

Usability Test for CBC Music



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Project Background

CBC Music is an interactive, multi-level site with a great deal of interesting material. It allows users to listen to commercial-free stations and gives them the ability to share their favorite songs with their friends or create playlists for free. It is also a valuable information source for song, album, and concert information with over 7.5 million hours of free music available.¹

Project Purpose

With a massive user index for this site we would like to know exactly how user friendly is the site, and would small changes improve current user attitudes? This is the primary objective of the usability test to be completed. A secondary purpose of the test is to determine exactly how accurate the users’ navigation processes are and whether or not it takes them an appropriate amount of time to find what they are looking for, or if valuable time is being wasted.

Project Outline

The usability test for CBC Radio will ask two participants to perform six tasks on the site, and the results will be based on the following criteria discovered as a result of the tasks:

- Overall success or failure of each task
- Number of clicks it takes each user to complete each task
- Time it takes each user to complete each task
- Any difficulties user experienced in completing each task
- Any other problems noted by moderator during the tasks

The users will be chosen based on availability, but care will be taken to ensure that the two participants vary in age as well as familiarity with the site.

To set the standard criteria for the tasks with which to have a basis of comparison, a moderator currently unfamiliar with the site will perform the tasks first, and calculate the average amount of time and clicks it should ideally take a user to complete each task. The moderator will also consider the easiest possible way by which each task may be completed, and whether alternative methods of completion, or partial completion options, are possible. It is expected that, because the moderator will have familiarity with the site before observing the participants for the test, that it will be easier for the moderator to record the success or failure of the participants' attempts at the tasks.

[Addendum: Moderator's preliminary results may be viewed in Appendix 2.](#)

Description of Tasks

The tasks to be completed by the users are as follows:

1. Listen to the Jazz Canada radio station and find out if song currently playing is available on iTunes.
2. Join as a member of CBC Music.
3. Locate the second most popular song by the artist Feist and add to a playlist.
4. Share the concert recording 'Tegan and Sara in Calgary' with a specified email address.
5. Find the date and venue of the 'Hey Ocean!' concert in Calgary in September.
6. Recall the details from the banner ad on the homepage when the session began.

[Addendum: See Appendix 2 for more information regarding each task, as well as the designated stopping points assigned by the moderator for each task and the ideal times of completion.](#)

Project Expectations

We expect that, with the calculation of average speed from the moderator, that the participants for these tasks will have no difficulty finding their way around enough to complete the tasks in approximately the average amount of time. We also expect that the moderator will take note of difficulties beforehand while testing the tasks and necessary precautions may be taken so the users will not run into similar difficulties. However, it is also to be expected that, due to unforeseen events, other difficulties, errors, or mistakes may be encountered by the users.

Project Materials and Paperwork

The following forms will be designed to assist the moderator in the testing process:

- Identification Form: Participants will be asked to fill in and sign this form, which will obtain basic information from them such as age, gender, familiarity with the Internet in general, and familiarity with this site specifically.

Addendum: See Appendixes 3-4 for completed forms.

- Testing Form: Moderator will use this form during the testing to record the results. It will include an outline of the simplest way for the user to complete the task, an ideal time of completion, and a place for additional notes. The moderator will record the time of completion on this form, as well as the number of clicks it takes the user to complete the task, and whether the task was completed, partially completed, or not completed.

Addendum: See Appendixes 5-6 for completed forms.

Additional materials to be used in this study are as follows:

- Laptop with external keyboard and mouse
- 6 index cards with the individual tasks printed on them
- Pen and blank paper for user/moderator to use as necessary
- Clipboard, timer, forms as above, and pens for moderator to use

Modus Operandi

Each participant will be escorted into the testing area, which will be clear of unnecessary clutter and contain only materials listed above which will be necessary for the tasks. The participant will be formally introduced to the moderator and the moderator will discuss with the participant the following:

- That the site is being tested, and not the participant
- That all feedback is important and appreciated
- That the user should not feel obligated to complete a task if they are confused or frustrated
- That the timer is for testing purposes and is not intended to make the participant nervous
- That the participant is not obligated to complete the test and is free to leave at any point
- That the participant's results or comments may be needed for further use in this study, but that everything will remain completely anonymous
- That the user should speak out loud as they complete the tasks, as all information they intake is important to the study
- That if they are confused or need assistance, the moderator is not able provide the answer, but may be able to assist with a nudge in the right direction

