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Inspection based evaluations

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Abstract

Usability inspection methods (UIMs) remain an important discount method for usability evaluation. They can be applied to any designed artefact during development: a paper prototype, a storyboard, a working prototype (e.g., in Macromedia Flash™ or in Microsoft PowerPoint™), tested production software, or an installed public release. They are analytical evaluation methods, which involve no typical end users, unlike empirical methods such as user testing. UIMs only require availability of a designed artefact and trained analysts. Thus, evaluation is possible with low resources (hence discount methods). Although risks arise from low resources, well-informed practices disproportionately improve analyst performance, improving cost-benefit ratios. This chapter introduces UIMs, covering six and one further method, and provides approaches to assessing existing, emerging and future UIMs and their effective uses.