

USABILITY TESTING

WITH TEENAGERS

by Gabriel Roque

HELLO

I'm Gabriel Roque, an enthusiastic advocate for user-centered design.

As the Head of UX at ília, I guide teams in crafting extraordinary digital experiences spanning various sectors, from banking and insurance to automotive.

My journey, which began in graphic design and expanded into user experience, has immersed me in groundbreaking innovation initiatives for global ventures like BMW and Santander. I also enjoy sharing insights at events, such as my participation in Behance Brazil, and contributing to shaping creative minds as a UX Design instructor.

"Usability Testing with Teenagers" seamlessly aligns with my unwavering dedication to deliver impactful digital experiences. I trust you'll find this read both insightful and enjoyable.



Gabriel Roque

Head of UX | European Market at ília

Connect with me on LinkedIn to stay in the loop and delve deeper into inspiring work, cases and more content about UX Design.



[Lets talk](#)



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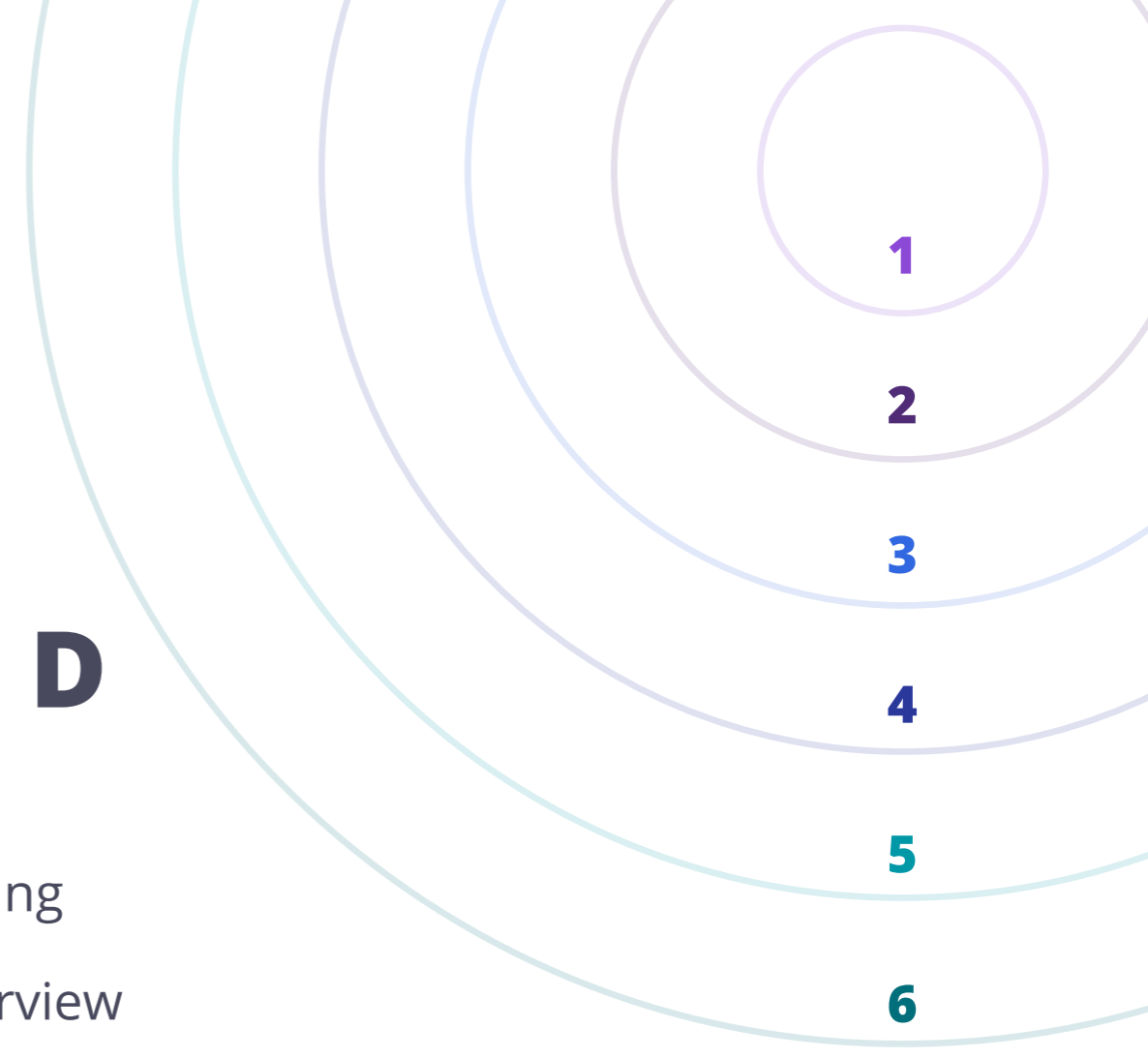
USABILITY TESTING WITH TEENAGERS



Welcome to the world of adolescent usability testing! Drawing from NN Group's insights and ília's practical experience, this e-book offers concise strategies for engaging teenagers effectively. Discover how to establish a comfortable environment, design tasks that resonate, and extract valuable insights to enhance your applications for this dynamic user group.

