

Test Plan



HCDE 417

Katlyn Edwards

Peter Kupcis

Joe Nguyen

Jillian Redosendo

Qian Zhang



Contents

Purpose	2
Research Questions	2
Participant Characteristics	2
Methods	3
Task Lists	4
Task 1 (<5 Minutes)	4
Task 2 (5 Minutes)	4
Task 3 (<5 Minutes)	4
Task 4 (5 Minutes)	4
Task 5 (5 -10 Minutes)	4
Task 6 (5 Minutes)	5
Task 7 (3 Minutes)	5
Task 8 (5 Minutes)	5
Test Environment, Equipment, and Related Logistics	5
Facilitation Approach	6
Data to Be Collected	6
Qualitative Data	6
Quantitative Data	6
Data Evaluation	7
Reporting	7

Purpose

The goal of this test is to evaluate the usability of the course management website Lore, formally known as Coursekit. We will be testing the functionality of Lore and determining how it compares to other course website tools such as Catalyst and Google Sites. Lore is an emerging tool developed by a startup, and it is also for public use as it is not affiliated with any particular school. Not very many instructors or students have heard of Lore or have had the opportunity to use it yet. It is still a growing technology, so we believe our usability test can contribute to its development. Through this test we will determine what works well on Lore and what does not, and then give recommendations for improvements.

Our objectives for this test are as follows:

- Recruit active instructors in the local vicinity who have created course websites, but have never used Lore, as participants.
- Have each participant complete a list of tasks on Lore.
- Conduct a post interview with each participant to discuss their opinions of Lore and their experience during the test.
- Record each test session using screencasts and audio recorders.
- Take notes during each test session while observing the participants and their interaction with Lore and facilitator(s).
- Compile data collected from all participants and look for trends.
- Form recommendations for Lore from data analysis.

Research Questions

From our user requirements study we developed a list of questions that will be answered from our usability test of Lore. All of these questions will aid in determining the functionality of Lore and how it compares the competition:

- How quick and easy is it to set up a course website on Lore?
- How intuitive is Lore for the average users?
- How does Lore compete with other course management tools?
- What are the functionalities that are useful or not useful on Lore?
- Does it match up with the user's mental models?
- How do the tools of Lore improve the communication between students and teachers?

Participant Characteristics

The participants of our usability test for Lore will be the active instructors in the local vicinity who have created course websites before, but have not used Lore to do so. There will be no gender or age restrictions, but all participants should be familiar with internet since Lore is a web based course creation and management tool. Our potential participants include all professors, lecturers, TAs from college and teachers from high schools or middle schools who have teaching experience before. We have opted to make teaching experience a requirement so that when participants come to the usability test for Lore, they have an idea of what to expect in a course website managing system. According to the resource limitation, our participants will most likely to be instructors within University of Washington,

which has its own course management system, Catalyst. Due to this, we have categorized our participants into two subgroups: those who create course websites through Catalyst, and those who use other tools.

We will not consider any users who have never made a course website, or have used Lore to do so as potential participants. Since this test will require our participants to personally show up, we will not include the users who live too far away from our test center.

Methods

We plan to have 8-10 participants for our usability test on Lore, 4-5 as Catalyst users and 4-5 as non-Catalyst Users. We will recruit participants by sending out emails and talking to instructors in person, discussing participation in the test. A follow up email will be sent to participants 2 days before their test sessions to make sure of their participation along with the reminding of time and location of the test sessions. In order to thank them for participating, we will also be compensating our participants with a \$5 Subway gift card. The whole session will take **approximately 30-60 minutes**.

Before each test session begins, the facilitator will introduce the background of the study and the logistics of the test. The participants will then be given a consent form asking for their consent to be a participant and to have their actions and responses recorded during the study. Then the facilitator will conduct a Pre-Test Interview where the facilitator will ask the participant a few questions to get a better understanding of the participant's related experiences and preferences. During the test session, our participants will attempt to complete eight major tasks in Lore. These tasks will be created based on the features of Lore that we want to test on so that we can see what are the participants' reactions when they are interacting with these features. We will complete a pilot test study to finalize the set of tasks, get a rough idea of how much time it might take to complete, and consider the possible routes that the user might take to achieve success.

