Ten user research techniques for the web

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“I found what I was looking for quickly and without having to think”. - Anonymous participant from user testing
0. Why do research?

* user centred-design
* satisfy needs
* content strategy
* evidence-based decision making
0.2 What do we need to know?

* context
* language
* needs
* tasks
* context
* language

**Obvious**
- Jobs!
- Click
- Jobs
- Click

**Requires Thought**
- Hmm. [Milliseconds of thought]
- Jobs.
- Employment Opportunities
- Hmm. Could be Jobs. But it sounds like more than that. Should I click or keep looking?
- Job-o-Rama
## Choose Film

### Look for Certain Qualities
- Choose Eclectic Films
- Choose Films by Director
- Choose Self-Desecrating Films
- Choose Serious Films
- Choose Quality Films
- Choose Blockbusters
- Choose Film for the Story

### Choose Familiar Films
- Choose Film Because I've Read Book
- Choose Film of Country I've Been To
- Watch a Certain Genre in Winter

### Include Random Film Choices
- See What's Playing to Choose Film
- Choose a Variety of Films
- Inherit Interest in a Genre from Family

### Choose Films Together with Companions
- Compromise on Film Choice
- Avoid Certain Films for Companion

### Avoid Certain Films
- Avoid Non-PC Films
- Avoid Violent Films
- Avoid Film to Preserve Book Experience
- Avoid Mainstream Films
- Avoid Certain Genres
- Avoid Films with Bad Stories

### Decide on Film Based on Reviewers Opinion
- Choose Film Based on Reviewers Opinion
- Decide if I Agree with Reviewers Points
- Read Reviews When Mye Not Sure

### Postpone a Film
- Wait for Film to Come Out on DVD

### Film List
- Film List (by title)
- Film List (by genre)
- Film List (by location)
- Film List (by related films)
- Film List (based on books)
- Film List (by director/actor)
- Film List (by country of story)
- Film List (by mood)
- List of Movies Playing Now
- How Much Longer Will It Be Playing?
The techniques
1. Existing research

* Market research
* Reports/studies from the sector

Good for:-
* Audience overview
* Domain knowledge
Q2 How happy were you with Paul's talk on user research?

- Ecstatic
- Very ecstatic
- Deliriously happy
- I'd prefer not to say
2. Surveys

* On and offline
* "Web intercepts"

Good for:-

* Quant data on audience groups (age, location, etc.).
* Lists of needs.
* Recruiting users for later research.
3. Analytics

* Popular content and landing/exit pages
* Search terms (site and engines)
* GTM.

Good for:-
* Language
* Current user needs/tasks
4. Contextual inquiry

* Listening
* Watching

Good for:-
* Context
* Language
* Frustrations and opportunities
5. Interviews

* Phone
* Face-to-face

Good for:-
* Best way of finding out detailed information about your users - context, language,
* BUT: sample size
"You kids don't know what you want. That's why you're still kids, 'cause you're stupid. Just tell me what's wrong with the freakin' show!" - The Simpsons: Season 8, Episode 14
6. Focus groups

Good for:-
* Gauging opinion.
* Internal audiences
* BUT: risk of the opinion of one.
7. Card sorts

* Open
* Closed
* Online tools

Good for:-
* Language
* Information architecture
8. User testing

* Face-to-face
* Remote

Good for:-
* Tasks.
* Language.
9. AB and multivariate testing

* Testing alternative layouts
* Done on existing sites
* Need traffic

Good for:-
* Language.
* Tasks.
10. Personas

* Archetypes
* Needs not stats
* For designers, marketers, managers...
* Settle arguments
* Dimensions
Matthias Neumann

"A diligent German Astrophysics student, dedicated to his research and looking for a world-class expert to work with."

**About:** Studied entirely in top-level German institutions and is currently starting the second year of an intensive Master’s programme. Expected to graduate top of his cohort.

**Age:** 23

**Audience:** Prospective graduate student (research; overseas)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Background &amp; use of web</th>
<th>Motivation &amp; relationship</th>
<th>Goals &amp; needs</th>
<th>Frustrations</th>
<th>Opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hopes to secure departmental, governmental or Research Council award related specifically to his research.</td>
<td>Research-focussed; wants to pursue his research with world-class facilities and a leading expert in his field.</td>
<td><strong>Find out what the English language requirements are.</strong></td>
<td>He isn’t sure whether he can apply directly to the supervisor/department he would like to study with or whether he is required to apply through the central admissions process.</td>
<td>Facilitate direct communication with the department and straightforward signposting to detailed academic information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interested in football, comedy and programming.</td>
<td>Wants a community of students in his discipline to collaborate, network and socialise with.</td>
<td><strong>Find out whether his German qualifications are likely to be competitive.</strong></td>
<td>He isn’t sure how to apply for funding/scholarships, or the likelihood of being successful.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very technical though not design-oriented; Linux user.</td>
<td>Want to work at a top rated RAE department (in EU), with record of ground-breaking research and frequent publications in high-impact journals.</td>
<td>Find out which supervisors/research groups are at Oxford and who have vacancies.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintains his own website and a modest presence on Facebook and Twitter; socialises mainly amongst those with the same academic interest.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Would like to find out about the department, research facilities and accommodation options.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All needs for Matthias at: [http://needotron.torchbox.com/search/tag/prospective%20graduates](http://needotron.torchbox.com/search/tag/prospective%20graduates)
Your exercise

* Groups of 5 please.
* Choose a site you're involved with
* Choose the most important audience group
* What is their context/motivation?
* What are their goals (and tasks)?
* What else would you like to know about them?
References


Mental model for choosing a film - http://rosenfeldmedia.com/books/mental-models/blog/moviegoer_alignment_diagram/index.php


Web intercepts - http://ethn.io

Google Tag Manager - http://www.google.com/tagmanager/

Lester Freamon from The Wire - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lester_Freamon


AB testing using content experiments - http://support.google.com/analytics/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=1745147
Thanks for listening

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