Moderator will ask the participant to view and fill out the [identification form](#), and if the form is consented to, the test may begin. The moderator will open the Internet browser and click on the saved bookmark for www.music.cbc.ca. The participant will be instructed to return to this bookmark at the start of each new task. They will be handed the index card with the first task on it, and after having read and understood the task, the moderator will begin the timer and stop it only when the task is completed. The task is considered complete if the user gives up, successfully completes the task, reaches the pre-approved partially complete point, or reaches

a necessary stopping point for an unforeseen reason (i.e. the Internet crashes). If the user completes the task, the moderator will circle 'Complete' on the [testing form](#); if the user gives up or is unable to complete the task, 'Not Completed' will be circled. The third option is 'Partially Completed', which may only be circled if the user has completed the task up to a previously determined stopping point, as chosen by the moderator. This stopping point varies for each task.

Addendum: See Appendixes 1-2 for more information.

This process will be completed for each task, with the exception of the sixth, which does not involve the browser at all as it is a recollection test. This task will be the only one not timed, nor with the number of clicks noted by the moderator. When all tasks are complete, or if the user has decided to leave, the moderator will thank the participant for their cooperation, and reassure them that if their feedback will be used further in the study that it will remain anonymous.

User Completion of Tasks

Overall, the users were able to complete most of the tasks successfully. The results have been charted and displayed as follows:

C = Complete

P = Partially Complete

N = Not Complete

	Participant 1			Participant 2		
	Completed	Clicks	Time	Completed	Clicks	Time
Task 1	C	3	2 min 10 sec	N	N/A	N/A*
Task 2	C	3	1 min 30 sec	C	2	1 min 45 sec
Task 3	P	4	2 min 30 sec +	N	4	3 mins +
Task 4	P	4	2 mins +	C	4	2 mins 15 sec
Task 5	C	4	1 min 45 sec	C	3	1 min
Task 6	P	N/A	N/A	P	N/A	N/A

*Task was not completed due to unforeseen Internet problem.

Summary of Task Results

Task 1

Participant 1 claimed to not be familiar with iTunes or its logo, which is most likely why she experienced difficulty with this task. Participant 2 experienced difficulties with the Internet (specifically, the sidebar would not load available stations nor play music), which the moderator confirmed was an unforeseen complication and the task was not completed.

Task 2

Participant 1 experienced no difficulties locating the correct page, however she was unfamiliar with what the 'human verification' section was, and did not complete it, resulting in her having to refresh the page and begin again. Though the task was complete, she claimed it was not clear to her what she had to do until the moderator explained its purpose. Participant 2 did not experience any difficulties; the reason it took him a while to complete the task is simply because he filled out the form slowly, claiming to be a slow typist.

Task 3

Participant 1 reached the pre-approved stopping point for partial completion determined by the moderator; she was able to locate the song in question, but was unable to add it to a playlist. After the task, the moderator pointed out the icon for adding songs to a playlist, and she claimed to have had no idea what it was for. Participant 2 had a similar problem; he browsed the page for 2 full minutes and skimmed right over the 'add to playlist' icon.

Task 4

Participant 1 had to be prompted to try the search bar; she claimed to be unaware that it was an option on the page, as it was hiding at the top and not very obvious. As with Task 3, she had difficulty understanding what the intention of the 'sharing' icon was and the task was declared only partially complete. Participant 2 completed the task successfully, but also had difficulty understanding the 'sharing' icon and only clicked it after prompted by the moderator that it was alright to make a mistake and try something else.

Task 5

Participant 1 claimed she had heard of the band before, which seemed to give her more motivation to find it faster. She navigated the pages with great confidence, and was not apprehensive about using the search function for this task. Participant 2 was not entirely sure what he was looking for; he had never heard of the band and did not realize at first that 'Calgary Republik' was the name of a venue, which made him assume he did something wrong. However, navigation through the pages was not difficult for this participant as he located the correct page in under a minute.

Task 6

Both participants remembered small details about the picture (i.e. there were four people in it / there were trees in the background), though neither could recall the title of the ad or its purpose (see Figure 1).