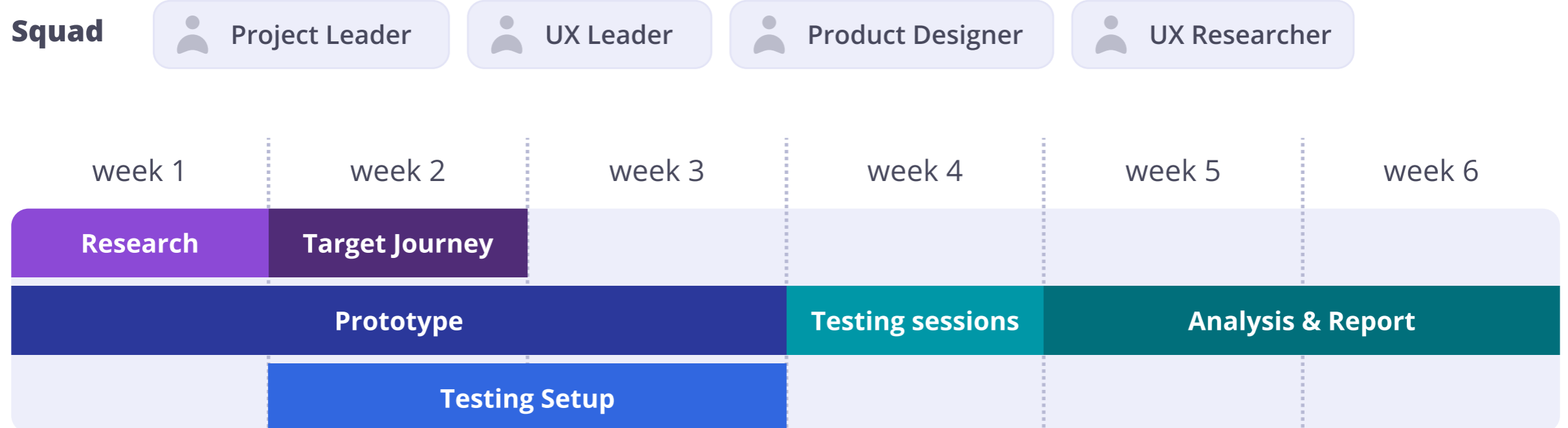
In the following pages, we'll delve into the nuances of conducting usability tests with adolescents, highlighting key considerations and practical approaches that stem from both established research and real-world projects at ília.

This e-book offers insights using a **in person moderate** approach as a project example.



GETTING STARTED

As you embark on the journey of navigating usability testing with teenagers, this concise introduction provides an overview of essential stages. Here is a quick example of a Squad and Roadmap for a standard project of this nature:



1 - Research

Gather insights on project objectives, talk to stakeholders and build a benchmarking.

2 - Target Journey

Define the scope of features to be validated on a journey that brings value to users.

3 - Testing Setup

Craft a guide of tasks and questions and select people aligned to the target audience.

4 - Prototype

Create a user-friendly model of the application, mirroring the user's real-world experience.

5 - Testing sessions

Conducting insightful testing sessions with precision and engagement.

6 - Analysis & Report

Gather findings and actionable recommendations for effective improvements.

The roadmap, stages, and squad outlined on this page serve as an extremely simplified illustration for the purpose of exemplifying a standard usability testing project. By any means, these examples should not be regarded as rigid rules. The estimated timeline of the roadmap deliveries can be entirely revised based on factors such as project feature scope, recruited test participants, number of testing rounds, prototype modifications, and squad composition. The seniority of squad members may also vary according to the project's scope. Additionally, it's crucial to highlight that usability testing projects are a segment within a broader product discovery process.

RESEARCH



Desk Research

Let's dive deep into the project's core to grasp its objectives and intended audience. This entails comprehensive desk research, mapping trends, analyse competition, and identifying drivers of user behavior.

Previous researches

Crucial to this phase is studying prior research from reliable sources such as Pew Research Center and Child Development Journal, providing a robust foundation for project decisions.

References

Crafting a benchmarking snapshot of popular apps used by teenagers adds depth to decision-making.

Useful links

 **Pew Research Center**

[Pew Research Center](#)

A reputable research institute offering a wealth of data and analyses on global trends, particularly insightful for understanding digital behaviors, social dynamics, and generational preferences.

appbot

[Appbot](#)

An essential tool for gauging user sentiment and feedback across app stores and reviews. Streamline your user experience optimization by leveraging data-driven insights from real user opinions, enhancing your app's performance and user satisfaction.

