

From Basics to Best Practices: An Introduction to Research Repositories

Explore the concept and potential of UX research repositories
and find the ideal tool for your organization

2024



condens

“

Our research repository keeps a searchable archive of all our research sessions and findings. It speeds up the qualitative analysis process and simplifies the sharing of insights, ultimately leading to higher-quality findings.

”



Tamara Oess

UX Researcher
@ Yokoy

Why We Created This Guide

As we gathered insights and engaged with numerous user research teams to understand their unique challenges, we set out to incorporate invaluable feedback and build our own research repository tool. Along this journey, we noticed a common theme: many organizations grapple with the concept of research repositories. They're not sure if they need one or how to choose the right one for their needs. At the same time, we saw how much research teams benefited from a repository and how it enhanced their work.

And that's why we've put together this comprehensive guide. It's designed to simplify and demystify, offering practical guidance that will assist you in navigating the world of research repositories.

In the upcoming pages, we'll explain what research repositories are, help you figure out if you need one, and guide you on picking the right one. Our ultimate goal is to enable you to effortlessly reap the benefits of research repositories and master the art of knowledge management.

Let this guide be your go-to resource as you explore the landscape and possibilities of research repositories.

We hope you enjoy it and find it useful!



Anya

from the Condens team



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Starting Points for a Research Repository

In our experience, researchers rarely wake up thinking, 'I need a research repository.' Instead, the need for a repository often becomes apparent in the course of everyday work. Below, we've gathered some common situations that indicate a research repository would make your life easier:

I'm trying to connect my new insights to existing findings, but it's really hard to do cross-study analysis.

When a researcher leaves our organization all the knowledge leaves with them.

Research studies are replicated in our organization because it's hard to know what already exists.

We all analyze and report our research results differently, which leads to a lack of consistency.

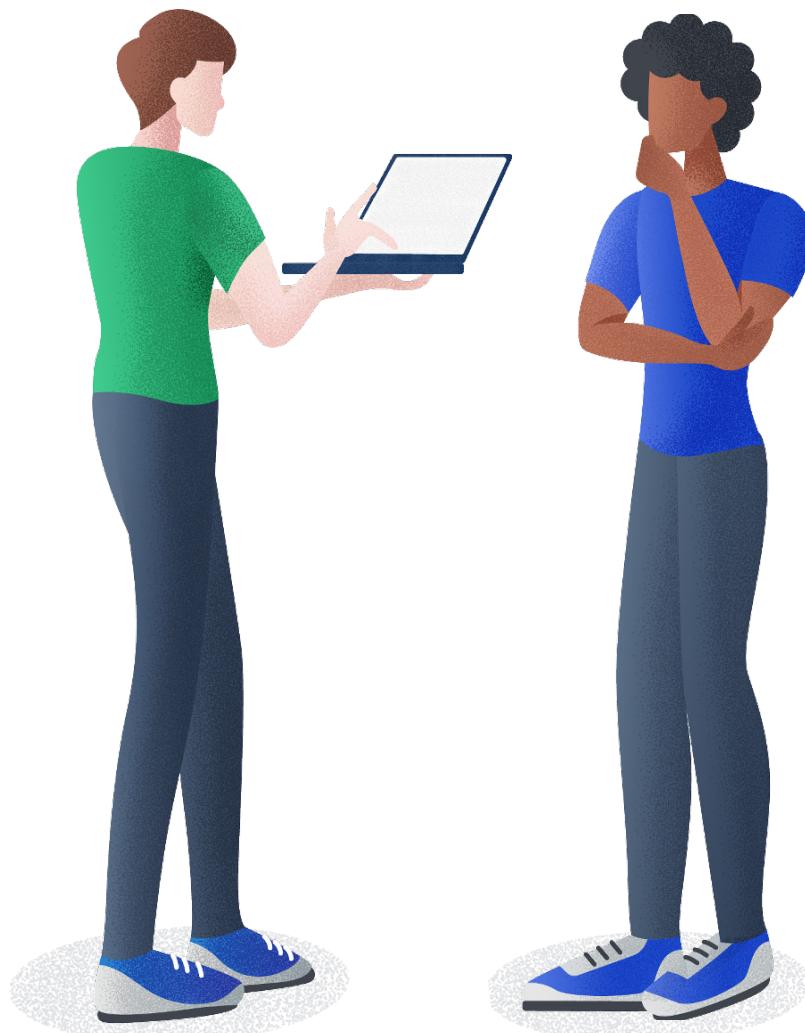
In one research session, I found useful evidence for another researcher, but I had no way to save it for them to use later.

When a stakeholder asks for research insights on a certain topic, it takes me a lot of time and effort to retrieve it.



In other words, organizations struggle with:

- 1 **No Single Source of Truth:** Research is scattered all over the place, with no central place to go.
- 2 **Lack of Consistency:** A unified, structured, and standardized research approach is missing.
- 3 **Disconnected Research:** Difficulty in cross-study analysis and bridging the gap between past research findings and new insights.
- 4 **Underutilized Research:** Research reports remain unread and data gets lost.
- 5 **Duplication:** Research is repeated multiple times.
- 6 **Knowledge Drain:** Valuable insights are lost as researchers change jobs and their knowledge leaves with them.



What Is a Research Repository?

If these previously highlighted challenges resonate with you, it's a strong indicator that a research repository could be a valuable long-term asset for your organization. But let's start with the basics and dive into the fundamental concept and significance of a research repository first. Unclear what a research repository is? Keep reading, and it'll become clear!

As we've closely engaged with researchers across various organizations, like Deloitte, Personio, KPMG, and more, we've learned more about their needs and come up with a unified definition of a 'User Research Repository'.

In essence, it is an **easily accessible central place for your user research**. It enables you to **store, structure, and analyze user research, bring together insights from various data sources, and present a comprehensive user narrative**. It also fosters **cross-disciplinary and team collaboration**, allowing researchers and stakeholders to actively participate and retrieve information.



User research repositories may also be called "Insights Repositories" or "User Insights Repositories." Sometimes, you may also come across terms such as "User Insights Knowledge Base", "UX Research Insights Database", or "Customer Insights Hub". We'll use the term "Research Repository" throughout this guide.

In short, a research repository serves as a comprehensive hub for all UX research-related needs, ultimately making your user research more accessible, actionable, and collaborative.



Elements of a Research Repository

Now that we've established a basic understanding of repositories, let's dive into the relevant elements. Typically, the content of a repository falls into two categories: Input and Output.*

- **The Input** is what you manually import or configure in the repository for planning and conducting user research.
- **The Output** is what you get by taking information from the repository, shaped by input, and often includes research findings and reports.

Although the design of a repository may vary depending on the scope and teams involved, there are recurring patterns that define the structure. Typically, we distinguish between key and added features, with the latter one not always being integral to a repository.

Key Features:



Research Infrastructure

How it works: Encompasses the team's mission, vision, descriptions of the research methods, and tools and templates for consistent research.

Purpose: Clarifying team capabilities, expectations, and requests, fostering shared best practices and a common research approach.



Research Projects

How it works: Organizes research activities into distinct projects, each with its own objectives, methods, and outcomes.

Purpose: Managing different research initiatives, making it easy to find and revisit specific studies with their relevant metadata.



Data and Insights

How it works: Stores raw user research data in an organized format, making it easier to analyze and synthesize insights.

Purpose: Preserving the original data collected during studies, allowing for reproducibility and in-depth analysis.



Research Storage and Sharing

How it works: Compiles and presents the findings, insights, and conclusions from research projects in a clear, visualized, and organized manner.

Purpose: Enhancing research accessibility, offering avenues to share insights and promoting collaboration among stakeholders.

