

2. Customer orientation and type of user of a website

Usability has a double objective and subjective side. Thus, the same user can perceive an application as objectively usable but subjectively unsatisfactory, and vice versa. In addition, the same application may be usable for some users and not for others; even this perception can change depending on the life moment of the user. That is why it is necessary to know the user, their characteristics, their needs and their tastes.

2.1. User-centered design: UX and UI

User-centered design is a design philosophy that aims to create products that solve the specific needs of the user.

In user-centered design, a process is followed where every decision taken is based on the needs, goals, expectations, motivations and capabilities of the users. In general terms, this process goes through the following stages:

1. Get to know the user thoroughly, usually by doing qualitative and/or quantitative research.
2. Design a product that solves your needs and fits your capabilities and expectations.
3. Testing what has been designed, usually through user tests.
4. Introduce in the design of the product the appropriate improvements observed during the tests.

Many companies believe that their website should please the owner and be everything that the business owner has in mind, without taking into account that the website has one goal: it should please the end user and it should give you a good experience.

See in detail the differences between user experience design and interface design:

The user experience works on all aspects related to the user's interaction and perception with an interface and a device, and looks for the elements to make this experience positive and pleasant. These are UX tasks:

- Define the characteristics of the product.
- Profile the user and their needs.
- Structuring the information architecture
- Draw wireframes and mockups.
- Design the interaction.

- Plan accessibility.
- Define the statistical measurement strategy.

User interface. It is the visual part of the graphical interface, which is what the website user sees. To make a good design, you need to take into account everything that has been done in the UX, adapting the style to the corporate identity of the brand. They are part of the user interface design:

- Corporate identity, style guide
- Sketch
- Visual design
- Color
- Typography
- Photo treatment

2.2. Type of user of a website

Generic user. On any website there are sections that do not require any registration action to access them. These are spaces intended for the general public, but they tend to be limited.

Authenticated user. As a registered user, you have permissions to access certain content or services on the website. This type of user has previously registered on the website and is authenticated each time they access it.

User editor / administrator. This type of user is a registered user who has access to the administration of the website, with more or less permissions. For example, in a CMS you can define different user roles associated with permissions.

Going into a little more detail, another type of classification is the one that assesses the level of experience of the user:

New User. He is a user without much knowledge of Internet browsing or experience in the use of information and communication technologies (ICT).

Intermediate user. He is a user with a minimum level of experience in Internet browsing and in the use of ICT in general.

Expert user. He is a type of user who has accessed many websites, has already registered on the web, and knows the contents and how to use the tools available to him.

The types of users serve to identify the possible barriers they may encounter to move through a given website.

2.3. User profiles: the 'user' person

The client-centered methodology is a process that counts, from the beginning, with the users. But... how can we know what the users are like? We need to investigate, following a scientific method, their needs, characteristics and limitations, in order to anticipate how they will behave in certain situations.

This research task is carried out at the beginning of the project, and based on the conclusions of this analysis, a series of user archetypes are built, which we call user persona.

The information gathered will define essential factors of the design and final contents of the web, and a well-conducted study will ensure a good user experience and lay the foundations to offer good usability.

2.3.1 Collection of information about users

The collection of information about users is usually done through surveys, interviews and focus groups or discussion groups.

The questions included in the studies are usually of three types: demographic, relationship with the brand and adoption of digital technologies. They are aimed at collecting data such as:

- Genre
- Age
- Sociocultural and economic level
- Profession and level of studies
- Computer knowledge
- Motivations or hobbies in general
- Internet connectivity habits (times, locations, device)
- Social networks used
- Type of content consumed
- Others

2.3.2 Organization of information about users

The aim of the research is to create archetypal users or user personas, as well as contexts that represent real scenarios. For this reason, the following variables are investigated:

- Context of use
- Level of ICT knowledge
- Motivations and objectives
- Frustrations and obstacles
- Needs

All this data is organized in person files, which contain representative descriptions of each of the types of web users. These files usually contain:

- **Photograph** that represents the archetypal user.
- **Demographic data** section, with general data such as name, age, nationality, educational level, profession...
- Data about the **physical environment**, such as where you live, where you went to school or university, where you work and where you usually shop.
- Data from the **social environment**, with information about the people who influence your decision-making: if you have a partner and/or children, what kind of friends you have, if you play sports or have any hobbies.
- Data on the **technological environment**, to identify your experience with ICT: which devices do you use?, how often?, which apps do you use?
- **User goals and objectives**: what do you expect to find in the product or service?
- **Frustrations**: what things frustrate the user of the product or service?
- **Quote** to represent what the user would say using the product.
- Other aspects that may help to better understand the user of the product. For example, which brands of a certain product do you consume?

