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WHAT'S MY METHOD?

USABILITY: Game evaluation through the **direct observation** of player **success and failure**.

DIRECT OBSERVATION

⊛ **PRIMARY BEHAVIOR**

What's the player doing inside the game world?

Can the player perform the task?

Does the player succeed or fail?

⊛ **SECONDARY BEHAVIOR**

What happens outside the game world?

⊛ body language, facial expressions

⊛ controller interaction

⊛ talking aloud, interview responses

Helps us interpret the primary behavior.

STEP 1: DEFINE GOALS

INTERFACE

correctly define key interface elements
use them appropriately during game play
TASK: ID Gang Notoriety Meter

CRITICAL SKILLS

able to attempt skill
improve over time
TASKS: Driving, Shooting

KEY CONCEPTS

describe function and value
retain knowledge
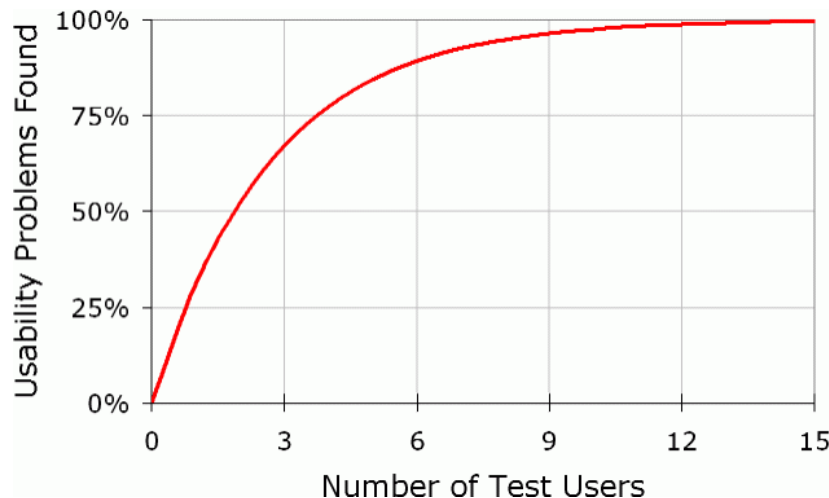TASK: Respect

STEP 2: FIND PLAYERS

- **SAMPLE**
  - recruited locally
  - own or play games on XBox 360
  - some familiarity with GTA
- **4-6 PLAYERS**
  - caveat: know your limitations
  - usability measures SUCCESS and FAILURE
  - NOT preferences or opinions

Jakob Neilsen's Alertbox, March 19, 2000
"Why You Only Need to Test With 5 Users"
http://www.useit.com/alertbox/20000319.html

STEP 3: BUILD YOUR LAB

COST
hi-budget or lo-budget
temporary or permanent
just need a place to sit, pen & paper

PARTICIPANTS
player
moderator
observers

VOLITION LAB
participant room (comfortable)
observation room (quiet)
1-way mirror + video feed
DV capture (controller, face, screen)
reception area (hall)

STEP 4: RUN THE TEST

SCRIPT

Part 1: Free Play

Part 2: Questions

Part 3: Directed Play

Part 4: Interview

PROTOCOL

player—think aloud

you—shut up & observe

STEP 5: WRITE IT DOWN

Aiming reticle moves erratically around the screen.

Vehicle stuck. Player can't find reverse.

Player misses turns when navigating by GPS.

Player fails to ID respect meter.

STEP 6: TAKE ACTION

Issue	Action
Aiming reticle moves erratically around the screen.	Implement aiming assist to help reticle stick to target.
Vehicle stuck. Player can't find reverse.	Display basic driving controls when player first enters vehicle.
Player misses turn when navigating by GPS.	Tell GPS to generate new route if player deviates from old route.
Player fails to ID respect meter	Require player confirmation when tutorial text is displayed. Fill respect meter on activity completion screen.

STEP 7: MORE TESTS!

Test	Focus	Date	Subjects	Time
1	Controls / Interface	OCT 05	10	45 minutes
2	Tutorial: Interface / Skills / Concepts	JAN 06	5	100 minutes
3	Prologue	MAY 06	5	180 minutes
4	Multiplayer	JUN 06	4	100 minutes
5	Balancing	MAY 06	3 x 3	40 hours
6	Benchmarking	JUL 06	3 x 3	40 hours

USABILITY: PROS/CONS

(+)

you can do it yourself

it's cheap and fast

you get actionable data

designers observe players directly

(-)

not a reliable measure of preferences or opinions

no fancy headgear