*According to [Nielsen Norman Group](#)

Added Features:



Data Analysis

How it works: Supports importing, transcribing, and tagging raw qualitative data, allowing for easy search and insights retrieval.

Purpose: Helping researchers extract meaningful insights by enabling efficient data organization, collaborative tagging, and insights generation.



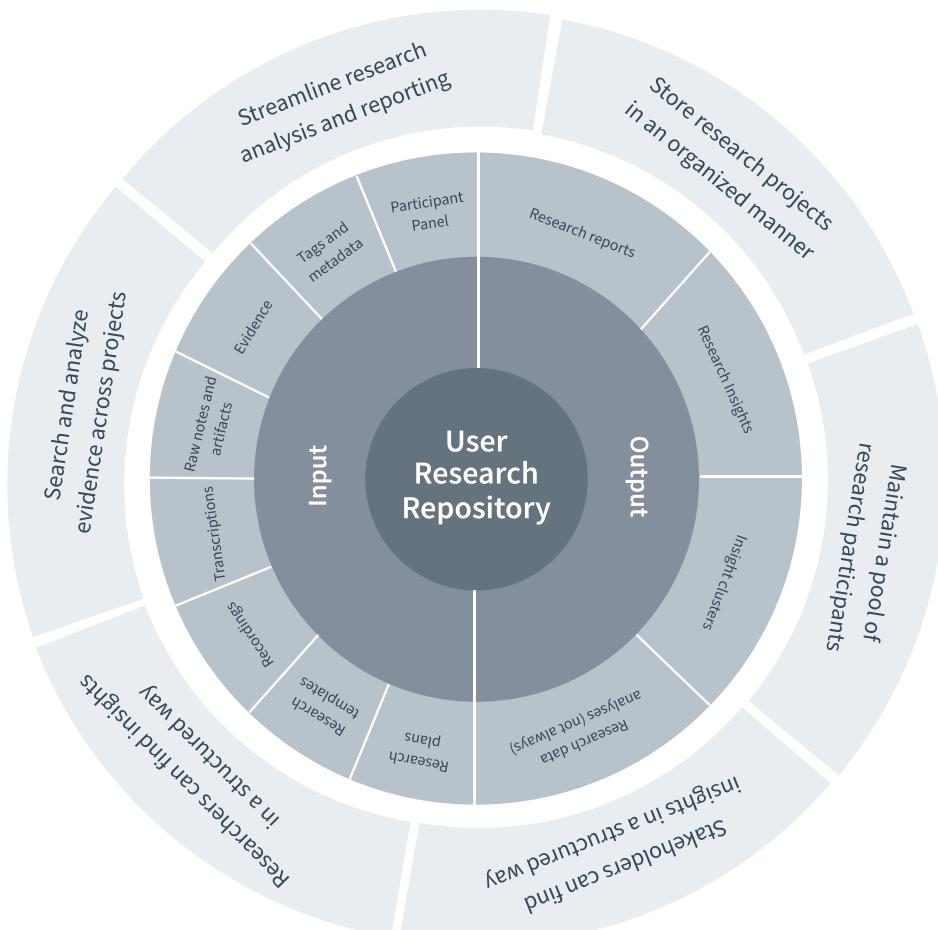
Participant Database

How it works: Maintains a GDPR-compliant record of research participants: demographics, consent forms, and contact information.

Purpose: Facilitating participant recruitment, managing consent and communication, and ensuring ethical research practices.

The scope of a research repository is strongly tied to your goals, as outlined in the framework below. This framework highlights the key input and output repository elements, along with its core objectives. Once your goals are clearly defined, leverage this framework to fine-tune your scope and select relevant repository components for your research. You don't need to include them all simultaneously, but each contributes to achieving your objectives.

Key Elements of a Research Repository Aligned with Objectives

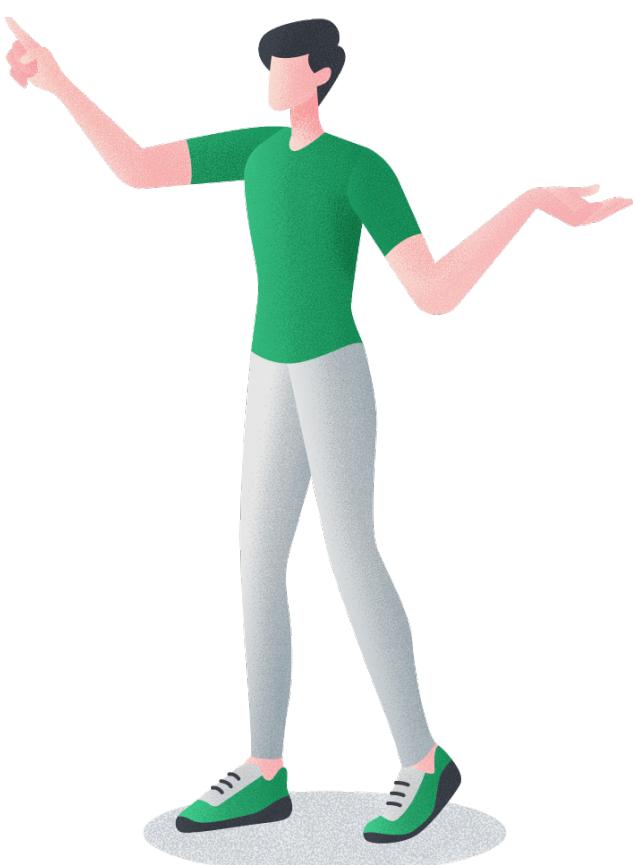


Navigate Your Research Process with a Repository

The various components of a research repository smoothly integrate into the user research process. Whether it's research planning, recruiting, or synthesis, the repository improves the efficiency of researchers by streamlining tasks throughout the entire process.

Overview of the User Research Process:

- 1 Creation of Research Plan**
A research repository centralizes templates, best practices, and previous research plans, enabling researchers to efficiently create research plans by leveraging existing knowledge and methods.
- 2 Recruiting of Participants**
By maintaining a database of participants, contact information, and segments, a research repository can streamline recruitment, saving time and ensuring GDPR compliance across studies.
- 3 Collection of Research Data**
Though data collection typically occurs outside of a repository, many repositories offer seamless integration with data collection tools such as Zoom. Storing raw data within a repository further enhances traceability.
- 4 Analysis of Results**
Certain repository tools allow for the transcription, structuring, and tagging of research data, empowering researchers to apply standardized methodologies for analysis and conclusion drawing.
- 5 Synthesis of Results**
A user research repository facilitates the identification of patterns and themes by providing a centralized space for researchers to access data analyses and findings from previous studies.
- 6 Sharing of Research Findings**
A repository serves as a centralized hub for storing reports, insights, and presentations, streamlining the sharing process and ensuring that findings are easily accessible to stakeholders.



