Understanding Software Usability Testing by Roger Lopez

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Today in the cut-throat competition of the corporate world, enterprises are facing increasing pressure to reduce financial expenditures and improve the quality of performance. It is on this background that testing has attained mighty significance and has become part and parcel of the software life cycle.

Software Usability Testing is a technique to determine whether an application meets its intended purpose and ensures that intended users perform their tasks effectively and efficiently. There are various factors that can be evaluated with the help of this testing method. It can help to determine certain aspects of the application such as efficiency, effectiveness, accuracy, safety, productivity and end-user satisfaction.

The importance of the usability testing is manifold. It helps in detecting navigational issues, language issues, workflow experience in addition to that of detecting errors. What good software testers do is often build a set of test cases based upon real end user scenarios or business cases to ensure the software is tested in a similar manner to how the real end users will actually use the software. As the purpose of the usability testing is trying to ensure that the end user experience is appreciated, testing is generally done manually. Moreover, the philosophy behind the idea is to put the testers into the mindset of the real end user and report on the â€œlook and feelâ€• factor of the software under consideration.

Software structural testing are the levels of steps that go into whole process of testing from the individual units of code through integrated subsystems to the deployed releases and to the final system. Systems are tested in steps and testing proceeds through various physical levels of the application development lifecycle. Each completed level represents a milestone on the project plan and each stage represents a known level of physical integration and quality. These stages of integration are known as test levels.

Usability can be affected by every decision taken in design and development. Therefore, testing has to be performed as an iterative approach that extends throughout the software lifecycle to ensure that all usability requirements are met in the final product. The process includes pre-test preparations, the actual testing, and analysis of the test results, implementation of modifications, and re-testing of the software/application.

Upon completion, results are compared to the goals set to find out to see if the targeted criteria are met or not. Changes are then initiated and later implemented. Further tests are conducted to see whether changes implemented met the required criteria and the goals set. AppLabs Software usability testing offers several advantages to both users and application development companies. Its benefits to the users include that of increased pace of learning, decreased user task time, errors and increased level of job satisfaction. On the other hand development companies reaps through providing less technical support and training to users, improved management of risks associated with usability rework as well as improved user acceptance.

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