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The Role of Psychophysiology in Usability Testing

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Poster Presentation P17

THE ROLE OF PSYCHOPHYSIOLOGY IN USABILITY TESTING

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Usability involves the testing of products for convenience and practicality. This study aims to test whether psychophysiological tools can be used in usability research. Physiological responses, such as heart rate and blood pressure were measured in order to test stress responses in users. Participants were computer science majors and non computer science majors. Each participant was hooked up to cardiovascular equipment and asked to complete a web-based task. The participants were assigned to a threatening or non threatening condition, and performed the task on both well and poorly designed websites. We hypothesize that computer science majors will show less stress relative to non computer science majors, and participants in the threat condition will show more stress relative to those in the non threat condition. Our research will help us better understand how to test new software and potential long term cardiovascular responses to using computer software.