Goals of a Research Repository

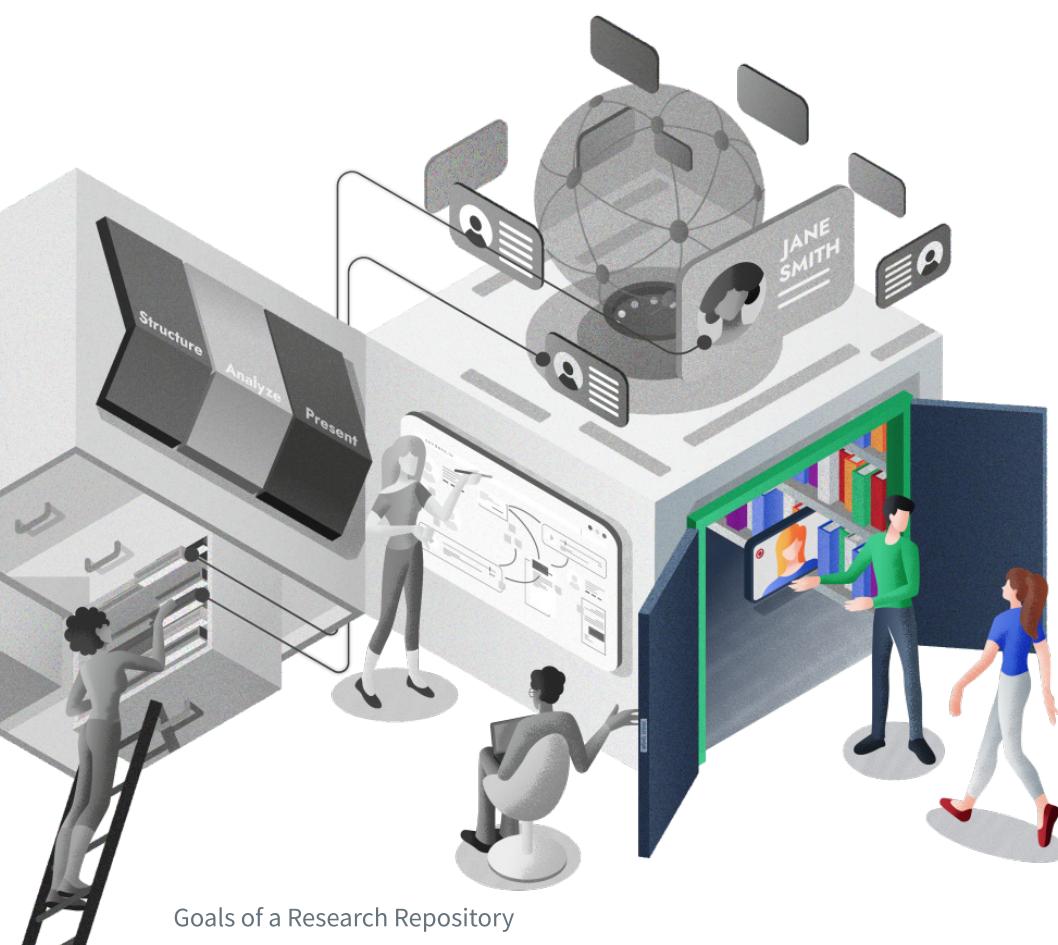
Repositories can help you achieve a variety of goals depending on the specific needs of your organization. Drawing on our experience with various organizations, we've pinpointed common objectives that describe the overall potential of a research repository:

- Store research projects in an organized manner
- Structure evidence consistently
- Streamline research analysis and reporting
- Researchers can find insights easily
- Stakeholders can find insights easily
- Maintain a list of research participants

When you're just getting started, we recommend identifying your top-priority goals. Select one or two key objectives, and progressively expand the scope of your repository to better support your research team or organization as a whole.

We highly encourage you to come back to this list as your organization grows and reflect on the changes in your team structure. It's important to regularly evaluate the requirements and feedback from your colleagues to identify additional functionalities.

On the next page, we'll dive deeper into the goals outlined above.

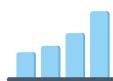


Goals You Can Achieve with a Research Repository



Store Research Projects in an Organized Manner

The ability to find past projects easily and learn things faster improves the research process and provides better research insights. Plus, research becomes a shared resource within a company, reducing reliance on a single person and preventing redundant research efforts.



Streamline Research Analysis and Reporting

Streamline your data workflow with automated transcription and translation, efficient tagging and categorization, and ready-made report and finding templates. This will help you collaborate with colleagues to enhance your analysis process and get from raw data to findings much easier.



Search and Analyze Evidence Across Projects

Consolidating data into a single, searchable, and analyzable interface streamlines the research process, enhancing both speed and efficiency. By eliminating the need for tool-switching, researchers gain access to raw evidence, resulting in more impactful and efficient research outcomes.



Researchers Can Find Insights Easily

Say goodbye to the hassle of shared drives, chaotic folder structures, and research scattered all over the place. With a repository, researchers can easily access their research findings, minimize tool switching, and simplify the sharing of insights to prevent redundancy in their research efforts.



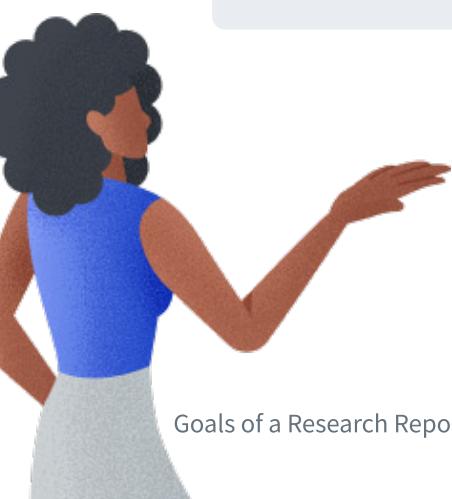
Stakeholders Can Find Insights Easily

For research to have an impact, it needs to be seen by the right people - in other words, be accessible. The collaboration in research builds trust, while diverse perspectives lead to more valid and representative results.



Maintain a Pool of Research Participants

Some repositories allow building your own panel of research participants and managing all their data in a central place. This helps facilitate recruitment, easily link research and participant data, and ensure strict compliance with research data privacy regulations.



Who Benefits from a Research Repository?

Whether you're a researcher, UX designer, product manager, or an executive, the benefits of a well-maintained user research repository extend across disciplines and practices.

From streamlining workflows to democratizing research, repositories are designed to make user research easier and insights more accessible for everyone involved in the process.

The core teams that benefit from a research repository are:

- 1 UX/Research teams
- 2 Product and Design teams
- 3 Other teams like Marketing, Sales, or Support

While all these parties derive value from a research repository, their utilization varies according to their respective roles. Typically, there are four scenarios of repository usage:



1

Researchers exclusive analysis, archival, and search:
The repository is exclusively used by researchers to store, organize, and analyze research data for informed decisions.



2

Researchers and stakeholders collaborative analysis:
Both researchers and key stakeholders alike work together, encouraging cross-functional analysis of user research.



3

Selective sharing with product managers:
Distilled insights from specific findings are shared with product managers, providing crucial information to guide and inform the product development process.



4

Open repository access for everyone:
The repository is open to all employees, cultivating transparency and nurturing a culture centered around user engagement throughout the organization.

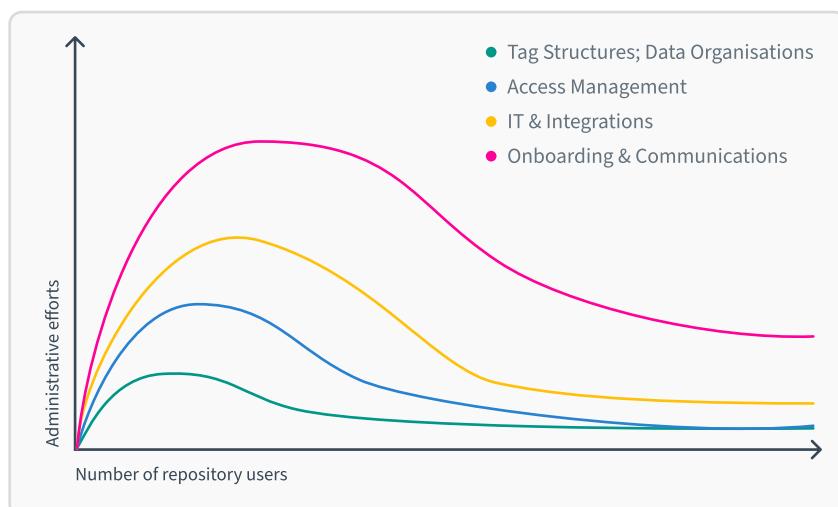
As a repository's user base grows, it brings forth new challenges associated with communication and maintenance:

- 1 **Learning Curve:** When people less familiar with UX research use the repository, it is likely that they will feel out of their depth and experience a learning curve.
- 2 **Onboarding Complexity:** When extending repository access to other teams, each new group requires separate administrative tasks and onboarding efforts. This can consume additional time and effort but is essential to maintain order and clarity.