TARGET JOURNEY

The Target Journey phase holds immense significance, particularly when catering to the dynamic adolescent demographic. This phase bridges research and design, transforming insights into practical pathways that resonate with teens. With that in mind, here are some key tips to enrich your usability testing with teenagers:

Prioritize their World

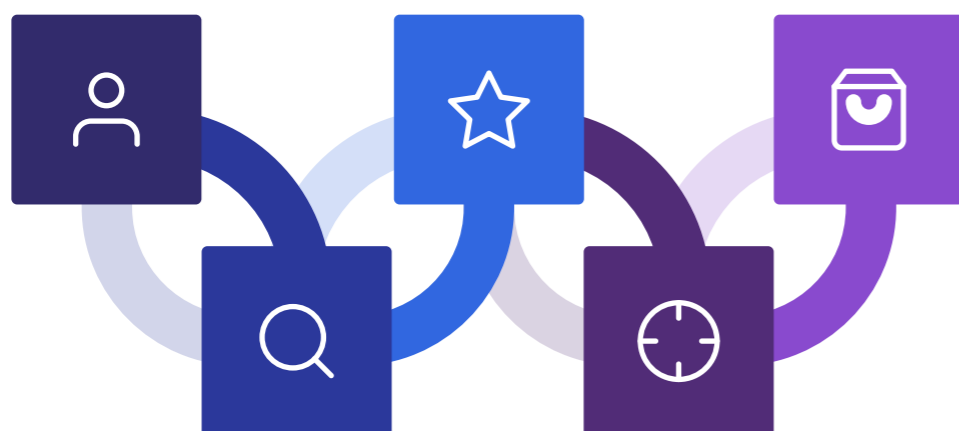
Young people possess unique preferences; hence, align your journey with their needs. Translate your findings to reflect their aspirations on the journey.

Reflect digital Realities

Adolescents are digital natives; design your journey around their digital habits. Make it akin to their typical online experiences, forging a sense of familiarity.

Embrace engagement

Teens thrive on interactive encounters. Infuse the journey with gamified elements or user-generated content, establishing a emotional connection.



[Interaction Design Foundation](#)

The Interaction Design Foundation has a great article talking [how to map a customer journey map](#)

PROTOTYPE

In order to craft prototypes for teenagers you need a blend of creativity, empathy, and understand their preferences.

Immerse yourself in teen mindsets: What captivates them? What they are used to see on their daily apps? By grasping their mindset, you're better equipped to craft a prototype that speaks their language.

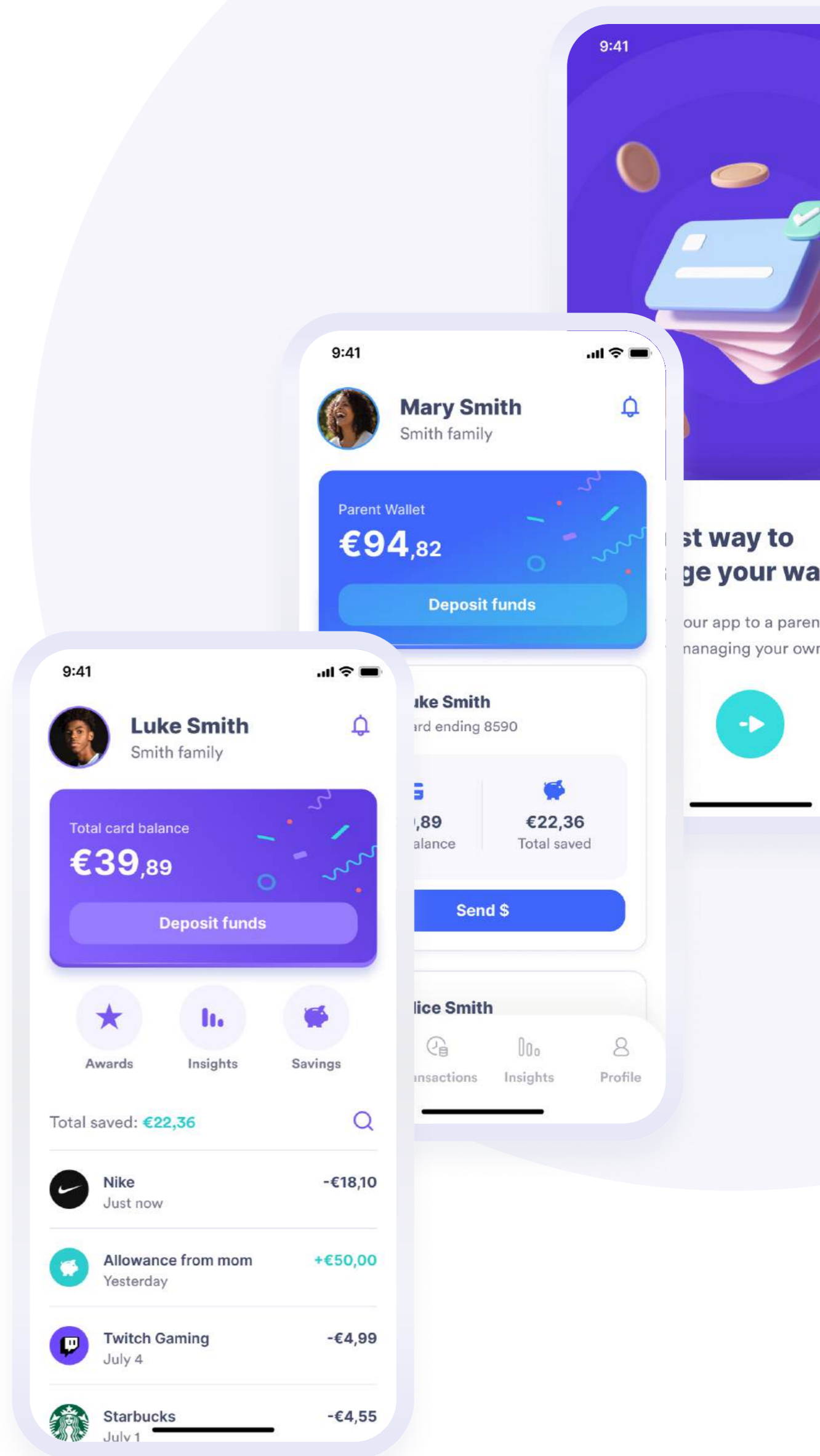
Prioritize simplicity, intuitive navigation, and familiar interfaces as you create realistic use cases aligned with their daily experiences.

