



MEASURING TIME ON TASK

A chipotle.com usability study

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INTRODUCTION

In this document we identify the pros and cons of measuring the amount of time a user spends executing a given task of chipotle.com. This quantitative measurement is known as “time on task” in the usability field. Any task, such as “selecting a restaurant location” or “checking out” may be measured.

DEFINING ‘TIME ON TASK’

The “time on task” measurement can be defined as such:

- The amount of time it takes a user to perform a task — simple or complex — from start to finish on a website, such as chipotle.com.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO CHIPOTLE:

- ***Chipotle’s website is largely task-oriented.*** A safe assumption is the majority of users are working to find a menu, select food items, select a store location, and proceed to checkout where the user will enter a payment method, etc. These all are tasks which can be measured as part of a usability study.

Pros:

- Time on task gives the research team quantitative, measurable results which are objective.
- Measuring time on task can highlight problem areas in the overall website usability.
- Time on task measurements can reveal where customers are spending the most time on the site during the checkout process.
- Time on task measurements can reveal how many tasks it takes to perform an overall process, such as ordering food from chipotle.com.
- Measuring time on task will allow Chipotle to determine how much time, overall, it takes a customer to order a meal and checkout.

Cons:

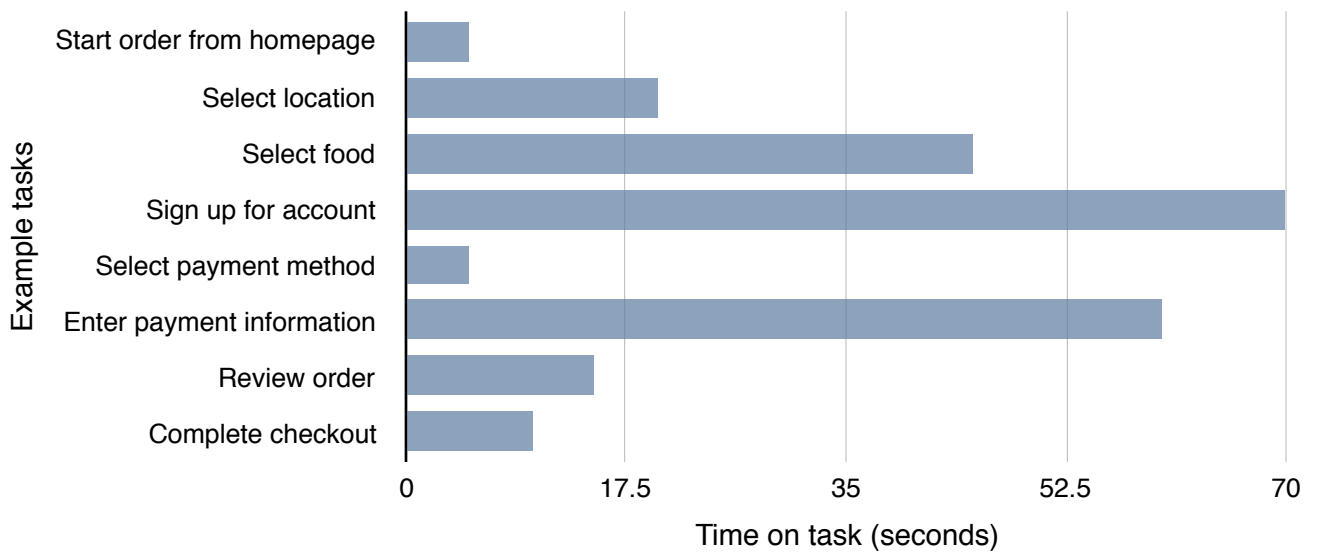
- Time on task measurements only will reveal part of the problem: I.e.: If a time on task study reveals users are spending much of the ordering process looking for a restaurant location, researchers are still left to figure out why.
- Time on task measurements alone do not take into consideration a user’s computer literacy and experience with online food ordering — but this can be addressed during participant recruitment.
- A higher rate of time on a specific task may not necessarily indicate a usability issue. Researchers may need qualitative input from users to determine if a high rate of time on task is a real usability issue, or if it is OK relative to the overall process of ordering food on chipotle.com, for example.



HOW TO PRESENT TIME ON TASK RESULTS

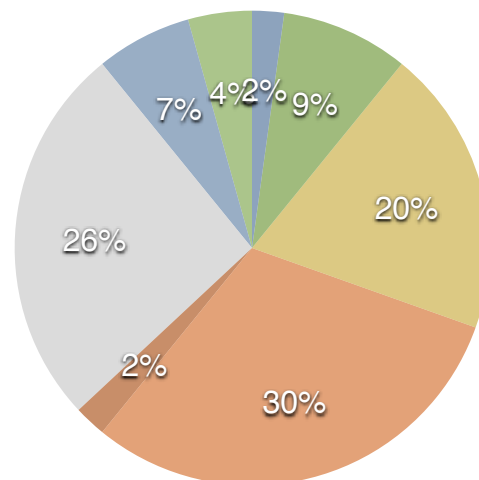
The average results of all tasks measured can be displayed in a graph to show disparity between tasks. The overall time on a process, such as ordering food from chipotle.com also can be shown, with each smaller task representing a different portion of the overall task, or process.