Such Administrative Tasks for Managing a User Research Repository Might Involve:

- **Repository Configuration and Maintenance:** With each new user group, it's advised to re-configure repository's access controls, revise its structure and organization, conduct regular data cleanup, and software updates.
- **Data Entry and Curation:** As you collect more user research data, entering a growing volume of data into your repository, categorizing and maintaining its quality becomes more demanding.
- **Data Security and Backup:** Ensuring the security of research data and implementing backup strategies becomes more critical as your repository grows.
- **Documentation and Metadata:** Creating and maintaining documentation and metadata helps both new and existing users find and understand the stored data, which can become more intricate with a larger dataset.
- **Training and Support:** As more team members or stakeholders use the repository, the onboarding training and support might be necessary to ensure effective usage.

As you can see in the graph, the initial setup and rapid growth take the most effort. Once the processes are set up, your repository works for your team with less admin work. Just remember, there's always some ongoing maintenance to do.



Starting small is a practical approach, and there's no need to be afraid of the process!

Deep Dive: Repository Adoption and Engagement

from our Guest-Author, Emily DiLeo

Why Is Adoption Important?

Adoption and value are inextricably linked when it comes to repositories. The greater the number of people who use your repository, the higher its value. And the more frequently people use your repository, the greater its impact! (Tip: for this reason, it's important to track the usage of your repository)



Condens note: We also recommend adopting a mixed method approach to understand the impact of your repository. While tracking is beneficial, consider engaging stakeholders through regular check-ins to gather qualitative feedback.

1

Understand the context of implementation

In order to formulate an adoption plan, you need to understand the context in which your repository is being introduced. And by “context”, I mean how people feel about it. Are folks excited about a repository? Skeptical? If you don’t know the answers to these questions, you need to find out!

2

Make adoption part of the planning phase

As you plan for your repository, you need to raise awareness about why your organization needs one. You should set up a communication strategy. And use the planning phase to identify people who have a desire to participate in the implementation of your repository.

You can touch on all of these by running a survey. Make sure it’s brief, and distributed to all of your stakeholders. Ask open questions, like “What value would a repository bring to our organization/company?” Questions like these will raise awareness and encourage people to think about how they might use a repository. I also like to include a question about concerns people have about a repository - this way I can respond right away and avoid pushback later on.

3

Build a network

There will be other people in your organization who care about knowledge management as much as you do! Don't tackle this alone - identify those people and recruit them to help. Be clear about the time commitment and decide how you want the group to function. Do you need help with communication? Do you need working groups for things like taxonomy and user journey mapping? It's extra helpful to have a variety of stakeholders in this group (e.g., product managers, and designers).

4

Engagement strategies

You may want to start a newsletter for your repository (or piggyback on another group's comms). Reserve a few minutes in the team meetings of various stakeholder groups - you can present the initiative there and answer questions. Perhaps you run a highly visible pilot project, like gathering research from multiple teams on a particular product or topic. [Whichever strategies you choose](#), the goal is to create visibility and engage colleagues on various levels. Know that some folks will be ready to contribute to the repository, and others will be less enthusiastic, so plan your approach carefully.

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Beyond implementation

Plan for consistent adoption, as new employees come on board. Keep your comms solid, and provide support and a feedback mechanism for the repository. You will also want to track usage. Who uses the repository? What is their role? How often do they access the repository? What do they search for? And perhaps most importantly - what do users do with what they've found in the repository?

Give your repository a strong start and ensure success by creating a robust adoption and engagement strategy!



Emily DiLeo

Research Ops & Knowledge Management Expert

Emily DiLeo is an ethnographer and information science professional working in UX. She has helped transform knowledge sharing at Thomson Reuters, SAP, and Yara International. You can connect with Emily on LinkedIn, and read more of her work on Medium.

What Are Typical Pitfalls to Avoid When Introducing a Repository?

Introducing a new tool often comes with its fair share of challenges, and implementing a research repository is no exception. However, being aware of these challenges can significantly ease the entire process. That's precisely why we're here – to guide you away from common pitfalls and make your journey smoother.

By proactively tackling the issues below with thorough planning, effective training, clear guidelines, and ongoing management, you can greatly enhance the likelihood of your repository's success.

Possible Challenges or Risks When Introducing a Research Repository



3 Takeaways When Considering a Research Repository

Now that you know the basics of user research repositories, here are three important points to remember before we move on to choosing one.

#1 Research Repositories Can Cater to Any Research Setting

A repository can be as small as just one person using it to keep things organized. But as more people contribute and use it, there's more work involved in building and maintaining it. Don't be afraid to start a repository - you can begin small and add more components later. Think of it as taking small steps to unlock new features later. Also, think about the nature of your research projects so that you can implement a repository at the right time.

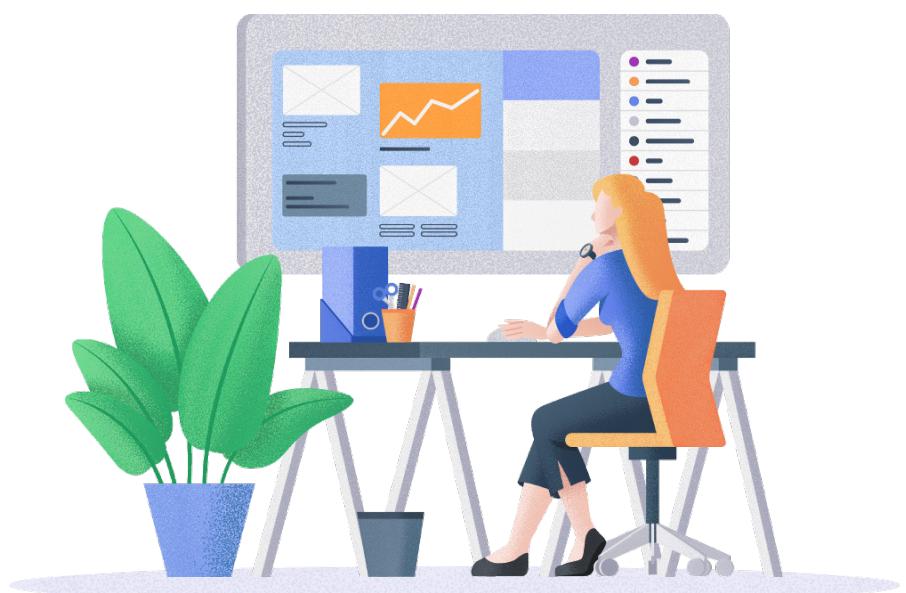
#2 Research Repositories Bring Maximum Value for Long-term or Collaborative Research Projects

Long-term research: For projects with extended timelines, a research repository provides a central hub to store and track evolving data, findings, and insights. If you're working on a short project alone, simpler ways of organizing your data could be enough.

Collaborative projects: When multiple researchers are engaged in a joint project, a research repository fosters synergy and collective knowledge management. However, if your organization doesn't do research very often, you might not need a repository right away.



It's a good idea to think about how much research you do before deciding if you need a repository.



#3 Involve Stakeholders as Early as Possible in the Decision and Implementation Process

When working within a team or organization, it's highly advisable to involve others early in the process of implementing a research repository. Start by discussing current information gathering practices and collaboratively explore methods for sharing research findings.