While participants are interacting with Lore, the note-takers will be observing their actions on the screen and our screencasting tool Quicktime will be recording their actions as well as any audio feedback. The note-takers will take notes on what path the participant takes, how long it take to complete or abandon the task, what they found easy to do, and what they found difficult. If the participant cannot complete a task or becomes stuck, we will either give them a hint or move them onto the next scenario. Our observers will also make a note of the moment when the participant becomes stuck by recording the time and the specific subtask they were trying to complete.

After each test, a Post-Test Interview will be conducted to gather more information about Lore. We will ask them about their thoughts about Lore and about their experience interacting with it, specifically regarding how easy or difficult it was for them to complete the tasks with Lore. These Post-Test Interviews will help us get a sense as to whether the participants themselves see Lore as an easy to use tool that can be used for creating course web sites. This information can then be compared to our statistical information on how the users actually performed, giving us a more in depth analysis.

Task Lists

For this usability test, we will be asking participants to complete a series of tasks using Lore, while our team members observe. Our task scenarios discussed below are derived from our recent work with Lore, including our user requirements study, and our own exploration of Lore.

Task 1 (<5 Minutes)

This is a demo page of a website dedicated to creating course websites. Feel free to explore this page as you normally would. You can scroll around with your mouse, but please don't click on anything just yet.

Ask the participant these questions after completing Task 1:

- “What are your initial impressions about the layout of this page? What you think of the colors, graphics, etc.?”
- “Without clicking on anything yet, please describe the options you see on the page and what you think they do. Feel free to move around the page, but again I’ll ask you not to click on anything right now.”
- “Without clicking on anything yet, if you were exploring, what would you click on first?”

(Show participant test account website for Tasks 2-6.)

Task 2 (5 Minutes)

We will now ask you to add an assignment to the course. The assignment consists of reading a PDF article, which is located on your desktop, and submitting a word document response by June 25th, 2012 at 5:00pm. It will be a graded assignment out of 10.

- Attach the PDF article.
- Type this short description for the assignment: “Submit a word response.”
- Set the due date and time, submission type, etc.

Task 3 (<5 Minutes)

We will now ask you to update the due date for this assignment to be on June 30th, 2012, instead of June 25th. When you change the due date for the assignment, please make sure to notify the students in the course of this change.

Task 4 (5 Minutes)

Now we will ask you to create a basic syllabus for this course. You will not be uploading a syllabus, but you will be creating it in Lore itself. Please add three sections - Contact Information, Course Description, and Course Policies. Type one sentence in each section (the content within these sections can be “filler text” and does not have to make sense nor be complete). After you have completed this, re-arrange the three categories so that Course Policies is listed first.

Task 5 (5 -10 Minutes)

At this time we would like to add more structure to our course website by updating the calendar section to show when lecture occurs. Please add to the course calendar that the lectures for this class start on 6/25/12, end on 7/27/12, and are held every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 1:00pm to 2:00pm at PAR 106.

Task 6 (5 Minutes)

Oh, no! There's been a scheduling conflict with another class. The lectures of your class will now take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Change the lecture days on the calendar to the correct days.

(Show the participant the demo website for Tasks 7-8.)

Task 7 (3 Minutes)

For this task we will ask you to use Lore's demo course website. Please give a 95% grade to Woody Allen for the "General Midterm" due on 10/6. Once you have completed that task, please find and then tell me the average grade for the "General Assignment 1", and what Jeff Bezos' current course grade is.

Task 8 (5 Minutes)

For our final task, we are going to ask you to communicate with the students in the course through this demo version of Lore. To begin with, please post two announcements to the course. The announcements can be of anything, and do not need to make sense. After you have completed that, please answer "Horace Mann's" question posted on the course website. The answer to this question does not need to make sense or be relevant. Finally, please make the first announcement you posted a "sticky" post -- as in make it stay at the top of the news feed. Then mark Charles Eames' post so that it has a green star in the top right corner, similar to Dieter Rams' post.

Test Environment, Equipment, and Related Logistics

We will be conducting our usability test in a quiet environment where the user will not become distracted by outside noises or events. Our team will be reserving the small and main conference rooms on the 4th floor of Sieg Hall for our tests.

