SCENARIO

# Description

**Scenarios are text that**

**“Scenarios specify how users carry out their tasks in a specified context. They provide examples of usage as an input to design, and provide a basis for subsequent usability testing[[1]](#footnote-1)”. “**They note the goals and questions to be achieved and sometimes define the possibilities of how the user(s) can achieve them”.[[2]](#footnote-2) Furthermore, they “highlight goals suggested by the appearance and behaviour of the system; what people try to do with the system; what procedures are adopted, not adopted, carried out successfully or erroneously; and what interpretations people make of what happens to them.” [[3]](#footnote-3)

They are produced “early and continuingly in the development process”[[4]](#footnote-4).

Scenarios has characteristic elements[[5]](#footnote-5):

* setting (context, persons, situation,…)
* agents or actors
* goals or objectives
* plot: sequences of actions and events

They can be:

* short or long
* abstract or detailed LIBRO 67

# Benefits

* It encourages “to consider:
  + The range of users who will use the system,
  + The range of activities for which the system is used
  + The environments within which users work”[[6]](#footnote-6)
* **Usability issues can be explored at a very early stage in the design process (before a commitment to code has been made).**
* **Scenarios can help identify usability targets and likely task completion times.**
* **Only minimal resources are required to generate scenarios.**
* **The technique can be used by developers with little or no human factors expertise.[[7]](#footnote-7)**
* Support reasoning about situations of use, even before those situations are actually created [[8]](#footnote-8)

# Best practices

Good scenarios are concise and answer the following key questions:

* **“Who is the user?** Use the personas that have been developed to reflect the real, major user groups” that use the future product.
* **“Why does the user” use the product?**  “Note what motivates the user to” use it and their “expectations upon arrival, if any.
* **What goals does he/she have**? Through task analysis, you can better understand what the user wants” on the product “and therefore what” it “must have for them to leave satisfied.

Some scenarios also answer:

* **How can the user achieve their goals” with the product? “**Define how the user can achieve his/ her goal” with the product, “identifying the various possibilities and any potential barriers.”[[9]](#footnote-9)
* **Identify intended users, their tasks and the general** [**context**](http://www.usabilitynet.org/tools/context.htm)**. This information will provide the basis for the scenarios to be created by the development team.**
* **Functionally decompose user goals into the operations needed to achieve them.**
* **Consider which activities should be performed by the user and which by the computer.**
* **Create an outline of the users' activities, goals and motivations for using the system being designed, and the tasks they will perform.**
* **To maintain design flexibility, scenarios should not specify what product features are used.**
* **Assign task time estimates and completion criteria as usability targets.**

### Practical guidelines

**Try to generate scenarios to cover a wide range of situations, not just the most common ones or those of most interest to the design team.**

**Try to include problem situations that will test the system concept, not just straightforward scenarios.**

**Work through the scenarios fully and judge the system on that basis rather than trying to change the system half way through.**

## More information

**Scenarios are most useful when produced early in development as specific realistic and detailed examples of what a user would do, but without making any reference what user interface features that would be used. [[10]](#footnote-10)**

**LIBRO p. 67**

“As you observe users at work, compile a list of tasks that you see them doing. Then describe the tasks by writing scenarios and use cases, focusing on the key or important tasks rather than trying to be exhaustive.”

“you are unlikely to get a scenario right on the first try”

they are “developed an refined over time”

# Examples

### Scenario for planning a route

Sue is going to a wedding in Yorkshire, and needs a route to drive from her home in Watford to the Church in Deepdale, and from there to the reception at Horton. She has not been to these places before. She wants to know the fastest route, and needs clear instructions as she will be travelling alone.[[11]](#footnote-11)

Mr. and Mrs. Macomb are retired schoolteachers who are now in their 70s. Their Social Security checks are an important part of their income. They've just sold their big house and moved to a small apartment. They know that one of the many chores they need to do now is tell the Social Security Administration that they have moved. They don't know where the nearest Social Security office is and it's getting harder for them to do a lot of walking or driving. If it is easy and safe enough, they would like to use the computer to notify the Social Security Administration of their move. However, they are somewhat nervous about doing a task like this by computer. They never used computers in their jobs. However, their son, Steve, gave them a computer last year, set it up for them, and showed them how to use email and go to websites. They have never been to the Social Security Administration's website, so they don't know how it is organized. Also, they are reluctant to give out personal information online, so they want to know how safe it is to tell the agency about their new address this way.[[12]](#footnote-12)

## Making Use: Scenario-Based Design of Human-Computer Interactions

## Par John M. Carroll

http://books.google.ch/books?id=s-0ZuadhBBAC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs\_ge\_summary\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false

1. http://www.usabilitynet.org/tools/scenarios.htm [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. http://www.usability.gov/how-to-and-tools/methods/scenarios.html [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. p.46 http://books.google.ch/books?id=s-0ZuadhBBAC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs\_ge\_summary\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. p.46 http://books.google.ch/books?id=s-0ZuadhBBAC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs\_ge\_summary\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. p.46-47 http://books.google.ch/books?id=s-0ZuadhBBAC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs\_ge\_summary\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. LIBRO p. 67 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. http://www.usabilitynet.org/tools/scenarios.htm [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. p.46 http://books.google.ch/books?id=s-0ZuadhBBAC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs\_ge\_summary\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. http://www.usability.gov/how-to-and-tools/methods/scenarios.html [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. [**http://www.usabilitynet.org/tools/scenarios.htm**](http://www.usabilitynet.org/tools/scenarios.htm) [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. http://www.usabilitynet.org/trump/methods/recommended/scenarioexamples.htm [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)