By systematically addressing these considerations, you can ensure alignment with your team's needs and goals. Remember, success in implementing your research repository relies on taking incremental steps and engaging the right stakeholders at the right time.



We've now provided you with the core information you need to know about user research repositories, from what exactly a repository is to helping you determine if it's the right tool for your user research efforts. As you move forward, you can now anticipate what a research repository has in store for you and how it can positively impact your user research.

Case Study: How ZEISS Introduced Condens as a Research Repository

ZEISS, a leading technology enterprise in optics and optoelectronics with over 35,000 employees, adopted Condens as their internal research repository to enhance their UX research practices and facilitate access to research findings across the company. This initiative was driven by two key factors:

- **Streamlining Research Tasks:** The UX researchers at ZEISS needed support in managing frequent research tasks, particularly the time-consuming manual transcription of user interviews.
- **Promoting User-Centric Development:** With a growing emphasis on user-centric product development throughout the organization, ZEISS aimed to centralize and make research data more accessible to all departments.

Here's how they implemented Condens:

1 Step 1: Kick-off Product Tour

- The entire UX team participated in a Condens product tour to familiarize everyone with the tool and address company-specific questions.
- This event marked the launch of Condens for conducting, analyzing, and sharing new research projects.

2 Step 2: Team Workshops on Taxonomy

- The teams conducted internal workshops to develop a unique tagging structure and best practices.
- The tagging structure included global tags and allowed flexibility for project-specific tags within research projects.
- This uniform structure aimed to improve the searchability and filtering of research data.

3 Step 3: Migrating Existing Research to Condens

- The UX team migrated existing research projects to Condens, including raw data and analysis results.
- This process was spread over time and involved different team members.

Implementing Condens as a research repository and analysis tool has helped the UX team in several ways:

- **GDPR Compliance:** Zeiss benefits from secure and GDPR-compliant handling of participant data, essential for research in the medical field.
- **Efficient Workflow:** [Automated transcription](#) in various languages speeds up data analysis, and researchers can easily download highlights and research quotes for use in workshops or meetings.
- **Integration with Other Tools:** Condens integrates seamlessly with tools like OneDrive, Microsoft Teams, and Miro, simplifying data import and sharing.
- **Democratizing Access:** A dedicated stakeholder repository allows non-researchers to access research findings easily, fostering transparency and trust.
- **Connecting Research Data:** Condens helps the UX Research team draw conclusions across projects and enrich user journeys and personas with evidence from various studies.

Insights from the Zeiss UX Research Team

“

Before we introduced Condens, our knowledge from UX research studies was distributed in different SharePoints, files, and platforms. Now we finally have one single source of information.

”



Liesa Breitmoser

Team Lead UX Researcher
@ ZEISS

How to Choose a Research Repository?

It's time to take action! Your organization has made the important decision to introduce a research repository. What's next? Preparation is the key to making this decision a success.

This chapter serves as your practical roadmap for selecting the right user research repository for your needs. We have gathered all the essential considerations you need to make to get your repository up and running. Starting from the definition of your goals to making the final decision and crafting an onboarding plan.

Here's an Overview of the Evaluation Process:



While we generally advocate following the six steps of the process sequentially, there may be instances where circling back to earlier steps is necessary. For instance, if you learn about an interesting feature of a repository during a demo (step 5) that hadn't crossed your mind previously, you might consider incorporating it into your requirements list (step 3).

Maintaining some flexibility is advantageous in this regard. The duration of the evaluation process varies based on your organization's size and the number of people involved. It can take as little as a day for a one-person research team to make a decision, and several weeks for a large organization.

1. Define Your Objectives

Defining clear and concise goals is a fundamental step in the process of choosing a user research repository. This not only sets the stage for purposeful and efficient decision-making but also serves as a guide for defining the repository's scope, influencing considerations like onboarding, setup, and [taxonomy](#).

The scope of a research repository is influenced by factors like the specificity or breadth of your research focus, the integration of methods or specialization, timeframe, geographic coverage, data types, and the duration of your objectives (long-term or short-term). These factors hinge on your team's resources and help in identifying the primary goals for the repository. Begin by reflecting on your primary objectives and the potential scope.

Are you looking for a platform that can efficiently store and organize research data, making it easily accessible for your team? Alternatively, your priority might be enhanced collaboration and streamlined communication among team members and stakeholders. Or perhaps, your primary focus is on maximizing the visibility and impact of your research through open-access options?

Use the examples below to refresh the goals discussed in the previous chapter and choose the right focus for your repository implementation.



2. Assess Team Size, Audience, Needs and Practices

When choosing a research repository that perfectly suits your needs, it's crucial to evaluate factors like team size and target audience, and perform a thorough needs and current practices assessment. This process should involve all team members who will use or contribute to the repository to facilitate its adoption. Surprisingly, some UXR teams skip this essential step, despite their expertise in user experience research. So, avoid that pitfall and invest time in understanding your team's requirements.

1

First, consider the size of your team. Whether you are working in a small, agile group or a large, interdisciplinary team, understanding the dynamics and workflows within your organization will guide you towards a repository that can seamlessly accommodate your team's collaborative efforts.

2

Next, determine your target audience – those individuals who will actively engage with the repository. Are you primarily addressing fellow researchers, stakeholders, clients, or a combination of these groups? Acknowledging the diverse needs and preferences of your audience will lead you to a repository that not only enhances the user experience but also aligns with their familiarity and ease with technology and data management.

3

Performing a needs assessment is a crucial step in this process. Collaborate with your team to pinpoint the specific challenges and requirements they face while handling research data, documents, and findings. Identify the essential features and functionalities that are critical to your team's success, such as version control, data security, collaboration tools, and data visualization capabilities.

4

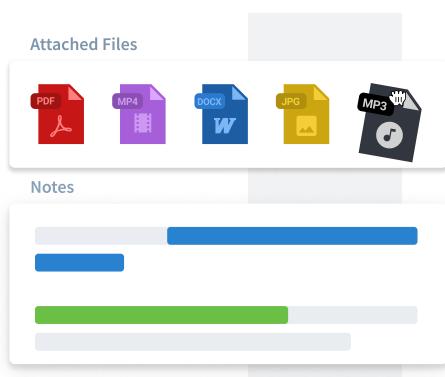
It's also important to do some groundwork. Start by listing your current research tools, methods, and data setup. This helps you understand what you're currently using, what you need, and how much you're spending. Talk to your colleagues to learn more about their experiences with these tools. This is crucial for selecting a repository that matches your team's needs and fits within your budget.



3. Specify Features and Functions

Once you've defined your goals and have a list of your needs, you should have a better understanding of the functionalities and features that are essential for your organization. Try listing the ones you require.