By merging these concepts, you'll not only create a prototype that speaks to teenagers but also set the stage for a product that captivates and delights them.

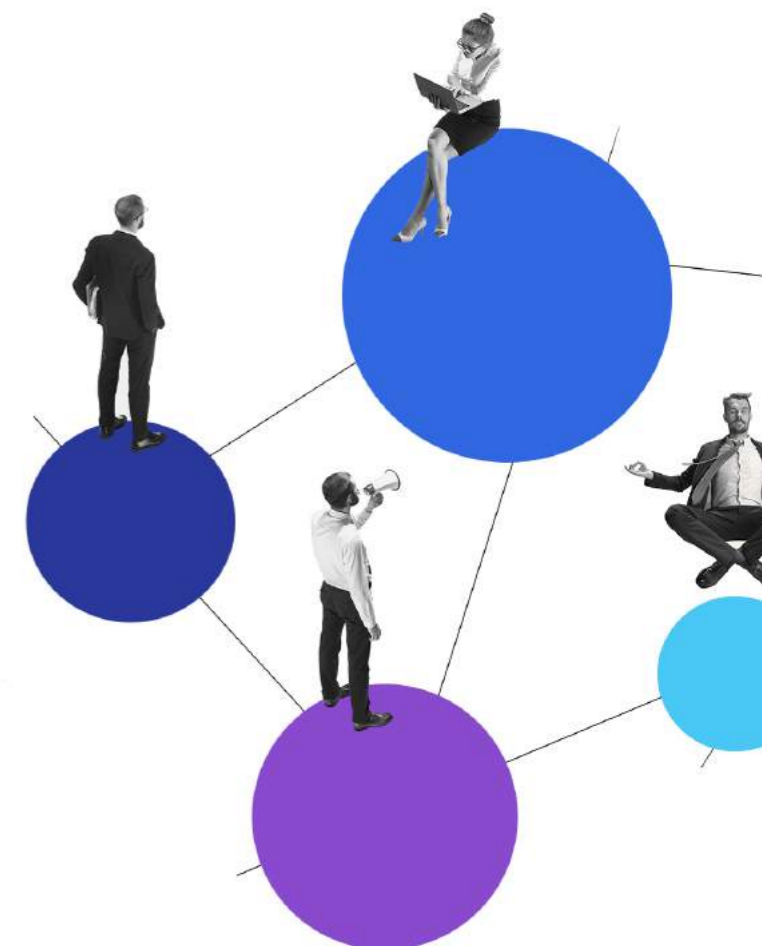
Bēhance

[Behance.net](https://www.behance.net)

An inspiring online platform showcasing a diverse array of creative projects spanning design, art, and user experience. Explore a multitude of portfolios and gain insights into innovative design approaches that can enrich your own projects.



In certain scenarios, the inclusion of a parental interface might be important. Take, for instance, a financial application designed to empower teenagers with allowances while fostering responsible financial habits. In this context, a separate interface tailored for parents is a must to enable parents to oversee and manage their children's financial education.



TESTING SETUP

Prioritize & Set Goals

Conduct a workshop with the squad to outline the scope and goals of the tests.

Testing Guide

Unlock the best insights with tailored questions and tasks.

Profiles to Recruit

Select participants based on your research and target journey.

Define the Award

Choose wisely the best incentive for participants.

Tools

From design softwares to videocall applications, seek for the best.

Equipment

Cameras, mics, pen and papers, whatever you need to get the job done.

Location

Choose a comfortable well located testing environment.

Dates

Set dates to accommodate everybody agendas according to the roadmap.

Decision Log

From providers to date, document decisions for everyone involved.

Terms and Conditions Form

Send a clear terms and conditions to participants.