Some characteristics of good user persona definitions are:

- They are not fictional inventions: every aspect of these archetypes must be grounded in real data (observed and researched).
- They reflect actual user patterns, and not different user roles: they have nothing to do with different roles within a system.

- They focus on the current state (how users interact with a product) and not on how they will interact with it in the future.
- A user persona is specific to a context, it is focused on the behaviors and goals related to a specific website or product.
- They should not have real names or real details of research participants or known people. This can introduce a bias in objectivity.
- They should not be confused with demographic data. While demographic information is important, what makes these profiles more powerful is the psychographic data discovered during conversations with end users (motivations, goals, frustrations, hobbies...)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D5WkP8JZgdw>

2.3.3 What are the 'user' persona for?

The user persona definitions offer a clear view of who the consumers are and what the social network participants are like with whom we want to communicate.

- Create a first website design proposal. Because we know the actions they need to be able to perform, we can create the information architecture, navigation and wireframes thinking about helping the user find what they need.
- Define the business model. We know how much they are willing to pay, what things they value, how they like to consume products and services. With this information we can identify the most suitable sales model.
- Design the communication strategy. Knowing their habits and interests, we can make the right decisions regarding the tone and format of the content to be published, the channels and the schedule and frequency of the publications.

2.4 User profile knowledge tools: empathy maps and customer journey maps

Once the data has already been collected (through interviews, discussion groups, surveys, statistical monitoring tools, comments on social channels, etc.) it is necessary to draw conclusions, synthesize the data and convert the abstract entity "user" or "customer" in people with whom you can empathize.

The most important tool to carry out this process of synthesis are user personas. Next we will see two more tools: **empathy maps** and **customer journey maps**.

2.4.1 Empathy maps

Empathy maps have just configured user personas, identifying users with different mentalities. Empathy mapping is a collaborative tool that helps the design team empathize with users.

Usually the empathy map has the following sections:

- What does he think and what does he feel?
- what does he see
- What do you hear?
- What does he say and what does he do?
- Efforts
- Results

2.4.2 Customer journey maps

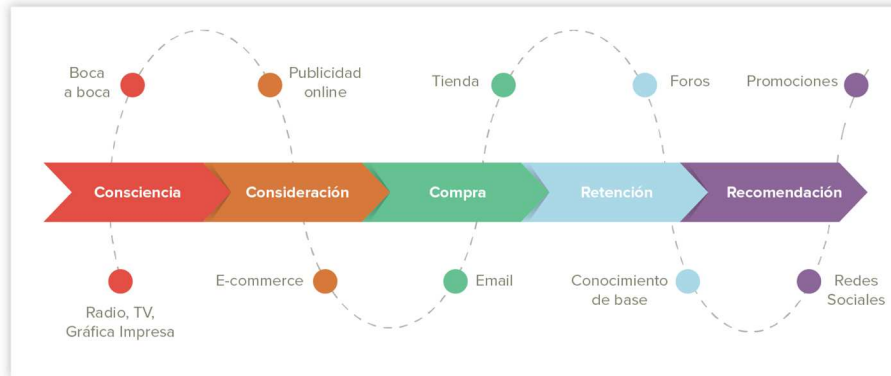
The customer journey map is the visualization of the process that a user person performs until reaching a goal. This visualization reflects the relationship the customer maintains, the path he follows with the brand throughout the purchase process. This journey goes from hearing about the brand to buying a product or service.

The creation of this route map begins with the collection of goals and actions of the user in a sketch by means of a timeline. Then, the user's thoughts and emotions are added to create the narrative. As a final step, this narrative is narrowed down and outlined, leading to visualization.

The customer journey map has the following objectives:

- Analyze and optimize the user experience and their satisfaction with the product or service, putting themselves in their place to investigate their feelings and thoughts.
- Understand and understand the user's frustrations and expectations in order to identify the key factors to discover new business opportunities.

- Have a complete view of the user journey, which will allow the company to have a tool for collaboration between the different departments.
- Improve existing processes and create a satisfactory user experience.



To track how users travel this path, companies use conversion funnels. These funnels break down the user journey into stages that help companies identify where there are gaps in their marketing strategy and allow them to provide content relevant to the user's context at each point in the journey.

top of the funnel. It is the top of the conversion funnel, the stage to achieve visibility. The ideal content for this stage is educational content that is broad enough to appeal to industry-wide solutions. Examples of this type of content can be guides, videos with small tips, diagnostic content, blog posts about trends...

middle of the funnel. It is the intermediate part of the conversion funnel. In this stage, the consideration stage, the user already has enough information to understand their problem and is ready to consider different solutions.

bottom of the funnel. It's the bottom of the conversion funnel. In this stage, that of the decision, the potential customer evaluates the product or service.