

**Table 9.1. Pretest Briefing for a Paper Prototype Usability Test**

Topic	Checklist	Example Wording (i.e., Script)
<b>Greeting and introduction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome the users (hang up coats, offer a beverage, ask if the directions were okay).</li> <li>• Introduce yourself and the company.</li> <li>• Describe the interface being tested.</li> <li>• Give users the informed consent form (ideally, they brought the copy you sent ahead of time).</li> <li>• Explain the goals of the session.</li> <li>• Introduce the notion of paper prototyping.</li> </ul>	<p>“Thank you for coming. I’m Carolyn Snyder. I’m an independent consultant, and I specialize in conducting sessions like this one. Here at [company] we’re working on a product for [target market] that will help them to [basic functionality]. I’ll go over the main points in this form we sent you. The purpose of today’s session is for you to help us figure out how to make this interface more user-friendly before we finish developing it. But believe it or not, we aren’t going to use a computer. As you’ll see, we’ve actually created paper versions of the screens, and this guy named Carl will be playing the computer.”</p>
<b>Their role</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If using co-discovery, introduce the two users.</li> <li>• Explain what’s expected of them.</li> <li>• Remind them of their qualifications.</li> </ul>	<p>“Frank, this is Ernest. The two of you will be working together. We’ll give you some tasks that we think are representative of what people might do in real life. [Give example.] Your job is to tell us what makes sense, what’s confusing, whether it works the way you’d expect it to, etc. You are here because you know [area of expertise], so your perspective will help us make this product more useful.”</p>
<b>Social concerns</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explicitly mention in-room observers and/or videotaping.</li> <li>• Explain that you’re testing the interface, not them.</li> <li>• Reassure users about what will happen if they encounter any difficulties.</li> <li>• Reiterate how valuable this is and how much you appreciate their help.</li> </ul>	<p>“About half a dozen members of the development team will be sitting in the same room, observing quietly and taking notes. We’re not going to be videotaping. Keep in mind that we’re testing the interface—we’re not testing you—so if you run into any problems it’s not your fault and it means that there’s something we need to change. I’ll be sitting next to you, and I can help you if you want. We held our first session this morning, and we learned a lot; in fact, we’ve already made some changes. We really appreciate having you come and help us out.”</p>

<p><b>Set expectations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledge the unfinished nature of the prototype (avoid the temptation to apologize—present this as a benefit).</li> <li>• Explain that the design will evolve.</li> <li>• Explain that you will record their suggestions but don't promise to implement them (especially important if the user is a customer).</li> </ul>	<p>“The prototype still has some rough edges—we're still thinking through how it should work and some parts of it are incomplete. Before we cast it in concrete, we want to get some feedback about how well this design works. We're doing several sessions like this one, so it's likely that the final version of the interface will be different than what you see today. If you have suggestions we'll make note of them, although at this point it is premature to promise what we'll be able to include in the interface. When we get done with this series of sessions, we'll review everyone's feedback to help determine our priorities for the next release.”</p>
<p><b>Paperwork and administrivia</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get signature on informed consent form.</li> <li>• Pay users (unless you have decided to pay them at the end).</li> <li>• Escort them into test room.</li> </ul>	<p>“Do you have any questions about what we'll be doing today? If not, could I please get your signature on this form? And so I don't forget, I'm going to give you your payment now since you've already earned it by virtue of showing up on time. If you need to leave early for any reason, you're still entitled to keep it.”</p>

**Table 9.2. Introducing a Paper Prototype Usability Test**

Topic	Checklist	Example Wording
<b>Introductions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct users to the chairs in front of the prototype.</li> <li>• Ask observers to introduce themselves.</li> <li>• Introduce users.</li> <li>• Have users answer 2-3 questions about their background.</li> </ul>	<p>“Frank, Ernest, please have a seat here. I’ll let these folks introduce themselves.”</p> <p>“Frank, you’re a senior network administrator at MegaBank, right? Please tell us a little bit about your responsibilities, how many end users you support, and what kinds of data security products you’ve used.” (Same for Ernest.) “Does anyone here have any other questions for Frank or Ernest before we get started?”</p>
<b>Paper prototype orientation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain what they’re looking at (usually the first screen of the site or application).</li> <li>• (Optional) For users with limited computer experience, you might point out familiar elements such as the browser buttons, explaining that these things on their computer might look a little different, but they do the same thing.</li> </ul>	<p>“As I mentioned, here’s the paper prototype of the Web application you’ll be working with. We’ve assumed you typed [URL].com into the browser and this page came up. This is your starting point.”</p> <p>(Optional) “You use AOL at home, right? These forward and back buttons here do the same thing as the buttons in AOL—they just look a little different. If you’re not sure whether something is the same as what you’re used to, just ask me.”</p>
<b>Interactions with the prototype and Computer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce the Computer.</li> <li>• Explain how to interact with the prototype (and each other if co-discovery).</li> <li>• Discuss thinking aloud and asking questions.</li> <li>• (Optional) Note that all interface functionality is available (e.g., drag &amp; drop).</li> <li>• (Optional) Point out any print manuals that may exist or mention that there’s a Help system.</li> </ul>	<p>“Carl here will be playing the computer. Now Carl may seem like a pretty smart computer, but he has no speech recognition and no artificial intelligence. Since machines can’t talk, he’s not allowed to explain anything. If you want to do something, you’ll need to interact with the prototype just as you would on a computer. Use your finger to click on links or buttons. These pieces of tape indicate places where you can type something in, and here’s your keyboard (give pen). It’s okay to write on this.</p> <p>The two of you are working together, so talk to each other as you go. It’s fine if you disagree about something because there are different ways to use this. Please tell us what makes sense to you, what’s confusing, and any questions that come to mind. Your questions are especially valuable, but I may not answer them right away because our goal is to change the interface so <i>it</i> answers them.”</p>

		(Optional) “Even though this is a paper prototype, assume you can do all the things you can do with a real computer, like drag & drop and right mouse menus. There’s even a Help system.”
<b>They are in charge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remind the users that you’re testing the interface.</li> <li>• Confirm ending time and that they can stop or take a break at any time.</li> </ul>	“Remember that we’re testing the interface—we’re not testing you. We’ll end promptly at 4:00, but if you need to stop or take a break before then, just let me know. Are you ready to start?”
<b>Begin first task</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hand users the first task.</li> <li>• Clarify the task if it’s confusing.</li> <li>• If necessary, prompt the users to begin interacting with the prototype.</li> </ul>	“Okay, here’s the first thing we’d like you to do. Take a minute to read this and let me know if it makes sense. If so, then whenever you’re ready please show us what you would do first.”