Examples:



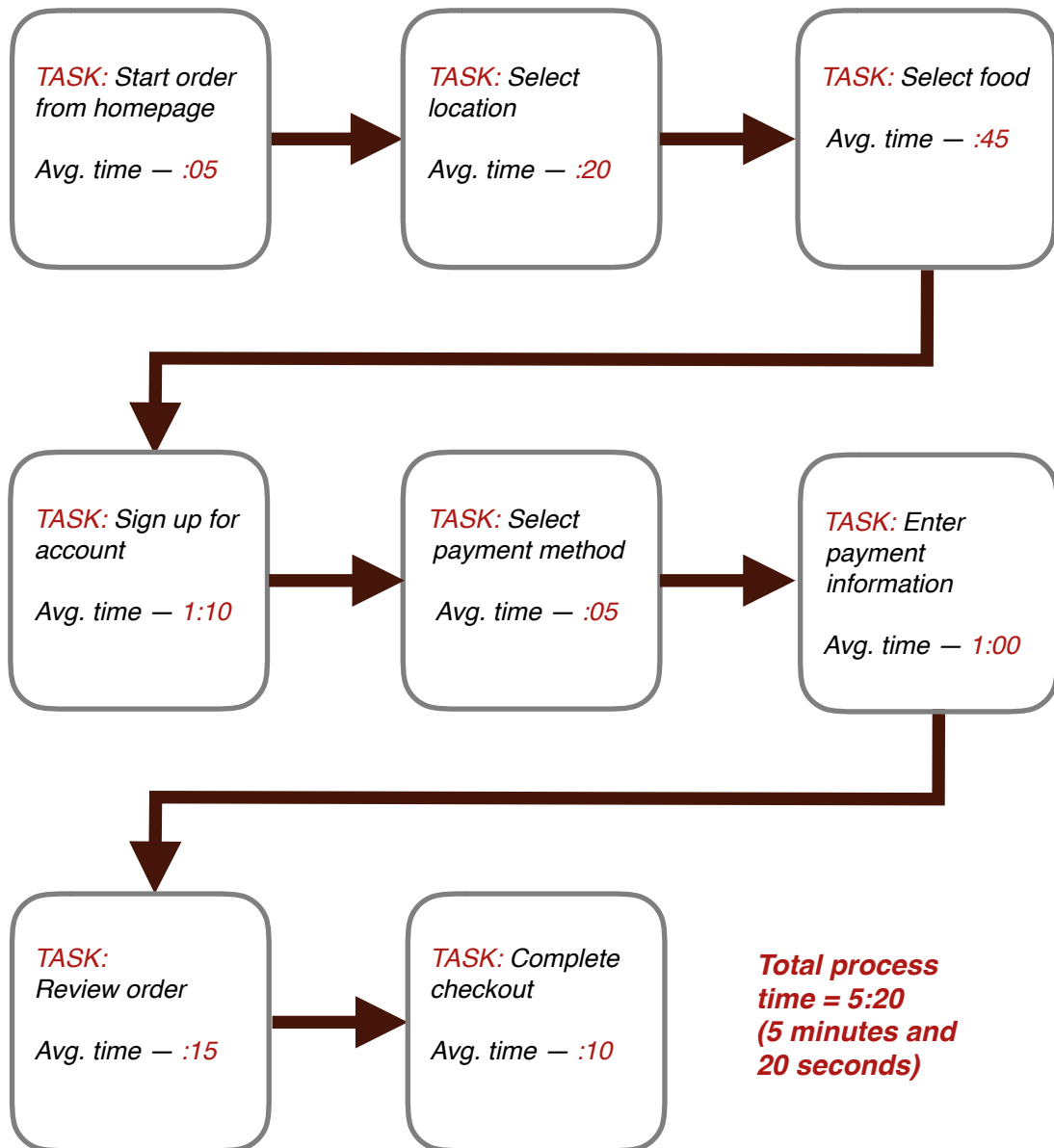
This piechart shows how several specific tasks make up one bigger process of ordering food from chipotle.com:

- Start order from homepage
- Select location
- Select food
- Sign up for account
- Select payment method
- Enter payment information
- Review order
- Complete checkout





Time on task, along with how many tasks it takes to complete a full process, also could be illustrated in a process flow:



NEXT STEPS

- Define a target audience for a usability test
- Define tasks to be given to usability test participants
- Measure time on tasks
- Present results and recommendations