Removing Bias with Wizard of Oz Screen Reader Usability Testing

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Introductions

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how can we test screen reader usability before a site is developed?
accessibility conformance does not guarantee a good user experience.
what is a **wizard of oz** test?

“Wizard of Oz (WoZ) is a method where participants interact with a system that they believe to be autonomous, but in reality, is controlled by an unseen human operator in the next room. It's a fantastic way to explore the experience of a complex, responsive system before committing resources and development time to actually build that system.”

- AnswerLab.com
setting the scene

“We have a partially functioning prototype – it’s not a real site that is built out yet but something that’s in the early design phase.”
building the test
prototype with **a11y annotations**
using Adobe XD

Interest Checking
being the wizard

Getting into the Mindset
• Taking on a robotic persona

Voice Considerations
• Volume level
• Clarity
• Consistency
• Pre-recorded content
unplanned scenarios

• Unexpected routes taken
• Very specific key commands requested
  o Pausing to ask user for clarification if necessary
challenges as the **wizard**

- Different hot key possibilities and different screen readers
- Differing expectations for screen reader behavior
- Switching between listening for participants keyboard commands and listening to their dialogue about their thought process
- Participants who weren't comfortable voicing the screen reader commands
being a participant

• Important to listen carefully, like with normal screen readers
• Remember to talk about your thoughts as you navigate
• Describe what you would expect to happen when something sounds off
• It’s okay to have the task repeated as many times as needed
challenges

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  - Insert F7
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- Some screen reader command limitations (ex. Specific Table modes, and link searches)
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- Can’t replicate custom screen reader settings
general takeaways

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general takeaways

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• Majority of participants picked up the concept easily
• Helpful to have a separate wizard and moderator
a few **test specific** takeaways

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- Make it clear when users need to select a “save” or “submit” button
- Don’t make users listen too much before hearing the role
- In a multi-step flow, give announcements when a task is completed
tips for creating *wizard of oz* test

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  - Be prepared to read all until a participant tells you to stop, or read one element at a time
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- Be flexible. You’ll likely go back and forth between having a conversation with participants and having them voice key commands
- If you have time, practice with someone who isn’t familiar with the prototype or project, like someone on a different testing or QA team. If practicing with sighted users, ask them to dim the screen.
questions?