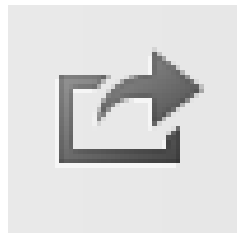
²Figure 1: Banner ad recalled for Task 6

Summary of User Comments

Both users found difficulties completing tasks due to the appearance of icons. The icon indicating 'add to playlist' (see Figure 2), though understandable once pointed out, was not clear to either user what its purpose was, and they skimmed right over it. Similar problems were met with the icon for 'sharing' (see Figure 3).



³Figure 2: 'Add to Playlist' Icon



³Figure 3: 'Share' Icon

Both users also did not consider using search functions to assist in the completion of their tasks. Participant 2 claimed that he felt it might be 'cheating', which is why he did not, but after prompting to feel free, still did not take full advantage of the search function, preferring to browse the pages himself. Participant 1 was not aware a search function existed, and did not use it at all until it was pointed out.

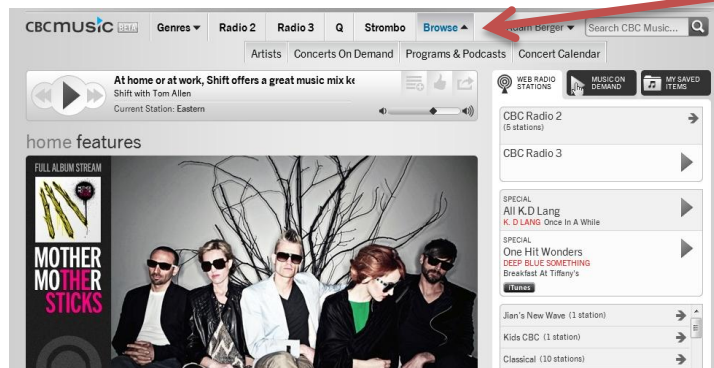
Participant 1 was a less common Internet user than Participant 2, and had no experience with online forms. As a result, she was unable to identify the purpose of the human verification section and skipped right over it. The moderator had to explain to her what it was for, as the site did not have a clear indication.

Both participants independently claimed that the site was too 'crowded' or too 'busy' which threw off their searching and made them feel overwhelmed by the detail. The moderator's opinion, during observation of the tasks, was that both users seemed to scan their cursors randomly over the page, hoping to randomly come across the information they were seeking, without using a logical method to search. Participant 1 in particular also pointed out the sidebars and how she wasn't sure what they were there for.

Reflections on Site

As per the results of this test, possible upgrades to the CBC Music site may be as follows:

- Upgrading icons to be easier to recognize, providing a key so users understand what each icon is for, or eliminating them completely and using a list function instead.
- Making the search bar more obvious, possibly with a message that welcomes the users to search for artists, songs, concerts, etc.
- Have a more clear indication of what the human verification box is; it cannot be assumed that users know what it is for.
- Upgrading navigation bars to include more information. Specifically, both users claimed to not understand what function 'Browse' had (see Figure 4). Participant 1 did not notice it at all, because the bar blended in to the background. A possible solution for this problem is to make the navigation bar more detailed, with more subcategories, as well as making it more noticeable as a search function on the site.



²Figure 4: 'Browse' Navigation Bar

- Making side panel more obvious and their contents clearer as to the purpose.
- As a general rule: less information on each page, or more white space between differing elements so the user is not overwhelmed.

Reflections on Usability Test

Participant 2 did not seem to understand the complete purpose of the tests, and tended towards browsing over things several times assuming he missed things. He also claimed that searching would have been 'cheating' and he did not seem to be prepared to make mistakes during the tasks. Both participants also seemed to have difficulties speaking aloud while they navigated the pages, though the moderator had requested it. It is likely that neither had participated in a test like this before and they were unfamiliar with the 'talking aloud' procedures.