Here's a list of potential features you might need:

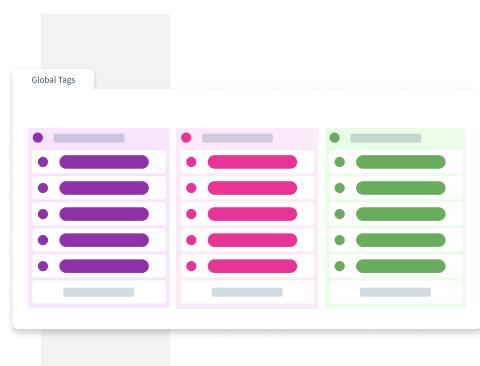
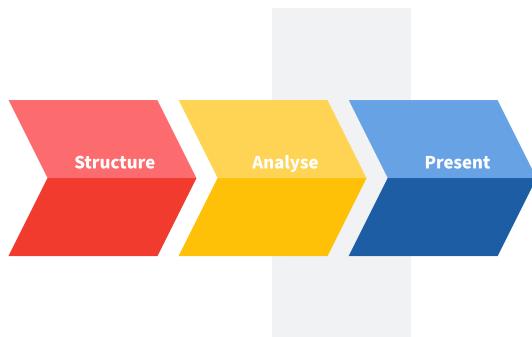


Store Research Projects in an Organized Manner

- Import existing research data
- Build and maintain a taxonomy to label raw research data
- Search and filtering capabilities across data
- Easy sharing and exporting functionality
- Ability to connect evidence across projects

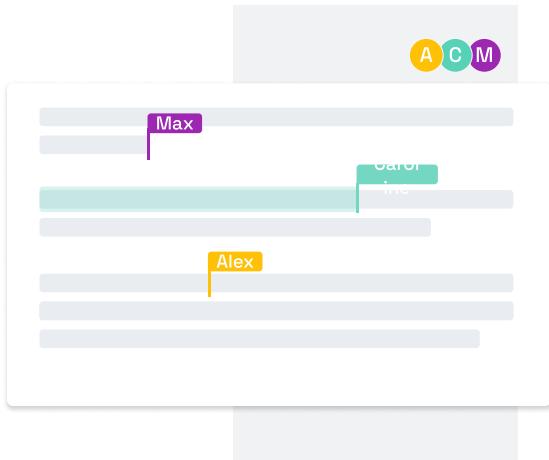
Streamline Research Analysis and Reporting

- Automated transcription
- Video and audio clips and clusters
- Integrated translation
- AI supported tagging
- Affinity Mapping
- Browser-based sharing of results



Search and Analyze Evidence across Projects

- Slack form to push feedback to the repository
- Automatically forwarding emails to the repository
- Hotjar, Zendesk and Salesforce Integrations

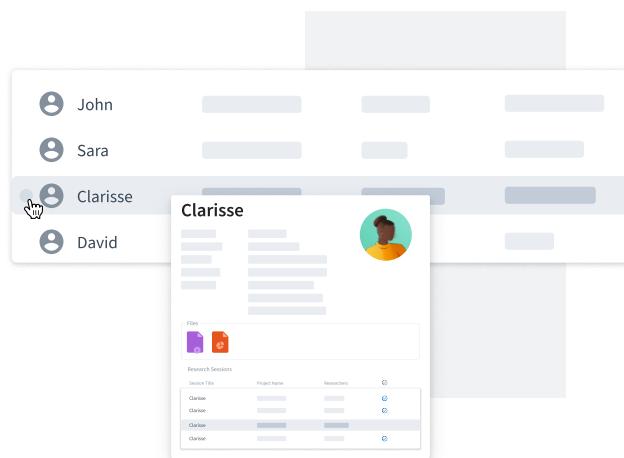
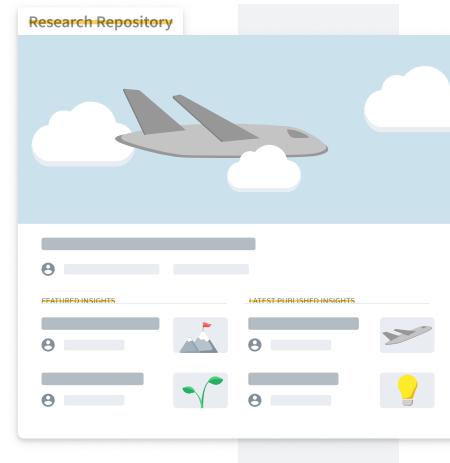


Researchers Can Find Insights in a Structured Way

- Video clipping & highlight reels
- Live collaborative note-taking
- Live collaborative synthesis
- Research templates
- Comment and mention functionality

Stakeholders Can Find Insights in a Structured Way

- Read-only access to research insights or findings for stakeholders
- Only researchers have access to raw data



Maintain a Pool of Research Participants

- Participant database
- Participant data that is connected to research projects and findings
- Participant names are hidden during sharing
- Delete personal data easily
- Search and filter research data by participant attributes

Once you've pinpointed the functions of a user research repository that aligns best with your team's goals and needs, it's time to search for a tool that offers those features. Let's explore the various types of tools available in the market.

4. Narrow Down Your Tool Choices

It's now the time to kick off the comparison of various tools and resources. During the process of refining your tool selection, you'll most probably encounter two fundamental questions:

- 1 Should I opt for a generic or specialized tool?
- 2 Should I use a single tool for both analysis and archiving?

4.1. Using a Generic Tool

The primary advantage of a general-purpose tool, such as Google Drive, Confluence, or Notion, is that typically, everyone within your organization already has access to it, which helps you avoid the “Yet another tool” hurdle. While using a generic research repository may seem convenient at first, there are also several drawbacks and limitations to consider when applying it to user research. Let's explore the pros and cons in more detail.

Pros

- **Familiarity:** Many team members are already familiar with generic tools, reducing the learning curve and leading to faster adoption and increased efficiency.
- **Cost-Effective:** Many generic tools offer free or affordable pricing plans, making them budget-friendly options for small teams or startups.
- **Cross-Functionality:** Since generic tools are not limited to a specific niche, they can serve multiple functions within an organization, reducing the need for additional software subscriptions.

Considerations

- **Lack of specialization:** Generic user research repositories typically lack the specialized features for effective UXR data organization, analysis, and sharing.
- **Limited data structuring:** Generic repositories may not fully support certain data structuring formats, impeding the efficient categorization and analysis of data.
- **Inefficient tagging and metadata:** There's not enough flexibility in effective tagging and customizable metadata, which can hinder data retrieval and organization.

Generic research repositories can be useful for general research purposes but may not be the most optimal choice for managing user research data.



4.2. Using a Specialized Tool

Specialized user research repository platforms tend to offer superior features, organization, and collaboration capabilities, tailored to the unique demands of UX research. Specialized user research repository platforms offer many advantages but they also have some potential drawbacks to consider. Let's take a look at both of them:

Pros

- A dedicated research repository offers **scalability and efficient data management** for growing volumes, users, and teams.
- It often goes beyond data storage, providing **additional analysis features** and support for user research artifacts.
- Specialized repositories prioritize security for sensitive data.
- User research relies on a deep understanding of users, their needs, and pain points. Specialized repositories excel in **preserving context** and facilitating seamless linking between various research data points.

Considerations

- Adopting a specialized platform has a learning curve, requiring time for **onboarding and training**. Complex or unintuitive tools can prolong proficiency development.
- **Data portability** can be an issue with specialized platforms, hindering migration to other systems later.
- Specialized user research platforms may come at a higher cost compared to generic or free tools. Their pricing structure often revolves around factors like user seats, storage, or the number of projects, making them **less budget-friendly** for smaller teams or organizations.

Condens UX Research Repository



[Learn more](#)

Condens simplifies the analysis, storage, and sharing of your research data and findings, making the process effortless and enjoyable. It is also a scalable research repository that brings value to your entire organization. Learn more about what Condens can do for you!



4.3. Using a Single Tool Versus Separate Tools for Data Analysis and Storage

Another crucial decision lies ahead: should you use a single tool for both data analysis and storage, or should you go with dedicated separate tools for these tasks? Let's dive into this important choice, examining the effort and rewards associated with each option.