TESTING PLAN EXAMPLE



Project Leader

- Responsible for**
- Roadmap
 - Budget
 - Prioritize & Set Goals
 - Recruitment
 - Participant's awards
 - Tools & Equipments
 - Dates & Locations
 - Third parties
 - Project Decision Log

UX Leader

- Responsible for**
- Support to Project Leader
 - Design deliveries
 - UX Research deliveries
 - Methodology
 - Room setup
 - Pre test
 - Design Review
 - Support to test facilitator

UX Researcher

- Responsible for**
- Support to Project Leader
 - Support to UX Leader
 - Testing Guide
 - Define profiles to recruit
 - Test facilitator
 - Terms & Conditions Form

Product Designer

- Responsible for**
- Support to Project Leader
 - Support to UX Leader
 - Prototype review
 - Prototype adjustments
 - Support to test facilitator

This flow is a variant flow from the article [Usability Testing 101](#) by Nielsen Normal Group.



HOW MANY SHOULD I RECRUIT?

Following the [NN Group](#) recommendations, we typically recommend 5 participants for qualitative tests, but depending on the project, like a project where you need teenagers, you can recruit 8 people. Having a greater group of people can be essential in this particular case.

Teenagers can be shy and reserved, so it is important to interview a slightly larger number of people to account for the fact that some may provide slightly less information than expected.

THE AGE MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

As we are conducting tests with minors, there are some practices we recommend following.

It is important not to have a significant age difference between the teenagers participants, given the fact that teens tend to have rapidly changing interests with each passing year.

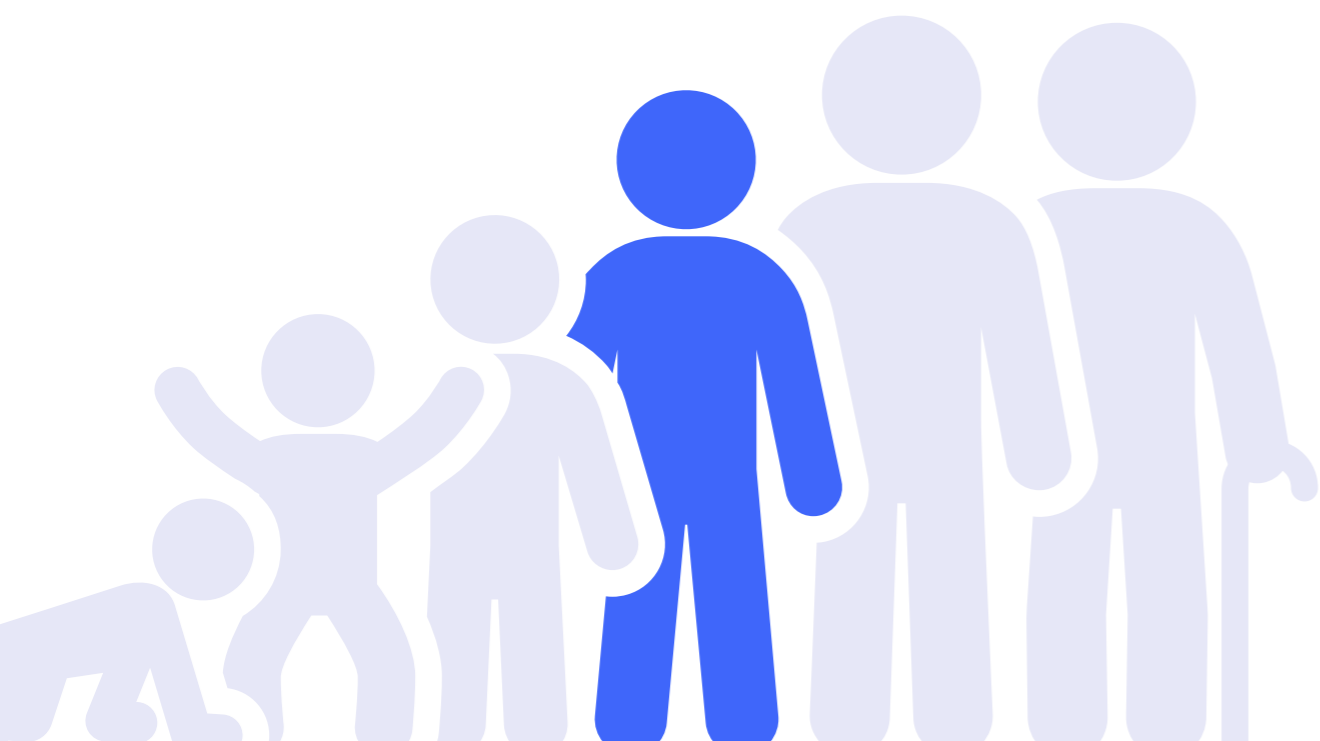
Therefore, if you seek teenagers, try not to recruit people with a large age gap between them.

For example, if you want to talk with teens among 13 to 17 years, in the final report its important to divide the insights into two subgroups: 13 to 15 years old and 16 to 17 years old.

NN/g

[How to recruit participants usability studies](#)

For an in-depth guide, consider reading the report available at NN Group. This resource provides valuable insights and strategies to ensure you're recruiting the right participants.