As a result of this test, it may be concluded that for future usability tests, the following should be considered:

- Users should be given an unimportant task to complete prior to the start of the real tasks, in order to give them practice and make them comfortable with the 'talking aloud' procedure.
- It should be made clearer to the users at the start of the tasks that it is alright to make mistakes; we are not expecting them to be perfect and every bit of information they provide for us is helpful. It may also help to point out that they are always welcome to go back and start over if they feel they made an error.
- It should be made clear to the users that they are allowed to use search functions.
- The identification forms for the users to sign should be completed with more details, as well as more information such as what they are agreeing to (i.e. anonymously using their search results).
- Expected number of clicks required to complete each task should be determined prior to beginning the test.
- Index cards with tasks should possibly be written more concisely; bullet points could be considered as a way to make separate parts of the task clearer.

Sources

¹<http://cbc.radio-canada.ca/en/media-centre/2012/08/14/>

²<http://music.cbc.ca/>

³<http://music.cbc.ca/#/artists/Feist>

Appendix 1: Draft Test Plan

Individual Tests (see Appendix 2)

1. Complete tasks in normal time and familiarize self with page
2. Complete tasks again, but this time copy down ideal process for completion
3. Complete tasks a third time, timing the ideal process for someone familiar with the site
4. Create a possible 'what-if' scenario for partial completion for each task, and the minimum time that needs to be completed for each before declaring a failed task

Prior to User Testing

- Have two printed copies of an identification form for each user which they will fill out and sign before the test begins (see Appendixes 3-4)
- Have two printed copies of a form which includes outline of tasks, space for notes, and space to write time of task completion (see Appendixes 5-6)
- Have site homepage saved on bookmarks bar
- Have timer prepared, clipboard, notes, and pens prepared
- Have testing area clear with only essential clutter
- Have each task clearly written on individual cards for each participant

Participant Selection

1 user from each category should be selected

- Male/Female
- Frequent web user/Infrequent web user
- Younger in age (18-30)/Older in age (30+)
- IF POSSIBLE: User who has used CBC before/User who has not used CBC before

During User Testing

1. Introduce test to participant, explain what the main goal is, and explain that the SITE is being tested and NOT the user
2. Explain that being timed should not make them worry and they should feel free to ask questions about the test if they wish
3. Tell them to feel free to speak as they perform the tasks; that all feedback is important
4. Have user read, fill out, and sign identification form
5. Sit slightly behind participant so screen is visible but not so they feel crowded
6. Give the first card to the user and direct them to the homepage
7. Start timer when homepage is loaded but AFTER the participant has read the card
8. End timer when task is complete, or after it has been determined as a fail task
9. Thank user and give them the next card; have them reset the homepage
10. Complete steps 6-9 for each task
11. If a task has surpassed the minimum declared time for a failed test, allow them the opportunity to move on or complete the task, but mark the test as failed
12. If a task has been declared partially complete or failed, mark on form as appropriate
13. When all tasks are complete, thank user and give them a cookie. They deserve it.

Appendix 2: Individual Tests

Task 1: Locate and listen to the Jazz Canada radio station. Determine if the current artist/song is accessible through iTunes.

Steps to Complete:

Side Panel → Open 'Jazz' category → Play 'Jazz Canada'

→ Option 1: Click 'iTunes' link

→ Option 2 if Option 1 not available: User must declare song is not available on iTunes

Ideal Time to Complete:

1 min

Test is 'Partially Complete' if:

User is able to play Jazz Canada but is not able to locate iTunes.

Test has failed after:

2 mins 30 seconds

Task 2: Join as a member of CBC music.

Steps to Complete:

Join → Sign up as music fan → Form → Sign Up

Ideal Time to Complete:

1 min

Test is 'Partially Complete' if:

N/A

Test has failed after:

2 mins 30 seconds

Task 3: Locate the second most played song by the artist Feist. Add to a playlist.

Steps to Complete:

Browse → Artists → Search 'Feist' → Feist → Sidebar → Select song → 'Settings' Icon → 'Playlist' Icon

Ideal Time to Complete:

1 min 30 seconds

Test is 'Partially Complete' if:

User managed to locate artist 'Feist' and second-most popular song but unable to add song to a playlist.

Test has failed after:

3 mins

Task 4: Share the concert recording 'Tegan and Sara in Calgary' with another person.

