



User Research Tools That Produce Rapid Results



There has never been more pressure to innovate quickly and create new offerings to meet customer demand.

But as you consider some of today's biggest trends—such as digital transformation and big data—and how they impact customers' experiences, you must stop and ask yourself a vital question.

Do you really know what your audiences want and need?

Everyone knows audience research is important. But with the pressure to deliver, many organizations simply don't do it. Or if they do, it becomes focused on where to place a button, instead of from a place of empathy: asking why is the customer there and what do they want from the button?

Today we're sharing why user research and testing is important and some tools we use to make the process efficient, repeatable, and budget-friendly.



USER RESEARCH IS THE KEY TO EMPATHY

Empathy means understanding what your customers want from their perspective.

It requires leaving all assumptions about what you believe they want at the door, including validation of what you or other stakeholders think they need.

You can't empathize with your audiences unless you talk to them—and actually listen to what they tell you. That's why, more than ever, every product and website development process requires user testing and research.

Teams might think they don't need it. Or maybe they know it's needed, but other stakeholders don't think it's worth the time or money. Even if user testing is built into the plan, it's often the first step cut when teams are up against timelines and budgets, as it can be seen as a barrier to delivering business value quickly.

But here's the catch: You can deliver a project on time and under budget—but if your audience doesn't want it, who cares?



USER RESEARCH TOOLS THAT PRODUCE RAPID RESULTS

New tools have made user testing easy, effective, repeatable and budget-friendly.

When we conduct user research, it's about leveraging quantitative and qualitative information to create a unique view of your customer.



Quantitative: Analytics & Social Behaviors

The first step is analyzing quantitative data. This includes looking at web data, such as Google Analytics; utilizing social listening tools; considering marketing analytics, such as advertising and email; and implementing and reviewing website visitor surveys. Analytics data and social engagement create new questions, which can only be answered by real people.



Qualitative: User Interviews & Observation

The best way to move to an empathic view of your user is through real-life interviews and observations. In-person user panels and one-on-one research are still out of reach for many organizations, but today it's easier than ever for the everyday marketer or product manager to collect and use this extremely valuable data.

No need to research many different tools — we've got two top-ranked tools right here that will get you up and running in just a few days!

UI USER INTERVIEWS

OVERVIEW

Userinterviews.com

Allows you to recruit the right users and schedule one-on-one sessions. You use the testing time how you see fit.

You can gather the tester's thoughts on an idea, or allow them to test a prototype or product in its preliminary stages.

PROS

You screen your own panel and set up time slots based on your calendar.

Screening options include demographic and custom questions.

Pre-screen potential testers by phone for an additional \$20 each.

Use your own video or phone technology. We love Zoom and use emulators and screen sharing to let testers experience apps. Another option is Lookback.io.

You can ask questions and discuss areas of frustration throughout the interview since you're on with the users.

CONS

The cost per tester averages at about \$100 each, which includes an incentive.

No automated reporting is included.

It does not have built-in testing technology. We recommend Lookback.io for running your sessions if you want more advanced gesture and screen tracking.

This tool has a higher time commitment. You or your team needs to create the interview guide, run the interviews, and analyze the findings.



"We'll help you recruit and manage your research logistics for any safe and legal user research method you can think of: interviews, focus groups, moderated usability tests, unmoderated tasks, diary studies, shop-alongs—you get the idea."

- userinterviews.com



OVERVIEW

UserTesting.com

Enables you to implement end-to-end testing without being involved. Users go through a product on their own with questions and prompts along the way.

A key to its success, this tool supports responsive websites and native apps, even pre-release, which is a huge differentiator.

PROS

Set up your panel requirements, test script, and go—You can have results within hours.

Screening options include demographic and custom questions.

Use their global panel or recruit your own.

The cost per tester is lower at \$49.

Enterprise-level service offerings and professional research services are available.

You receive a video recording of their interactions and written responses to specific questions.

CONS

You have to have a visual prototype or developed website or app to test.

In the self-guided user tests, you cannot participate in the testing to ask questions or provide clarification.



“Gain visibility into how users think, feel, and interact using self-guided tests, and get fast, actionable feedback from real people in just a few hours.”

- userTesting.com



WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?

Once you've created a plan for user testing, you might run into some resistance within your organization.

We often hear the following question.

"Why should we conduct formal user testing and research? Can't we just get opinions from friends and family?"

Friends and family absolutely cannot replace the benefits of formal user research. A neutral third-party removes any regional bias, allowing for a broader demographic. It also eliminates any preconceived notions from those who know you, your company, or your products. Finally, users who are being paid for their feedback often give more honest opinions than friends and family.

Understanding what your customers really want has never been more important. As you consider new projects, ensure that user testing is part of your process to help you stay ahead of the competition and create exemplary digital experiences.



Don't feel overwhelmed by user testing and research — or any other digital project.

We're happy to provide our insight and advice from our work on hundreds of apps, websites, and mobile experiences. Shoot us an email at shoptalk@acella.net and let's converse about all things digital.