.

The other half of the test will be project specific and will help validate the design decisions made.

#### User types we will recruit:

6-8 users

½ will be current users of .NET

½ will be high-speed subscribers, but not users of .NET

**Results reported:** within 48 hours of test a quick results sheet will be provided to core teams to make changes to design. Items that can't be changed due to deadlines will be deferred to next release.

#### What we are going to test:

A detailed list of questions will be put together before the test to clarify what we want to learn and our goals.

The following are high-level problem areas that need to have further research done on them. Each month we will focus on one topic to gain some understanding and help improve our products and expand our user knowledge.

**January: Video** (Are multiple players a problem for users? How important is video to our users? What kinds of video are perceived to be available? What about Video Mail? Would our users like to create video as well as watch?)

**February: RSS feeds** (Do users understand feeds? Have we made them useful? What kinds of content should be provided in a feed? Can we make them increase site traffic to certain areas?)

**March: 3<sup>rd</sup> party sites/Other Comcast web properties** (Is the current way of handling 3<sup>rd</sup> party sites working for users? What is the best way to tie Comcast web properties together? How do we make going back and forth seamless? Is that important to users?)

**April: Advertising** (Are banners the most effective ads? How to work text ads in? How much is too much? What's the right balance?)

**May: Icons** (are our icons working? What are they communicating? Do we need them?)

**June: Photos** (What do users want to do with Photos? What aspects of photos are most used or viewed as most useful by users? Should Photos be surfaced more?)

**July: Vault concept** (How do users store stuff now? Online? Would users download stuff and store it on .NET? Is the concept difficult to grasp?)

**August: Packages** (What is a package? What kind of packaging is most useful to users? When would users need packaging? Do some areas of the site lend themselves to the concept more than others?)

**September: Community** (What level of community is most appropriate for our audience? Are forums enough? How does community work with our communication products?)

**October: Communications** (Integrating communications products into .NET and how advertising/promotions can be more effective within communications products, How to make Digital Voice more integrated into content ex. Our Digital Voice users voted for these people on American Idol last night..)

**November: Search across site** (What problems are users currently having with search?)

**December: Monthly fee services** (How to integrate upsell of our partners)

### Issues/Questions

Possible training in different techniques to gather user data (especially in upfront research) What kinds of training are available? This should probably be a team goal for next year, if user testing is going to become a bigger part of our job.

Resources (or time) to regularly go through current research (marketing, etc) to support our new research initiatives (user testing, etc). Analyzing documents takes time and turning them into something that is usable for the team is also a time-consuming task. How does this relate to the customer insight team?

How do we get results to be valuable to core teams so the results make a difference? We've done a lot of tests and they haven't had that much of an impact. Or have they?

Do we have permission to show designs to people? What kinds of releases do we need? Do we have management support?