

# Moderating Usability Studies

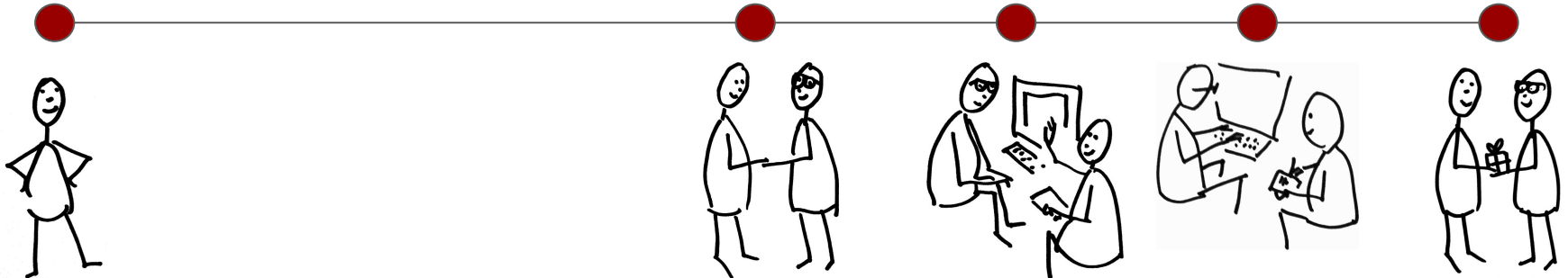
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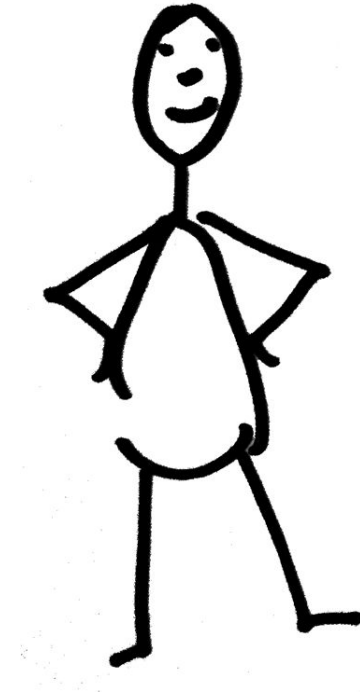
# A timeline

- Preparation
- Welcoming the participant
- Getting ready
- During the study
- After the study



# Preparation: before the study begins

- Be prepared
- Your assumptions
- Your biases



# 20 COGNITIVE BIASES THAT SCREW UP YOUR DECISIONS

## 1. Anchoring bias.

People are **over-reliant** on the first piece of information they hear. In a salary negotiation, whoever makes the first offer establishes a range of reasonable possibilities in each person's mind.



## 2. Availability heuristic.

People **overestimate** the importance of information that is available to them. A person might argue that smoking is not unhealthy because they know someone who lived to 100 and smoked three packs a day.



## 3. Bandwagon effect.

The probability of one person adopting a belief increases based on the number of people who hold that belief. This is a powerful form of **groupthink** and is reason why meetings are often unproductive.



## 4. Blind-spot bias.

**Failing to recognize** your own cognitive biases is a bias in itself. People notice cognitive and motivational biases much more in others than in themselves.



## 5. Choice-supportive bias.

When you choose something, you tend to feel **positive** about it, even if that **choice has flaws**. Like how you think your dog is awesome – even if it bites people every once in a while.



## 6. Clustering illusion.

This is the tendency to see **patterns in random events**. It is key to various gambling fallacies, like the idea that red is more or less likely to turn up on a roulette table after a string of reds.



## 7. Confirmation bias.

We tend to listen only to information that **confirms** our **preconceptions** – one of the many reasons it's so hard to have an intelligent conversation about climate change.



## 8. Conservatism bias.

Where people favor prior evidence over new evidence or information that has emerged. People were **slow to accept** that the Earth was round because they maintained their earlier understanding that the planet was flat.



## 9. Information bias.

The tendency to **seek information** when it **does not affect action**. More information is **not always better**. With less information, people can often make more accurate predictions.



## 10. Ostrich effect.

The decision to **ignore dangerous or negative information** by "burying one's head in the sand," like an ostrich. Research suggests that investors check the value of their holdings significantly less often during bad markets.



## 11. Outcome bias.

Judging a decision based on the **outcome** – rather than how **exactly** the decision was made in the moment. Just because you won a lot in Vegas doesn't mean gambling your money was a smart decision.



## 12. Overconfidence.

Some of us are **too confident** about our **abilities**, and this causes us to take **greater risks** in our daily lives. Experts are more prone to this bias than laypeople, since they are more convinced that they are right.



## 13. Placebo effect.

When **simply believing** that something will have a certain effect on you causes it to have that effect. In medicine, people given fake pills often experience the same **physiological effects** as people given the real thing.



## 14. Pro-innovation bias.

When a proponent of an innovation tends to **overvalue its usefulness** and undervalue its limitations. Sound familiar, Silicon Valley?



