



# Index Usability Test Questions

(for online indexes or printed indexes)

**Thought for the day:**

Indexes for online documentation are even more important than indexes for printed documentation. Something happens to most people when they get online. It's similar to what happens to me when I get behind the wheel of my little Mazda Miata convertible: I want to get there now, and I don't want anything to get in my way! Similarly, most people become more impatient when they are online. They want instant gratification, and they become very impatient if they do not get

it. They want an index that takes them directly to the information they need in just split seconds—so they can get back to work. They do not want to go on a “fishing expedition,” which is what they are forced to do if all they have is full-text search that yields a gazillion irrelevant hits, doesn't provide them with any real “topic analysis” and, most importantly, can't distinguish between significant information and passing references.

QUESTIONS		Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	Navigating the index is easy.					
2.	The index reflects the terminology of the document.					
3.	The index uses consistent terminology.					
4.	The size of the index seems appropriate for the document.					
5.	Information can be retrieved with no more than three clicks.					
6.	The index links to substantive information (not to passing references).					
7.	The index has a user-centered design (as opposed to a product-centered or organization-centered design).					

**QUESTIONS (continued)**

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
8.	The index successfully gathers information together that is scattered throughout the text.					
9.	The index reflects an information hierarchy.					
10.	The index entries are concise.					
11.	The index entries are specifically worded.					
12.	The index includes entries for definitions.					
13.	The index includes entries for important concepts.					
14.	I saw several entries leading to the information I needed.					
15.	The index reflects good topic analysis.					
16.	The index appears to be balanced, with equal treatment for topics of similar importance.					
17.	The index appears to be a good educational tool.					
18.	The index contains entries useful to novices as well as to expert users.					
19.	The structure of the index is visually attractive.					

Reminder: The processing required to create a good index happens between your ears, not on your hard drive!

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