RECRUITMENT EXAMPLE

8 participants, age between 13 to 17 years



Group 1

13 to 15 years
4 participants

50%



Group 2

50%

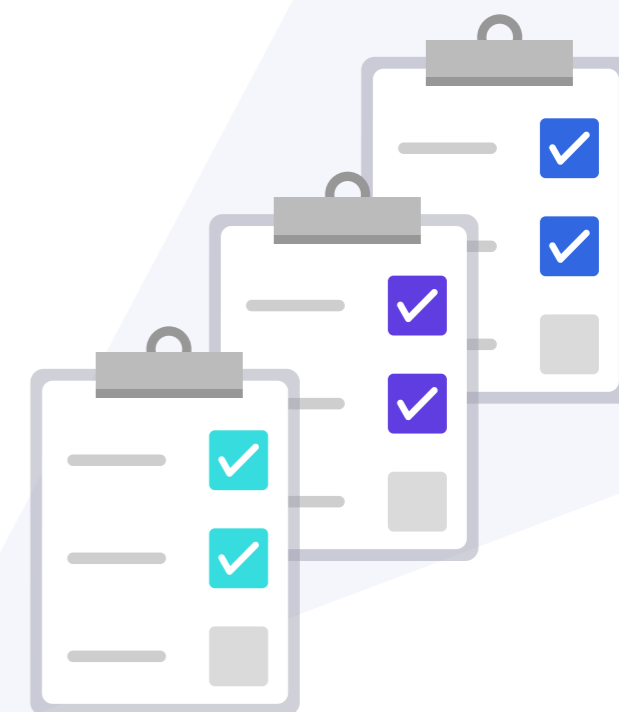
16 to 17 years
4 participants



Learn more

A study featured in the [Child Development journal](#) reveals the tendency of adolescents to frequently shift opinions and perspectives throughout their developmental years.

TIPS ABOUT THE TASKS



Compared to adults, it is more common for teenagers to feel bored and lose interest quickly. In the other hand, adolescents tend to perform digital tasks much faster than adults.

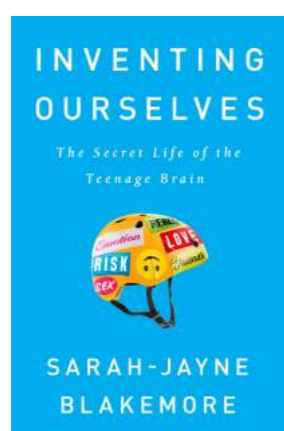
Taking this into account, the storytelling of the tasks needs to be engaging and have a variety of different tasks to perform. It is important to ask for constant feedback to keep the session dynamic and interactive.

Another valuable point will be to use a friendly language in the app's texts.

We also recommend that the tasks be of low complexity and make sense for real-use cases for the teenager. Our focus is to make participants feel empowered in relation to the test.

Another point is to have extra tasks and questions prepared in case the participants finish the activities quickly. So be ready to have a good backup with extras tasks and questions to make the time more valuable for your findings

Additionally, teenagers tend reject tasks outside of their comfort zone. Therefore, the prototype crated should have a navigation system familiar to the apps they typically use. (For example: TikTok have a well stablished horizontal navigation to consume content)



[*Inventing Ourselves, The Secret Life of the Teenage Brain by Sarah-Jayne Blakemore*](#)

The book delves into how the adolescent brain potentially have to greater plasticity and rapid learning abilities compared to adults.

TIPS TO GUIDE THE TESTS

We understand that participants should never feel judged. Therefore, it will be important to explain how we need their help to improve the application. We want to introduce the dynamics as a moment to learn from teenagers about their world and interests.

Feeling that their opinion is highly valued and that we want to hear it is really important to gain the participants' sympathy.



Improve the usability testing experience between sessions.

Use feedbacks to refine the questions, tasks and prototype.

Introduction to the tests

Begin by introducing the purpose of the usability tests to the participants. Emphasize that their opinions are highly valued to improve the application.

Introduction to the prototype

Familiarize participants about what is a prototype by a brief demonstration. Explain that the goal is to simulate a real product to test and get feedback.

Example of a task

Kick off with an example task. Encourage them to voice their thoughts and emotions during the task, fostering an environment of open communication.

Conduct testing

Guide participants through the tasks. Ensure tasks reflect real-world use cases. Gather constant feedback to ensure a dynamic and informative session.

Ask feedback

Encourage participants to share their overall thoughts and suggestions. This is an opportunity to get holistic feedback beyond task-specific observations.

THE ENVIRONMENT GIVES THE TONE

A welcoming space is crucial as comfort Breeds Openness. Prepare a relaxed space with inviting seating.

Adjacent seating for parents balances their presence without pressure, promoting an atmosphere where candid opinions flow freely.

Additionally, having good snack and beverage options available can be essential to create a more friendly atmosphere for everyone involved.



If you are using a third party usability test room, ask them to **go there one day before the tests to check the environment**

ROOM SETUP EXAMPLE

Chairs: It is important to have chairs adjacent to each other so that the participants' position suggests collaboration and is friendly.

Snacks: To create a receptive environment, having food and drink options can be a good idea.

Mirror: It is recommended that the main participant don't sit directly in front of the mirror of the room. Avoid feelings of being observed.

Equipment: Make sure you only have the essentials on the table so you don't create distractions. Avoid leaving the camera in front of the participant.