The equipment necessary to perform our usability test includes a digital timer (with stop and reset functions), a desktop computer or laptop, a USB mouse (if laptop is used), a screencasting tool, an audio recording tool, high-speed internet, and writing utensils for note-taking.

We are currently planning on using Mac's latest version of QuickTime as our screencasting and audio recording tools to record participant's interactions with Lore and the communications with the primary facilitator. The timer will be used to record how long it takes for each participant to complete each task. The timer will also be used to record at what time participants became stuck or required assistance.

There are many logistical aspects to conducting a usability test that need to be handled. The first logistical item is finding participants for the test. We expect to have approximately 8 or 9 instructors participating in our test, with a minimum of 4 for both the Catalyst subgroup and the non-Catalyst subgroup. The next major logistical task is finding a time to conduct the test that works for every member of our group along with the usability participants, and when the small and large conference rooms are available. Our team will also have to purchase \$5 Subway gift cards to not only lure in participants, but to also thank them for their time and efforts. The usability test also requires the use of laptops. As a team, we decided to perform our tests on our team members' Macbooks for all of our test sessions in order to keep the tests consistent.

Facilitation Approach

To successfully conduct the usability test, our team strategically planned out the facilitation method to ensure that there will be no confusion and miscommunication between team members during the test. For each test, we will assign specific roles to each individual on the team. After careful consideration, we have assigned roles that will best fit the size and context of our usability test. Our team collectively decided on having two observers/note-takers, two facilitators, and one moderator/manager. Below is the list of team member roles with specific job descriptions we devised for the usability test:

- Two note takers / observers:
 - Each observes the participants' interactions with Lore and their behavior, takes notes during the task scenarios, and times task completions.
- Two facilitators:
 - Primary facilitator who conducts interviews and tasks
 - Secondary facilitator:
 - Times each task
 - Take notes during interviews.
- One moderator / manager:
 - Keep the usability test organized and will be in charge of gathering materials.

Data to Be Collected

Qualitative Data

To effectively collect valuable data, we will be gathering this information in three forms: screencasts, audio recordings, and handwritten notes. With screencasts, the participant's every move on the screen will be recorded using Quicktime. At the same time, we will encourage the participants to speak aloud their actions, and while that is occurring, we will record their voice. The audio recording will include conversations between the participants and the facilitator(s) during the usability test and afterwards in the Post-Test Interviews. The last form of data gathering is handwritten notes. The two observers/note-takers and the secondary facilitator we assigned will be taking notes while they are observing the participant's interaction with Lore and the facilitator(s). There will also be some handwritten notes from observations during the Post-Test Interviews.

Quantitative Data

We will be recording how long (in minutes) it takes participants to complete each task for our usability study. We will also record the path the participant takes to complete a task and note the level of difficulty they had.

Trends

- Common struggles that users had during study
- Average amount of time to complete tasks
- Similar (and different) pathways to success
- Number of uncompleted tasks

Data Evaluation

After completing the tests with all of our participants we will compile the data collected, separating the sets of data by participant. We will analyze the data by looking for trends throughout all of the results, paying special attention to the difficulties the participants had throughout the test and whether they completed the tasks sufficiently and correctly. In the screencasts we will look for moments of hesitation in the mouse trails and clicks. We will use the audio recordings to gain insight on what the participants were thinking while interacting with Lore and on their overall impression of Lore. Lastly, we will refer to the handwritten notes to recall the initial observations that were recorded during the test.

This evaluation will help us identify the problem spots of Lore that our participants encountered. We will then be able use this knowledge to form recommendations proposing changes to the interface or general design of Lore that we believe would get rid of these problem spots and thus improve the overall usability of the website.

Reporting

After evaluating our data we will write up a final report that summarizes our usability test, what we learned from it, and how we think we can improve Lore in terms of usability. We will discuss the preparations we made for the test, who we recruited as participants, how the tests were conducted, our results from the tests, as well as our usability recommendations for Lore. We will include pictures of our test setup, charts of our results, and our observation notes.

We will also create a slideshow presentation that we will use as a visual aid for our in-class presentation. We will start off the presentation by briefly introducing the product Lore, our user profile, and user requirements; we will basically have a short recap from our last presentation. Then we will include charts and quotes from our data in the slideshow. We will end the presentation by presenting our recommendations.