Steps to Complete:

Option 1: Browse → Concerts on Demand → Search 'Tegan and Sara' → Click Calgary link → 'Share' Icon → Form

Option 2: Search 'Tegan and Sara' → Click appropriate search link → 'Share' Icon → Form

Ideal Time to Complete:

2 mins

Test is 'Partially Complete' if:

Concert is located but user is unable to share the link.

Test has failed after:

4 mins

Task 5: Hey Ocean! Is playing in Calgary in September; find the date and venue.

Steps to Complete:

Browse → Artists → Search 'Hey Ocean' → Click link → Tab 'Shows' → 'Calgary Republik'

Ideal Time to Complete:

1 min 30 seconds

Test is 'Partially Complete' if:

User locates artist but cannot find concert information

Test has failed after:

2 mins 30 seconds

Task 6: Recall the contents of the banner ad displayed on the homepage when you started your session.

Test is passed if user remembers in great detail, partially complete if user recalls one detail, and fails if user recalls nothing.

Appendix 3: Identification Form – Participant 1

User Information

Please circle appropriate information

Age

Younger than 18

19-29

30-39

40-49

Older than 50

Gender

Male

Female

How frequently do you use the internet for work purposes?

Often

Fairly often

Occasionally

Infrequently

Never

How frequently do you use the internet for personal entertainment?

Often

Fairly often

Occasionally

Infrequently

Never

Previous Experience

Please circle appropriate information

Have you ever heard of CBC Radio before this test?

Yes

No

Have you ever used CBC Radio before this test?

Yes

No

Do you have a user account with CBC Radio?

Yes

No

CBC Radio is a free way for internet users to access various commercial-free radio stations which are organized by genre. You have the ability to create playlists, recommend your favorite songs to others, and learn about upcoming concerts.

After reading this description, how often do you think you would be interested in using CBC Radio in the future?

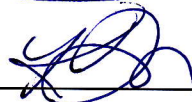
Extremely likely

Somewhat likely

Not very likely

Unlikely

Please sign if you wish to participate in this usability test:



Appendix 4: Identification Form – Participant 2

User Information

Please circle appropriate information

Age

Younger than 18 19-29 30-39 40-49 Older than 50

Gender

Male Female

How frequently do you use the internet for work purposes?

Often Fairly often Occasionally Infrequently Never

How frequently do you use the internet for personal entertainment?

Often Fairly often Occasionally Infrequently Never

Previous Experience

Please circle appropriate information

Have you ever heard of CBC Radio before this test?

Yes No

Have you ever used CBC Radio before this test?

Yes No

Do you have a user account with CBC Radio?

Yes No

CBC Radio is a free way for internet users to access various commercial-free radio stations which are organized by genre. You have the ability to create playlists, recommend your favorite songs to others, and learn about upcoming concerts.

After reading this description, how often do you think you would be interested in using CBC Radio in the future?

Extremely likely Somewhat likely Not very likely Unlikely

Please sign if you wish to participate in this usability test: Adan Berger

Appendix 5: Testing Form – Participant 1

Task 1: Locate and listen to Jazz Canada

Ideal Time Completion: 1 min

Actual Time Completion: 2 mins 10 seconds

Task Process: Side Panel → Open 'Jazz' category → Play 'Jazz Canada'

→ Option 1: Click 'iTunes' link

→ Option 2 if Option 1 not available: User must declare song is not available on iTunes

Notes:

Clicks: 111

Difficulty identifying iTunes - claims to be unfamiliar with it.

Task is:

Completed

Partially Completed

Not Completed (< 2 mins 30 seconds)

Task 2: Join as a member

Ideal Time Completion: 1 min

Actual Time Completion: 1 min 30 secs

Task Process: Join → Sign up as music fan → Form → Sign Up

Notes:

Clicks: 111

Not familiar with standard online sign-up procedures; did not recognize security words or their purpose

Task is:

Completed

Partially Completed

Not Completed (< 2 mins 30 seconds)

Task 3: Locate Feist second most popular song

Ideal Time Completion: 1 min 30 seconds

Actual Time Completion: 2 mins 30 secs - unsuccessful

Task Process: Browse → Artists → Search 'Feist' → Feist → Sidebar → Select song → 'Settings' → 'Playlist'

Notes:

Clicks: 1111

General search unsuccessful - user had to back track. Unable to add song to playlist once located.

