

# 20-Point Usability Checklist

Not sure where to start to check your product's usability? This checklist covers common usability issues that impact the overall user experience of a product.

## Content

Good content is vital to a good user experience. Make sure your content makes sense your audience.

Criteria	Yes	No
<b>1. Are your titles descriptive?</b> Make sure that your page titles make sense for the content you offer.		
<b>2. Do you answer your user's questions?</b> Users utilize a product because they want answers, so it's important that your product gives them what they are looking for.		
<b>3. Have you optimized your writing for the web?</b> Ensure that your text is short, scannable, and to the point, offering answers and common language. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Content should be between Grade 6 – 8 Reading Level. Technical content should be below Grade 12.</li><li>• Use the <a href="#">Hemingway App</a> to check the reading level for your content.</li></ul>		
<b>4. Is your text annoying?</b> Use bold, italic, and all caps text sparingly.		
<b>5. Do you date your content?</b> Don't make users guess about which content is current and which is obsolete. Have a plan for content to make sure users have the latest information.		

## Navigation & User Journey

Help your users get where they need to go. Overcomplicating the user journey will confuse your users.

Criteria	Yes	No
<b>6. Is your navigation clear and simple?</b> Make sure that your navigation lets the user know where they have been and where they can go in a clear, consistent manner.		
<b>7. Do you emphasize high-priority tasks?</b> Make sure that your landing page or home screen highlights the important actions you'd like visitors to make.		
<b>8. Have you grouped information?</b> Make it easy for users to find what they're looking for by arranging related information together.		
<b>9. Have you guided users to the next step?</b> Make it easy for users to see where they're supposed to go next.		
<b>10. Are your forms too long or complicated?</b> Cast a critical eye on your forms to make sure you're allowing flexible inputs and not asking for unnecessary information.		

## Product Design

Your design should support your content, not distract from it. Keep designs simple and consistent.

Criteria	Yes	No
<p><b>11. Have you used color properly?</b> Avoid placing light-colored text on a light-colored background, or it will be hard for visitors to read your content. The same goes for dark-on-dark.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>View the <a href="#">Branding Toolkit</a> for more information on color and branding standards.</li></ul>		
<p><b>12. Do your graphics mean anything?</b> If your graphics seem irrelevant or frivolous, users won't be impressed, so make sure that any images you use are directly related to the content.</p>		
<p><b>13. Are your fonts readable?</b> Make your text readable by avoiding small font sizes and allowing font resizing.</p>		
<p><b>14. Do you have “white space”?</b> By placing too many elements too close together, you may overwhelm users. Spread things out a little. Break things down into different sections if you have a lot of content.</p>		
<p><b>15. Is your design consistent?</b> Don't leave users guessing whether they've stumbled upon a different site. Use similar colors and typefaces throughout your entire site.</p>		

## Structure & Functionality

Broken products cause frustration for users and departments. Make sure your product is accessible and functional.

Criteria	Yes	No
<b>16. Have you started an accessibility review?</b> Accessibility is important for all users. Before your product launches, you will need to have a review completed by the Disability Access Office (DAO).		
<b>17. Do you have a responsive layout?</b> If you're only optimized for one size, you're rendering your product incorrectly to a lot of visitors. Make sure your product scales for different screens and devices.		
<b>18. Is your site organized with a consistent structure?</b> Include headings, lists, and a unifying structure from page to page.		
<b>19. Do your links work?</b> Always double check your product for broken links.		
<b>20. Do your error messages help?</b> Look at your error messages. Don't just tell the user they're wrong, provide suggestions for how to remedy the problem.		