**Page ID**: **#.# Diary Study**

# Primary Content

**Title**

Enter the **Title** of the **Method** here (REQUIRED).

**Diary Study**

**Description -- i.e., What it is:**

Enter the **Description** here (REQUIRED).

A method used to collect qualitative data from users in their own words over a given time period.

Participants are provided a diary or journal to record their perceptions, thoughts, and attitudes about activities of interest. The activities could include those that happen in work, home, and/or leisure environments. Participants may draft entries freeform or they may also be provided with predefined questions that are answered repeatedly over time.

Diary studies are longitudinal and, depending on the scope of the project, last anywhere from several days to a month or longer.

Diary entries are traditionally provided by writing in either a paper or electronic diary or journal. Alternatives to text-based entries include photographs with descriptions, or entries recorded in some digital medium (audio or video).

At the conclusion of the study, a post-study interview with each participant is usually conducted as an opportunity to get clarification and probe for additional insights during discussion of diary entries.

Diary studies are almost entirely qualitative endeavors that are aimed at understanding the circumstances and environment in which users and customers are engaged. They afford the collection of insights derived from scenarios that can be difficult to create in laboratory settings.

**Recommended Uses**

Enter the **Recommended Use** here. If there are no details, insert N/A or TBD.

* To provide a valuable source of data for use scenarios, task analysis, requirements elicitation, customer journey maps, and feedback on technology use and implementation.
* To gain an unrestricted view of what is most important to the users, especially when studying long-term product adoption.

**Limitations**

Enter the **Limitations** here. If there are no details, insert N/A or TBD.

* Diary studies are unlikely to provide the rich or detailed understanding that can be realized from observational studies.
* Burden of the study involvement tends to be on the participants, which can make recruiting and full completion difficult.
* Other than frequencies of recorded data, quantitative data and analyses can be quite limited, if not negligible, due to the qualitative nature of the data.
* Self-reported data may not be equivalent across participants (e.g., one person’s definition of a slow system may be different than others).
* Analysis of data may end up being conducted without enough participant clarification.
* Participants must remember to make entries at desired times, when they may not have the ability to do so.

**Outcomes**

Enter the **Outcomes** here. If there are no details, insert N/A or TBD.

* A comprehensive report, along with relevant artifacts (e.g., diary entries, photographs, audio or video recordings).
* Depending on the methods used, the report may also include more quantitative data, such as the frequencies of recorded data.
* A report that has the potential to summarize how findings evolve and change over time, thus leading to a rich understanding of the end-to-end user experience from the customer perspective.

**Required Skills and Expertise**

Enter the **Required Skills** **and Expertise** here. If there are no details, insert N/A or TBD.

* Method can be leveraged with minimal training and practice.

**How to Proceed**

If there are no details, insert TBD.

* **How-To Guide.** Review step-by-step instructions on how to conduct a diary study ~~and access tools and instruments to support your evaluation~~.
* **Schedule a Consult.** Connect with a usability specialist for support on your project.

[BEGIN: How to Do It]

**Introduction**

Enter the **Introduction** here (REQUIRED).

A diary study requires users to engage in some activity regularly for a period. It is a good way to look at how users might engage with a product or tool in a natural, everyday context. This method allows you to understand how the users experience changes over time.

**Procedure**

Enter the **Steps** here. (Required).

A diary study is conducted over a period time and requires users to record their experience performing a certain task or using some tool or system each day. In order to conduct this, you need to …

* Determine what task or tasks you want the participant to engage in.
* Determine who the users are going to be. This can be done using a screener if needed.
* Work with stakeholders or developers to determine what questions should be answered each time the participant records their experiences.
* You also need to provide them with a structured method for recording their experiences and any other questions you would like answered.
* Provide participants with the prototype of the tool or system being studied
* Explain to the participants the instructions for the study (i.e. what tasks should they complete with the prototype, how to fill in their responses each day)
* Provide incentives to participants for filling out diary entries for each day of the study period to avoid attrition (participants dropping out of the study).
* Once data has been collected, research team must code and analyze the data to extract insights about user experience with the prototype.
* Summarize findings in report to stakeholders.

**Tools**

If there are no details, insert N/A or TBD.

* N/A

[END: How to Do It]

**Author**

Enter the **REFERENCES** here. If there are no details, insert N/A or TBD.

* Human Factors Engineering (HFE), Office of Health Informatics, Veterans Health Administration

**Sources**

Enter the **REFERENCES** here. If there are no details, insert N/A or TBD.

* N/A

**References**

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* N/A