…Questions to Ask During Persona Development

The following questions and areas of discussion will help you construct a snapshot of the visitors to your site.

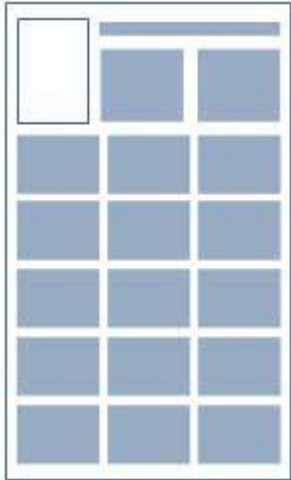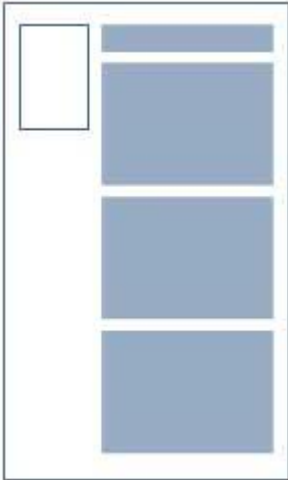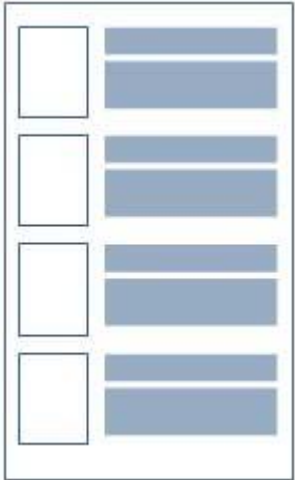| Objective	Questions
Define the Purpose/ Vision for the Site	• What is the purpose of the site? • What are the goals of the site?
Describe the User	**Personal** • What is the age of your person? • What is the gender of your person? • What is the highest level of education this person has received? **Professional** • How much work experience does your person have? • What is your person's professional background? • Why will they come to the site? (User needs, interests, and goals) • Where (or from whom) else is this person getting information about your issue or similar programs or services? • When and where will users access the site? (User environment and context) **Technical** • What technological devices does your person use on a regular basis? • What software and/or applications does your person use on a regular basis? • Through what technological device does your user primarily access the web for information? • How much time does your person spend browsing the web every day?
User Motivation	• What is your person motivated by? • What are they looking for? • What is your person looking to do?

Objective	Questions
	• What are his needs?

Elements of a Persona

Personas generally include the following key pieces of information:

- Persona Group (i.e. web manager)
- Fictional name
- Job titles and major responsibilities
- Demographics such as age, education, ethnicity, and family status
- The goals and tasks they are trying to complete using the site
- Their physical, social, and technological environment
- A quote that sums up what matters most to the persona as it relates to your site
- Casual pictures representing that user group

Organize persona information in an easy to read, logical format. Depending on the amount of user research you were able to conduct and the nature of your organization, personas may be laid out in a number of ways, including:

The Narrative	The Table	The Quick-and-Dirty
Best for stakeholders who are not so concerned about the technical details of user needs.	Best for designers who need an easy way to compare designs to user needs.	Best in situations where personas lack sufficient research.

Source: Dan Brown

Example Persona

Some personas are incredibly detailed, whereas others simply offer a brief sketch of each type of user. Here is an example of a portion of a larger persona developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Economic Research Service (ERS).

Persona:	USDA Senior Manager Gatekeeper
Photo:	
Fictional name:	Matthew Johnson
Job title/ major responsibilities:	Program Staff Director, USDA
Demographics:	• 51 years old • Married • Father of three children • Grandfather of one child • Has a Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics.
Goals and tasks:	He is focused, goal-oriented within a strong leadership role. One of his concerns is maintaining quality across all output of programs. Spends his work time: • Requesting and reviewing research reports, • preparing memos and briefs for agency heads, and

	• supervising staff efforts in food safety and inspection.
Environment:	He is comfortable using a computer and refers to himself as an intermediate Internet user. He is connected via a T1 connection at work and dial-up at home. He uses email extensively and uses the web about 1.5 hours during his work day.
Quote:	"Can you get me that staff analysis by Tuesday?"

Persona developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Economic Research Service (ERS)