Techniques

Definition: A user-created map/drawing of experience of a physical space or a more abstract aspect (e.g. learning), usually completed in a 6-minute time limit with 3 coloured pens.

- For this challenge, we want you to draw a cognitive map of ‘Your personal experience of conducting UX research’.
- You should complete your map over a 6-minute period with 3 different colour pens. Every two minutes you will need to change pen colour and mark the pen order on the side of the map.

- Your map should be largely pictorial and contain a bare minimum of text. This should not end up as a text-based mind map. When we draw, we access a different and often freer mode of expression.
- Don’t think about what you should draw too much. Ideally your drawing should be created instinctively and immediately without any preparation time.
- This is not an artistic exercise. It does not matter if you feel that you cannot draw. You cannot get your cognitive map wrong and it will not be judged on its artistic merits.
- When sharing maps with others do not try to interpret the maps of others. The meaning of each map is entirely down to its creator.
- Once you have completed your map the order of the pens you have used may help reveal your priorities and preferences.

Definition: A deliberately open and informal user research interview with the freedom to go beyond a rigid structured approach while still exploring a specific research topic.

- Ask questions that are broad, open and not leading. Perhaps start with “Can you tell me about your recent UX research experiences?”
- This should NOT be a conversation with your interview subject. Conversations see something like a 50/50 split of talking and listening. With this sort of user research interview, you should be aiming to talk for only 20% of the time or less. This is about them not you. To achieve this, you need to ask brief questions, stay more silent than might feel comfortable in order to allow your subject to speak. Do not be tempted to share your own experience or tell your own anecdotes.
- You should ideally remain silent after you have asked your question AND after they have responded with their answer in order to encourage them to continue and elaborate.
- Do not ask too many questions. Respond to the interviewee’s lead/what they say.
- Probe for what might not have been said in order to help the interviewee draw out their experience.
- Use non-verbal communication such as eye contact, nodding, smiling, head tilting, open body language in order to make the interviewee feel comfortable and to encourage them. You might feel like an idiot but you honestly cannot nod or smile enough! Also sit at right angles to them so the interview does not feel confrontational.
- You will not have time today to record and transcribe your interviews. Make notes during the interview, but don’t write everything down. Record key points and comments. Take a minute or two after each interview to make some summary notes.
Definition: Mapping the journey a user takes when conducting a particular activity in order to identify opportunities for improvements and interventions.

- For this challenge, we want your shared team map to reflect and detail experiences of conducting and seeking to embed UX at your institutions.
- Create the map on a flipchart or a wall and mark a timeline across the top.
- Assign categories on the left-hand side of the map as follows: activity; reaction/take-up; how you feel; opportunities for change (feel free to adapt or add to these suggestions).
- Add sticky notes to each row to build your map. You might want to use emojis for the feel line.
- You may also want to draw a corresponding rising and falling pain-and-gain line on your map.
- It will be difficult to fit all the experience on such a map as there will be 4 or 5 of you coming together to create it. It may not be completely accurate for everyone contributing but it should still offer insights into your experience.
- After you have filled the activity, reaction and feel rows with sticky notes, move onto the opportunities row. This should be filled with ideas and suggestions for how you might improve the process and your experience going forwards. Make sure you spend enough time – at least 5 minutes - on the opportunities as this is the main point of creating a user journey map.

Definition: Arranging research data, on sticky notes, on a wall, into categories and themes in order to establish common experiences, problems and opportunities.

- Spend the first 10 minutes transferring the data you have gathered (e.g. qualitative comments, practical problems and issues, personal reflections, successes and failures) created during the challenge onto individual sticky notes.
- Spend the remaining 10 minutes mapping the notes on the wall into themed categories or ‘affinities’.

- You may choose to identify broader and narrower categories and relationships between different categories.
- You may need to debate and discuss category headers.
- Often categories containing numerous sticky notes are too broad and they need to be broken down into narrower categories.
- Seek a volunteer on the team to verbally summarise the completed map.

Credits: This year’s team challenge was created by Andy Priestner, Matt Borg and Bryony Ramsden through idea generation and affinity mapping, fuelled by unhealthy amounts of Popchips and Coca-Cola.