Design of a Usability Lab

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What is usability?

“Usability means that people who use a product can do so quickly and easily to accomplish their own tasks.”
What is usability testing?

- The participants represent real users
- The participants do real tasks
- You observe and record what participants do and say
- You analyze the data, diagnose the problems and recommend changes
Basic lab layout

- Test area
  - System to be used by participant
  - Cameras and microphones
- Physical separator
- Observation area
  - Video displays
  - Recording equipment
Observing the participant

- **Cameras**
  - Size
  - Pan/Tilt/Zoom capabilities
  - Number
  - Placement
- **Microphones**
Observing the participant’s screen

- Screen capture software
- Scan converter
Synchronizing the observations

- Synchronize participant’s screen, image, and verbalizations
- Audio/Video mixer with Picture-in-picture capability
Recording the observations

- Video Tape
  - Analog
  - Digital
- Media file
  - Screen capture software
  - Real-time MPEG-2 capture
Next steps

- Design usability test procedures
- Train test team
- Conduct pilot test sessions
- Conduct test sessions
- Collect data