Task is:

Completed

Partially Completed

Not Completed (< 3 mins)

Task 4: Share concert recording

Ideal Time Completion: 2 mins

Actual Time Completion: 2 mins - unsuccessful

Task Process:

Option 1: Browse → Concerts on Demand → Search 'Tegan and Sara' → Calgary link → 'Share' → Form

Option 2: Search 'Tegan and Sara' → Click appropriate search link → 'Share' Icon → Form

Notes:

Clicks: 1111 Prompted user to use search function.
User did not understand icons
Incomplete - User could not figure out how to share

Task is: Completed

Partially Completed

Not Completed (< 4 mins)

Task 5: Find date and venue for Hey Ocean!

Ideal Time Completion: 1 min 30 seconds

Actual Time Completion: 1 min 45 secs.

Task Process: Browse → Artists → Search 'Hey Ocean' → Click link → 'Shows' → 'Calgary Republik'

Notes:

Clicks: 1111 Promptly used search engine this time; modified search after unsuccessful the first time.

Task is: Completed

Partially Completed

Not Completed (< 2 mins 30 seconds)

Task 6: Recall icon

Task is: Completed

Partially Completed

Not Completed

Recalled a group of people.

Additional Notes:

User was not too familiar with standard search engine functions, common icons such as 'share', or general online form procedures. She had several difficulties with simple tasks such as search bars, and was clearly unfamiliar with Internet commonalities such as side bars and bookmarks. Claimed site was "too crowded" and it threw off her searching - all pages seemed alike to her and she frequently felt lost.

Appendix 6: Testing Form – Participant 2

Task 1: Locate and listen to Jazz Canada

Ideal Time Completion: 1 min

Actual Time Completion: n/a

Task Process: Side Panel → Open 'Jazz' category → Play 'Jazz Canada'

→ Option 1: Click 'iTunes' link

→ Option 2 if Option 1 not available: User must declare song is not available on iTunes

Notes:

Clicks: 11 User browsed side bars
Task unsuccessful due to site issues - unable
to play music for unknown reasons

Task is: Completed Partially Completed Not Completed (< 2 mins 30 seconds)

Task 2: Join as a member

Ideal Time Completion: 1 min

Actual Time Completion: 1 min 45 secs

Task Process: Join → Sign up as music fan → Form → Sign Up

Notes:

Clicks: 11 User is slow typist - only reason
task was completed slowly.

Task is: Completed Partially Completed Not Completed (< 2 mins 30 seconds)

Task 3: Locate Feist second most popular song

Ideal Time Completion: 1 min 30 seconds

Actual Time Completion: 3 mins + - not complete

Task Process: Browse → Artists → Search 'Feist' → Feist → Sidebar → Select song → 'Settings' → 'Playlist'

Notes:

Clicks: 1111 User jumped to search bar immediately.
Found on second attempt with prompt to
try something new.

Task is: Completed Partially Completed Not Completed (< 3 mins)

Task 4: Share concert recording

Ideal Time Completion: 2 mins

Actual Time Completion: 2 mins 15 secs

Task Process:

Option 1: Browse → Concerts on Demand → Search 'Tegan and Sara' → Calgary link → 'Share' → Form
Option 2: Search 'Tegan and Sara' → Click appropriate search link → 'Share' Icon → Form

Notes:

Clicks: 1111 User browsed before using search box. Narrowed down search when prompted. Also prompted to try things and not worry about being wrong

Task is:

Completed

Partially Completed

Not Completed (< 4 mins)

Task 5: Find date and venue for Hey Ocean!

Ideal Time Completion: 1 min 30 seconds

Actual Time Completion: 1 min

Task Process: Browse → Artists → Search 'Hey Ocean' → Click link → 'Shows' → 'Calgary Republik'

Notes:

Clicks: 111 User attempted new way to find information and was successful. Completed task ahead of time.

Task is:

Completed

Partially Completed

Not Completed (< 2 mins 30 seconds)

Task 6: Recall icon

Task is: Completed

Partially Completed

Not Completed

Additional Notes:

Recalled people in front of a tree

User claimed to be very familiar with the Internet, but found several issues with the site. Was not able to understand most icons, and did not readily use the search bar. Seemed to be unwilling to take risks or backtrack to try again.