

About User Studies

By user studies we mean all the contacts and all interaction with the users and other interested parties in the course of the project – as well as the documented results of these.

This is an iterative process in which both the designer and the users inspire one another during the ongoing project, and in which they gain increasingly better knowledge of the problem that is to be solved along with the new possibilities it can offer.

User studies increase your knowledge of the users' situation, needs and wishes. But they also increase your knowledge of how the users understand and accept the different ideas and solutions, and how these can and should be changed and further developed.

User studies consist of interviews, observations, demonstrations, user tests and other methods in interaction with the users. These can aim to increase knowledge about the users and to gather and evaluate different solution proposals.

It is important that the designer, as clearly and as early as possible, tries to present, illustrate and make credible the potential solutions. This can be done by means of sketches, models and explanatory and illustrative artefacts. This approach makes it easier for the users to understand what the different solutions can involve, to be inspired by them and to give their points of view. The designer gains increased knowledge about the problem that is to be solved at as early a stage as possible. It is also facilitating if the interactions with the users take place in the setting and the situation in which the contemplated solution is to be used.

Please do as follows:

1. **Meet the person who placed the order (customer) and the user.** Meet the customer and at least two or three users in order to increase your knowledge about the users and the problem to be solved. Choose, for example, a typical user and one or two people with relevant disabilities to more easily determine that the *Seven Principles of Universal Design* have been met.
2. **Acquire knowledge about the current situation.** Visit the actual locations and observe and analyze the actual user situations as *they are today*.
3. **Iterative improvements.** Prepare and carry out interviews, observations, demonstrations, user tests and other methods in interaction with the users on several occasions in the course of the project. On each occasion, progressively improved suggestions for ideas and solutions are presented and evaluated while at the same time the knowledge of the problem to be solved will increase. All this is done so that the final product will be as good as it can be and will meet the requirements that were set.