Different Tools for Data Analysis and Repository

When researchers use different tools for analyzing data and storing information, they need to spend extra time and effort to make sure they document and save their findings properly. This proactive approach ensures that both they and other stakeholders can easily access the information when needed. Specifically, the additional effort for archiving involves the following steps:

- Gather all data from multiple sources and move it to the archive.
- Organize the data in a way that makes sense (e.g. separating raw data, analysis, findings)
- Add context for searchability (time of study, topics, involved researchers)

Combining Data Analysis and Archiving into One Tool

When researchers use a single tool that combines data analysis and archiving, they can save a lot of time and effort. The tool lets them analyze data and store their findings all in one place, making it easier and more efficient to use the information and conduct cross-project analysis. Let's explore the benefits in more detail:

- **Easy Data Handling:** This tool does the job of gathering and organizing data, so researchers don't have to do it themselves. Everything they need is in one place.
- **No More Missing Info:** The tool automatically adds important details like when the study happened and who was involved. This helps researchers understand the context without having to do extra work.
- **Enhanced Searchability:** Because the tool keeps data and its backstory together, it's easy to find what you need. You can search for specific information using i.e. keywords.
- **Save Time and Energy:** Since you don't have to switch between different tools or spend time organizing data, you can focus on the important parts of your research.
- **Teamwork Made Simple:** When everyone uses the same tool, it's much easier to work together. Multiple researchers can access and work on the same data without any hassle.
- **Your Research Stays Valuable:** The tool keeps your research useful for a long time. You and your colleagues can always go back to it, even years later.

In a nutshell, using a tool that handles both data analysis and archiving makes research a whole lot easier. It takes care of the tricky parts, so you can focus on what really matters.

Consider Different Needs of Different Stakeholders

When deliberating on the selection of analysis and repository tools, it's vital to take into account the diverse needs of all parties involved. In essence, we can categorize the stakeholders into three primary groups:

- **Researchers:** They are the ones using a repository daily. So, they require robust tools for data collection, analysis, and organization to support their research efforts effectively.
- **PwDR - People who Do Research:** They are also actively involved in generating research data and insights. They need easy access to research data, efficient search capacities, and collaboration support to facilitate the research process.
- **Research Consumers:** This broader group includes stakeholders who rely on research findings to make informed decisions, spanning across various departments within the organization. Their primary need is access to organized, comprehensible, and up-to-date research data.

These two groups have different requirements which are difficult to address in the same tool. So how can you balance the need for integration and separation?

A potential solution is to implement an analysis tool and a repository that shares a common database with customized interfaces for Researchers and Research Consumers.

The Mechanism of a Unified Data Analysis and Repository Tool



Using a common tool with distinct interfaces tailored for Researchers and Research Consumers, Researchers will benefit from a dedicated tool to streamline their research and data management processes. At the same time, Research Consumers will enjoy a user-friendly and straightforward interface to access and comprehend research outcomes. This approach enables both groups to access the same information while customizing their interactions with the data to suit their specific needs.



Condens Integration: Condens provides the best of both worlds. The analysis tool and the repository share the same data foundation, ensuring that adding data to the repository is effortless, requiring just a simple click. At the same time, there are two separate interfaces: One for Researchers and the PwDR and one for the Stakeholders. The Stakeholders' interface is designed as read-only to prevent any unintended changes and only displays relevant functionality for this user group. If more collaboration is needed, you can also invite Stakeholders to participate in a workshop.

After addressing the aforementioned questions, you should have a solid foundation for your tool selection process. To assess the quality, usability, and reliability of each option, leverage online reviews, ratings, and recommendations from fellow UX researchers. Furthermore, take into account the compatibility, integration capabilities, and scalability of these tools in relation to your existing systems and processes. A good starting point could be this list of reviewed tools from G2. Begin with a longlist and then refine it by examining your non-negotiable or critical criteria. Try to narrow your selection down to two or three vendors for a more thorough evaluation. This number strikes a balance between offering enough choices to find the best fit while respecting your time constraints.



Discover What Condens Customers Have to Say in Their Reviews

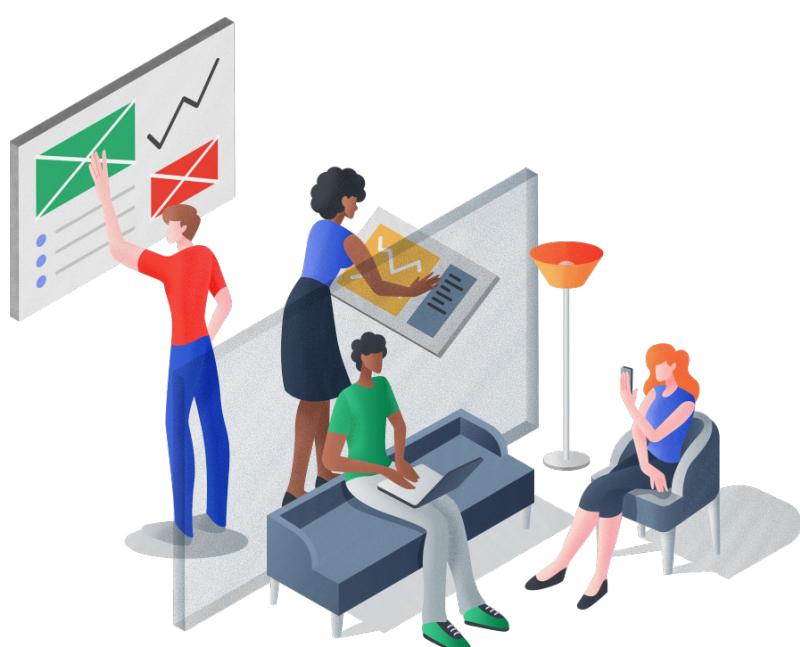
Condens is the most popular User Research Repository based on customer reviews on G2. Check them out yourself and learn why!

[Read more reviews](#)

Here are the top 5 reasons researchers choose Condens as their research repository tool.

Five Reasons Why Researchers Choose Condens Over Other Research Repository Tools

- 1** **Easy Onboarding & Smooth Usage:** Condens prioritizes simplicity for both novices and seasoned users. Whether you're a newcomer to research or an expert, Condens ensures an easy learning curve with its user-friendly design and intuitive structure. Newcomers will find guidance throughout the workflow, while seasoned researchers can capitalize on shortcuts and AI-assisted tagging for enhanced efficiency.
- 2** **Instant Sharing of Insights:** Sharing your research findings through Condens is as easy as a couple of clicks. No need for your stakeholders to create accounts - they simply open a link in their web browser. Meanwhile, you maintain full control of the shared reports, with options to unpublish, add passwords, or protect participant identities.
- 3** **Stakeholder-Friendly Repository:** Elevate the impact of your research by allowing stakeholders to explore it independently. Condens' Stakeholder Repository is a dedicated space for your colleagues from different teams to search and explore research results, similar to a curated magazine. It focuses on research findings, ensuring privacy for sensitive data.
- 4** **Live Collaboration Made Simple:** Whether you're working remotely or in-person, Condens enables real-time teamwork. Collaborate on documents simultaneously, like taking live session notes or synthesizing data as a team. You can easily see where others are working and join in effortlessly.
- 5** **Exceptional Personal Support for All Plans:** No matter the size of your team or organization, Condens provides top-notch, personalized support and guidance. Reach out via email or [schedule a video call](#). Our dedication to excellent service and a personal touch is what sets Condens apart, deeply valued by all our customers!



