

Participants' Bill of Rights: How Do We Protect Participants' Rights in Usability Testing?

QUESTION EXPANSION

A critical component of participant recruiting includes how we treat participants throughout their entire usability-study experience, not just during screening and scheduling. When participants have a good overall experience, they are more likely to want to come back for future studies if needed, or to recommend others they know as participants. The intent of this discussion is to provide attendees with ideas for improving the “care and feeding” of their usability test participants.

THOUGHT-STARTER QUESTIONS

- What are some ways in which we can treat participants more as human beings and less as test subjects?
- How can we put participants at ease during the study session?
- What about session breaks and refreshments? What's the minimum we should provide? The optimum?
- What special considerations do we need to provide for participants with disabilities, children, or senior citizens?
- How can we gracefully excuse participants who beat the screener or otherwise turn out to be unacceptable?
- What kind of pre- and post-session activities should we pursue with participants, without jeopardizing data?
- What are some ways in which we can tend to participants' physical comfort and personal safety?
- How do we and why should we guarantee participants' privacy?

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. The activator began her career in usability as a participant recruiter. She has trained both fellow usability specialists and clients in the art of recruiting and is interested in motivating fellow usability professionals to be participant advocates.

- 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 activator has used past Idea Market information to publish a report of participant recruiting tips and tricks.
- 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.