Plants: A research from the University of Exeter, in England, concluded that plants make environments happier.



INVOLVING THE PARENTS IS A KEY FACTOR

Teenagers may feel uncomfortable talking to unfamiliar adults about themselves. Similarly, for parents, it may be uncomfortable to let their children engage in conversations about personal choices with strangers without their presence and validation.

Therefore, it is important to have the presence of the mother or father during the tests to provide reassurance to both parties.

Keep in mind that it's vital to establish trust with parents. Sharing the testing agenda, topics, and purpose upfront instills trust and confidence. Remember to also request their informed consent through signed terms regarding data collection and recordings.



KEEP IN MIND

It is important to start the tests in a practical and easy way. Our recommendation is to provide a small example tutorial to show the participant what we expect them to do during the test. For instance, your team can make a demonstration by performing a task. This way you can show how the test works and emphasize the importance of participants speaking out loud about their thoughts.

We also understand that the team dressing casually will reinforce the message that the environment is friendly and welcoming.

Another crucial point is to always maintain a friendly tone and be smiling. Avoiding prolonged silences can help the younger person not feel judged or embarrassed.





ANALYSIS & REPORT

Let's craft impactful usability reports for your teen-focused projects. Here is a suggestion for your report structure.

About the project

Begin by introducing the project, providing context, and setting the stage for the report's content.

Our deliveries over the project

Highlight the key milestones and achievements accomplished throughout the project.

Project numbers

Utilize visual elements to present important numerical data, making it easy to understand.

Usability test plan

Outline the objectives, methodologies, and major milestones that were part of the testing plan.

Users profile (Divided by age)

Segment teenagers into different age groups, allowing for a more tailored analysis of findings.

Test Results

Summarize the key takeaways from each tested flow or aspect, presenting these findings concisely.

Analysis & Suggestions

Offer actionable recommendations, improvements, adjustments, and user-centered tweaks.

Next steps

Conclude outlining next steps with insights to elevate the overall user experience.

FAREWELL

Here we complete your journey through the world of "Usability Testing with Teenagers." You've equipped yourself with valuable insights, strategies, and tools to create user-centered experiences that resonate with this dynamic audience.

Always keep in mind that the teenage landscape is ever-evolving, and the insights you've gained here are a solid foundation for your ongoing endeavors.

Your dedication to understanding, embracing, and enhancing the teenage user experience is a testament to your commitment to excellence.

As you venture forth, may your path be paved with creativity, empathy, and a passion for crafting digital interactions that leave a lasting impression.



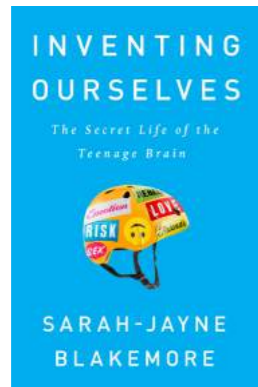
Wishing you all the best on your continuous journey towards creating exceptional user experiences.

Thank you for reading this book, I hope we meet again soon about the next issues in this usability testing series.

Gabriel Roque

Head of UX at ília

STUDY MATERIALS



[Inventing Ourselves, The Secret Life of the Teenage Brain by Sarah-Jayne Blakemore](#)

A captivating exploration of the intricate workings of the adolescent brain, offering insights into its developmental stages, behaviors, and implications for various aspects of life.



INTERACTION DESIGN
FOUNDATION

[Interaction Design Foundation](#)

A renowned hub of educational resources, courses, and articles focused on interaction design, usability, and user experience. With a vibrant community of experts, it's a valuable source for enhancing knowledge and skills in crafting impactful user-centered designs.



[Guide to User Research by Paulina Barlik](#)

A comprehensive guide offering practical strategies and methods for conducting effective user research, invaluable for honing skills in gathering and interpreting user insights.



[Child Development Journal](#)

A renowned publication dedicated to scholarly research on child and adolescent development, presenting valuable studies and analyses that contribute to our understanding of these crucial life stages.



[Nielsen Norman Group](#)

A prominent authority in usability and user experience research, the NN Group provides a wealth of industry-leading insights, best practices, and methodologies for creating user-centered designs.