## 15. Recency.

The tendency to weigh the **least information** more heavily than older data. Investors often think the market will always look the way it looks today and make unwise decisions.



## 16. Salience.

Our tendency to focus on the **most easily recognizable features** of a person or concept. When you think about dying, you might worry about being mangled by a lion, as opposed to what is statistically more likely, like dying in a car accident.



## 17. Selective perception.

Allowing our expectations to **influence how we perceive** the world. An experiment involving a football game between students from two universities showed that one team saw the opposing team commit more infractions.



## 18. Stereotyping.

Expecting a group or person to have certain qualities without having real information about the person. It allows us to **quickly identify strangers** as friends or enemies, but people tend to **overuse and abuse** it.



## 19. Survivorship bias.

An error that comes from focusing only on surviving examples, causing us to **misperceive a situation**. For instance, we might think that being an entrepreneur is easy because we haven't heard of all those who failed.



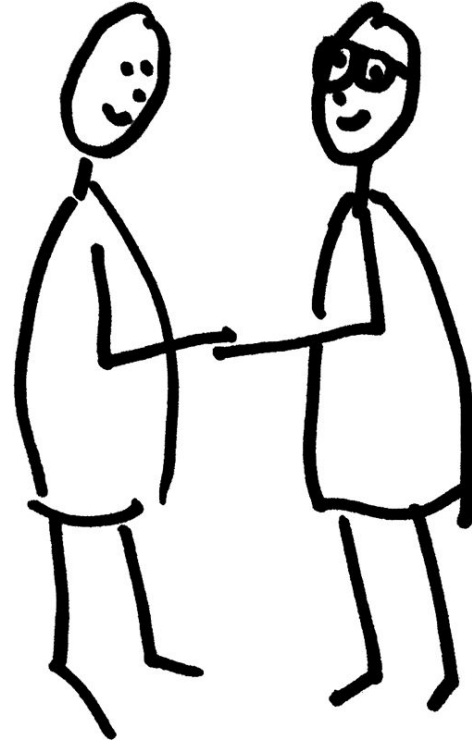
## 20. Zero-risk bias.

Sociologists have found that **we love certainty** – even if it's counterproductive. Eliminating risk entirely means there is no chance of harm being caused.



# The beginning: the welcome

- Build rapport
- Describe the study
- Make them comfortable



# The beginning, part two: getting the tools ready

- Forms
- Discuss recording & data privacy
- Explain 'think aloud'
- Overview of the technology



# The middle: during the session

- Your attention
- Your demeanor
- Ask questions (but be careful)



# The end: after the session

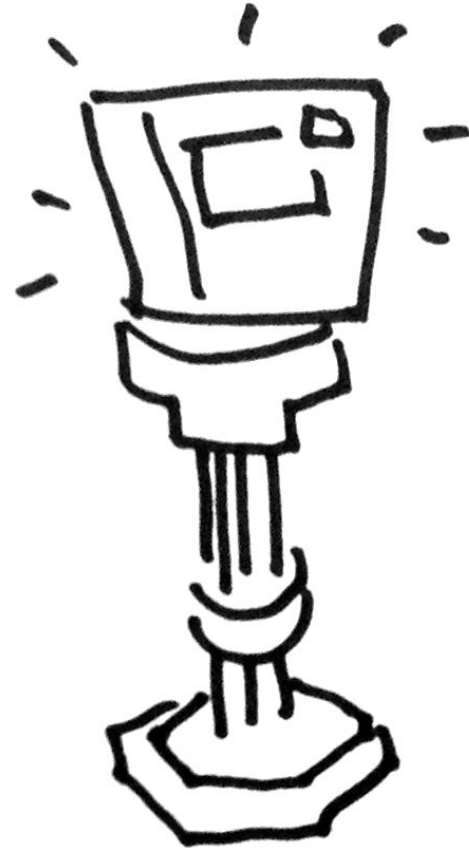
- Ask if any questions
- Give the gift
- Say thank you!





# Conclusion

- Success!



# Learn more

- How To Moderate Effectively In Usability Research, By Colleen Roller  
<https://www.smashingmagazine.com/2015/07/moderating-effectively-in-usability-research/>
- 12 Expert Tips for Moderating Like a Pro, by Peter Hughes  
<https://www.usertesting.com/blog/2014/09/22/12-expert-tips-for-moderating-like-a-pro/>
- Effectively Moderating Usability Tests, by Beth Loring (UIE webinar)  
[https://aycl.uie.com/virtual\\_seminars/effectively\\_moderating\\_usability\\_tests](https://aycl.uie.com/virtual_seminars/effectively_moderating_usability_tests)
- Identifying and Validating Assumptions and Mitigating Biases in User Research  
<http://www.uxmatters.com/mt/archives/2015/10/identifying-and-validating-assumptions-and-mitigating-biases-in-user-research.php>
- Interviewing Users- How to Uncover Compelling Insights, by Steve Portigal  
<http://rosenfeldmedia.com/books/interviewing-users/>
- This presentation as a blog post <http://tinyurl.com/harvarduxgroup>