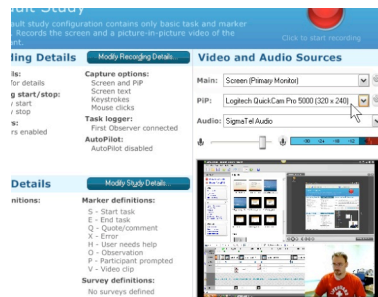


## MORAE CHANGES THE GAME

Morae recording software has rapidly become the tool of choice for people carrying out usability tests. Now Morae also lets you record studies that are not computer-based - such as tests of physical products and also focus group sessions. As usability and Morae expert David Travis says "If you can point a camera at it, you can use Morae to test its usability". Morae also lets observers watch the test sessions remotely via their own computers.



The data-logging features allow you to capture fine-grained actions such as mouse clicks, screen changes, time on task etc. Morae records the system or product under test, the dialogue between the test moderator and the participants, as well as providing a picture-in-picture view showing the test participant in action. All of this means big money savings! Why? Because you no longer need the one-way mirror. With Morae you can run studies in a quiet office or a hotel meeting room at a fraction of the cost of hiring a formal research facility. This lets you invest your development budget in usability data and insights rather than in testing facilities and other overheads. Find out more about Morae at this link: <http://www.techsmith.com/morae.asp>

## THINK POSITIVE? MAYBE NOT.

Conventional wisdom (and numerous self-help books) tells us that thinking positively can improve mood and boost self-esteem. However, new research carried out at the universities of Waterloo and New Brunswick suggests that positive self-statements may have no effect or may even be detrimental to people who most "need" the benefits, namely those with low self-esteem. Volunteers with high self-esteem who repeated a positive self-statement felt better than those who did not repeat the statement, but volunteers with low self-esteem who repeated a positive self-statement felt worse, suggesting that repeating positive self-statements may backfire for some people.

## PRIORITIZING USABILITY PROBLEMS

So you ran a usability test and found a long list of problems with your product or system. Now what? Must the development team fix them all? Or are just a few of them threatening the success of the product? How do you know which problems will have the greatest impact on the user? You can easily prioritize your usability test findings - and help the developers focus their time and resources - by asking these 3 questions of each problem you found:

1. Does the problem occur on a critical task pathway?
2. Is the problem difficult for the user to overcome?
3. Does the user encounter the problem every time they use the system?

If the answer to all 3 questions is 'yes', then the problem is **critical** - users may be unable or unwilling to carry out the task. You

should fix these problems as a matter of urgency. If you answer 'yes' to 2 of the questions, then the problem is **serious** - users are likely to be slowed down and may have to find a 'work-around'. Fix these problems as soon as possible. If you answer 'yes' to only 1 of the questions then the problem is of **medium** severity - these problems will make some customers feel frustrated with the system but may not affect task completion. And if the answer to all 3 questions is 'no' then the problem is of **low** severity. Low priority problems, such as typos or cosmetic issues, may not prevent customers from using your product, but they can negatively influence the perception of quality and they can damage the credibility of the product and the brand.

## NOW BOOKING

**How to carry out an Expert Review**  
**1-day seminar**  
**July 15 2009, Chicago**

Learn cost-effective methods to find and fix your system's usability problems quickly and inexpensively and without involving end users. Get more details and book your place at this link: <http://www.blueprintusability.com/training/review.html>

## DID YOU REMEMBER TO SMILE?

If you are smiling in your college yearbook photo you are less likely to get a divorce than people who didn't smile (pause while everyone checks their yearbook photos). Research out of DePauw University, Indiana, found that this 'thin slice' of information taken years ago can predict the likelihood of divorce. The study, reported in *Motivation & Emotion*, found that the effect held good even for childhood photos. Facial

expression predicted divorce even on a 10-year-old child's face. In some conditions non-smilers were up to 3 times more likely to divorce than smilers.

## NOTABLE QUOTABLES

"Planning is an unnatural process; it is much more fun to do something. The nicest thing about not planning is that failure comes as a complete surprise, rather than being preceded by a period of worry and depression."

- Sir John Harvey-Jones

## "NOT MANY PEOPLE KNOW THAT!"

- ◆ The average delay of Japan's Shinkansen 'bullet' train on its 360 mile Tokyo to Osaka line is 6 seconds.
- ◆ America was given its name by Martin Waldseemüller a German cartographer (he also made up his own name). In 1507, on the map that has become known as America's birth certificate, he named the New World after the Italian navigator, Amerigo Vespucci, who had bumped into it



in 1499. Though not the first European to set foot in the New World, Vespucci was the first to realise that it was not Asia.  
 ◆ John McEnroe (in 1981) was the last player to win Wimbledon with a wooden tennis racket.