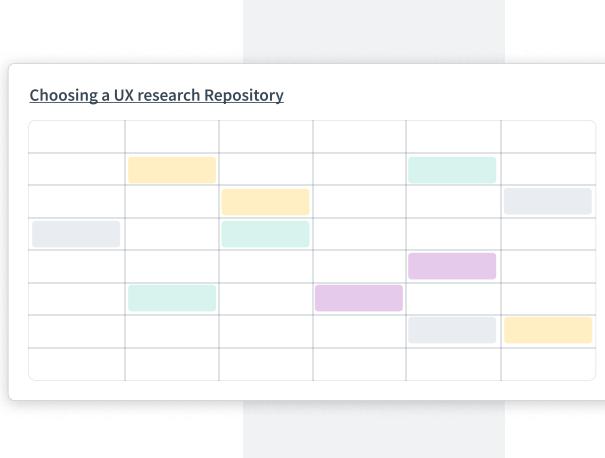
5. Use Demos and Trials

Once you've narrowed down your tool options, it's time to gather more information and insights about each specific tool. We highly recommend utilizing free demos and trials to assess the user experience, interface, and functionality. Additionally, reaching out to the customer success team can provide valuable insights into how each tool can meet your needs and goals.

We also suggest going beyond testing the tool with sample data and conducting actual research projects on each platform. In cases where using real data in a trial poses challenges, there's typically the alternative of employing dummy or example data. In any scenario, this approach allows you to thoroughly evaluate the workflow and determine if the tool is the right fit for your team. When assessing these tools, further consider the respective pricing, data privacy and security measures, the quality of customer support and the onboarding process.

To guide you throughout this evaluation process, we offer a template for selecting a UX research repository. This resource aids in identifying the most suitable tool for your needs and includes a vendor comparison overview.

Get started now and check out the template [here](#).





Start Your 15-Day Condens Trial For Free

Condens makes storing, analyzing, and sharing all research data easier, faster, and more enjoyable. Give it a try and experience the difference for yourself!

TRY 15 DAYS FOR FREE

Checklist for Choosing a Research Repository

Choosing the right research repository may present a challenge, but it's a manageable task, and we're here to assist you in simplifying the process. This checklist is your assurance that you won't overlook any essential factors when evaluating potential tool providers. Let's get started and make sure your research gets the recognition it deserves.

- Create a shortlist of 2-3 vendors for your user research repository.
- Visit their websites and help centers to learn about their capabilities.
- Send them [the evaluation spreadsheet](#) with your goals to see what they can offer.
- Use the template's page two to assess user experience and functionality, rating each tool from 1 to 5 and adding qualitative comments.
- Evaluate security and privacy with involvement from your legal team.
- Consider support and onboarding aspects, including available communication channels and time zone compatibility.
- If evaluating as a team, have team members individually fill out the evaluation template and discuss the results later.
- Assess the pricing of each tool for your team.
- Schedule personal demos with vendors and use free trials to better understand how the tools match your requirements.
- If possible, use the tools with real research data to get a practical sense of their usability.



6. Decide on Your Tool and Craft an Onboarding Plan

After having conducted demos and trials with potential tool providers, it's time to make a decision. Organize a meeting with your team and/or manager to thoroughly review the feedback you gathered and assess which tool aligns most closely with your specific requirements. Utilize the provided template and discuss the results.



When choosing a user research repository tool, consider all the factors that we discussed in the previous sections and further assess the ease of use, collaboration capabilities, security, and integration with the tools your team currently uses. Additionally, ensure that the tool aligns well with your organization's specific user research needs and workflows.

Once you've made your choice of a tool, designate a responsible individual for overseeing its implementation. This includes not only the procurement process but also entails defining data structures (e.g. taxonomy) within the repository, orchestrating the migration of existing research materials, granting access to all users, internal communication regarding the repository, and ensuring a seamless onboarding experience for everyone.



Condens Voices: Insights into Research Repositories

The core of my UXR tool infrastructure!

The simplicity and clear UI make it very easy to get started and I was positively surprised by the level/speed of support. They guided us also to come up with a taxonomy that makes sense for us – free of charge! A big plus for us is also the flexible user management and the fact that the repository is accessible across the organization without payment.



Michaël Dufranne
Senior UX Researcher,
UX Team Lead
@ Elia Group

Condens adds to my well-being!

Condens actually adds to my well-being by making research tagging a surprisingly pleasant activity!



Dominika Prikrylova
UX Researcher
@ Kontent.ai

Condens streamlines the entire process!

Condens supports and streamlines the entire process from collecting evidence to sharing findings.



Thomas Fortmann
Senior User Researcher
@ Morressier

Condens has the most important things I need to build a proper repository!

With Artifacts and Structured Fields, I feel like Condens has the most important things I need to build a proper repo. Those bits give it real powers!! Well done!



Ioana Giart
UX Research Team Lead
@ Adverity

From Basics to Best Practices: Our Final Thoughts

That's it! We hope this guide has equipped you with the knowledge and confidence needed to navigate the selection of your ideal research repository.

User research repositories are invaluable tools, enhancing your ability to leverage user insights effectively. Our aim was to simplify and demystify the concept of research repositories, providing practical guidance for evaluating their relevance within your organization, ultimately helping you to make the right choice.

Let's recap some of the key aspects we've covered:

- The essence of research repositories.
- The key beneficiaries.
- Three pivotal considerations when discussing these repositories.
- A step-by-step guide on selecting the ideal repository for your specific needs.

As you continue your journey with repositories, we encourage you to put our best practices and helpful tips into action and fully harness the collaborative potential of user research repositories.

Above all, remember this: whether you're an independent researcher or part of a larger team, a repository is a flexible tool that can adapt to your changing needs and requirements. Armed with the insights from this guide, you're well-prepared to make informed decisions when it comes to research repositories.

We sincerely appreciate you joining us on this exploration of research repositories. If you have any feedback, thoughts, or open questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to us at hello@condens.io.

Happy researching!



Anya
from the Condens team



About Condens

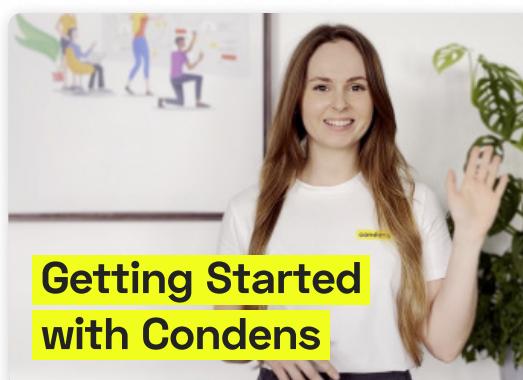
Condens is a leading research repository tool that streamlines the process of user research.

Our mission is to assist companies in creating better products and customer experiences by facilitating more efficient and effective user research. Condens enables UX researchers, product teams, and other people who do research to effortlessly store, organize, and analyze user research data while promoting the sharing of insights and discoveries throughout the entire organization, fostering a collaborative work environment.

With Condens, organizations can gain valuable insights into user behavior and preferences, leveraging this information to develop products and experiences that cater to their customers' needs.

Condens is committed to providing a user-friendly and flexible platform that adapts to each customer's needs and offers outstanding customer support to guarantee the success of their projects.

If you're interested in learning more about Condens and how it can help your organization level-up its user research, watch our 'Getting Started' video below.



Getting Started with Condens

This video covers everything you need to know to set up your first project in 5 minutes.

Happy researching with Condens!

[Watch now](#)

Resources

["Exploring the Significance of Research Repositories" - nngroup.com](#)

["Considerations for Building a UX Research Repository" - uxstudioteam.com](#)

["Retrospective Learnings from Introducing a Central UX Research Repository" - condens.io](#)

["Benefits and Insights into UX Research Repositories" - looppanel.com](#)

["Understanding the Role of Research Repositories in UX" - insightplatforms.com](#)

["A Guide on How Not to Fail with a Research Repository" - bootcamp.uxdesign.cc](#)

["Starting a User Research Repository at OpenClassrooms" - uxdesign.cc](#)

["Comparing Dovetail, Condens, and EnjoyHQ as Research Repository Tools" - chilipiper.com](#)

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UX Research Analysis and Insights Repository