

## Lies, damn lies, and statistics: How does corporate culture affect the reporting of usability results?

### QUESTION EXPANSION

User researchers often collect quantitative data during usability tests. For example, some organizations want to know how many participants experienced each identified problem. But other user research groups treat usability tests as strictly qualitative research, to protect users—and their companies—from what spreadsheet-wielding executives may do with the numbers.

### THOUGHT-STARTER QUESTIONS

- What kind of quantitative data do you collect during usability tests and other user research studies? Why?
- How do you use quantitative data in your analysis? How do you report such data—or do you?
- How do you reconcile any disconnect between participants' behavior and their responses to Likert-scale questions?
- What are the advantages of reporting quantitative data? What are the risks? What can you do to mitigate the risks?
- What role do rhetoric and “editorial decisions”—in addition to quantitative and qualitative data—play when crafting a results report?
- How do (or might) quantitative user research data affect an organization's decision-making about its products or website? How does (or might) the answer differ for an organization conducting a vigorous ongoing user research program vs. one sporadically undertaking isolated studies?
- If you work in a user research group within a larger organization, what are your organization's requirements for results reporting? What evolution have you seen in your group's approach to reporting results?
- If you're a consultant, what differences do you see in your clients' desire for quantitative data in results reports?

### HOW THE OUTCOMES OF THE DISCUSSION WILL BE USED

The activator has worked as a user research consultant for over 10 years, conducting scores of laboratory tests, user interviews, focus groups, contextual inquiries, and ethnographic interviews for clients with different expectations for results reporting.

- Other than the required UPA summary, the activator does not plan to write any articles based on the information gathered during this Idea Market session.
- The outcomes of the this Idea Market session will be shared informally during networking opportunities at local usability-related meetings and gatherings.

### ADDITIONAL ACTIVATOR(S)

No additional activators will be needed for this Idea Market session.