Methods for evaluation of usability

• Evaluation is a necessary part of all phases of a development project.
• Evaluations must be made several times in order to obtain a basis for further development, improvements etc.
• Evaluations takes time and are resource consuming. This is why they are often not given enough priority, which can lead to usability problems.
• As evaluations are resource consuming, it is important to choose the correct methods for every specific purpose.

Evaluations objectives

• Evaluations can be made at different points of time and of different reasons.
• We can especially differ between evaluations during the development process and evaluations of existing, complete systems.
Some examples of evaluation methods

- Expert evaluations
- Observations
- Interviews
- Enquiries
- Think aloud
- Cognitive walk-through
- Usability laboratory tests

Usability evaluation in practice

- Evaluations can easily be traded off in a project, if there are problems with dead-lines etc. This must be avoided.
- There must be a strict plan for evaluations from project start. This plan must include what actions to take, based on the outcome from evaluations.
- Evaluations often involves the users. These must be given sufficient possibilities and resources to participate.
- There are problems to measure some usability parameters. Many usability aspects are of a more qualitative nature, and require appropriate methods.