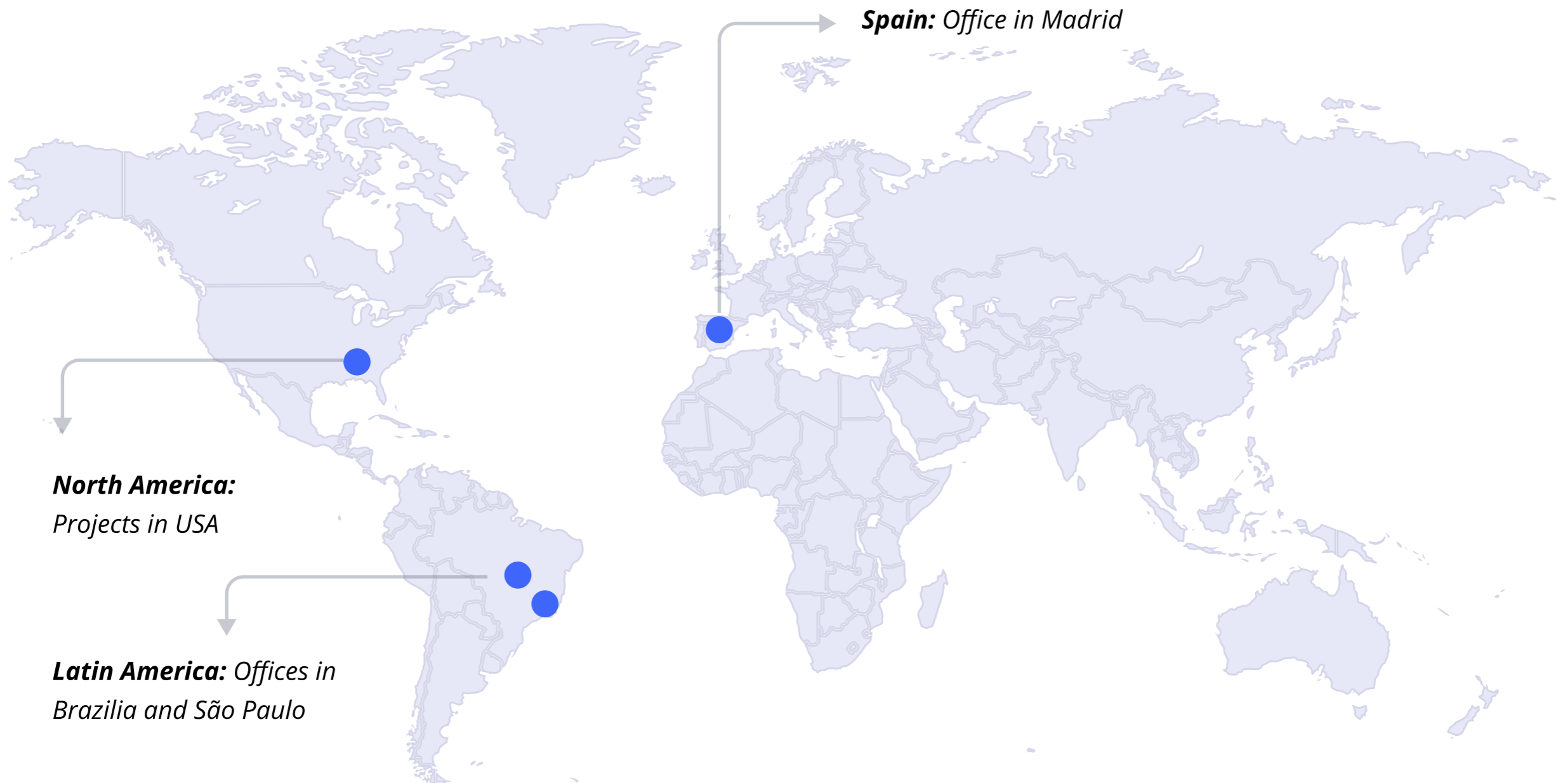


[Pew Research Center](#)

A reputable research institute offering a wealth of data and analyses on global trends, particularly insightful for researching and understanding digital behaviors, social dynamics, and generational preferences.



ABOUT US



433+

Talents across Latin America, North America and Europe

35

Active and relevant clients who trust us

100+

Digital products created by our specialists

Specialists in
Financial Services
Insurance
Mobility

Proudly trusted by



J.P.Morgan

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Design Innovators, Data Evangelists, Growth Enthusiasts & Tech Experts.

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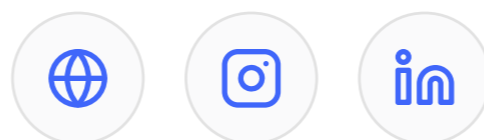
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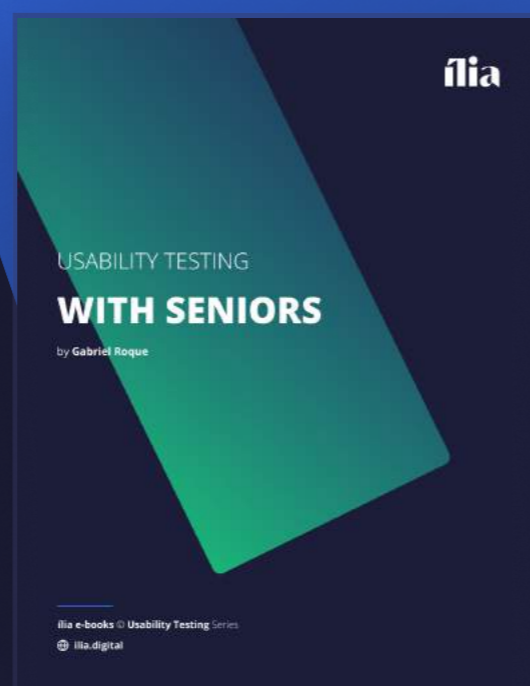
ilia.digital/en/insights-en





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Talk to a specialist

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