

User research

User research focuses on understanding user behaviors, needs and motivations through interviews, surveys, usability evaluations and other forms of feedback methodologies. It is used to understand how people interact with products and evaluate whether design solutions meet their needs. This field of research aims at improving the user experience (UX) of products, services, or processes by incorporating experimental and observational research methods to guide the design, development, and refinement of a product. User research is used to improve a multitude of products like websites, mobile phones, medical devices, banking, government services and many more. It is an iterative process that can be used at anytime during product development and is a core part of user-centered design.

Data from users can be used to identify a problem for which solutions may be proposed. From these proposals, design solutions are prototyped and then tested with the target user group even before launching the product in the market. This process is repeated as many times as necessary. After the product is launched in the market, user research can also be used to understand how to improve it or create a new solution. User research also helps to uncover problems faced by users when they interact with a product and turn them into actionable insights. User research is beneficial in all stages of product development from ideation to market release.

Types of User Research

There is pure and applied research, user research utilizes applied research to make better products. There are many ways of classifying research, Erika Hall in her book 'Just Enough Research' mentions four ways of classifying user research.

Descriptive or explanatory research

Descriptive research or explanatory research helps to define the characteristics of the problem and populations previously identified. It is used to understand the context of the problem and the context in which users have the problem. The methods in this phase can be very similar to the methods used in the generative research phase. However, this phase helps to identify what is the best way to solve a problem as opposed to what problem to solve.[5] During this phase, experts in the problem area are consulted to fill knowledge gaps that will be required to create a solution. This phase is required to avoid making assumptions about the problem or people that might otherwise result in a biased solution. The aim of this phase is to get a good understanding of the problem, to get the right solution ideas.

Causal research

Causal research typically answers why something is happening. Once the solution is up and running, one can observe how people are using it in real time and understand why it is or isn't used the way the solution was envisioned. One of the common methods used in this phase is A/B testing.

What does a UX research do?

User experience (UX) research is the study of learning what end users of a system or product need and want, then employing those insights to enhance the design process for products, services or software. UX research can take different forms depending on the area of focus.

What is the research method in UX?

11 Best UX research methods and when to use them

Research technique Description

Field studies Observe people in their natural environment

Focus group Group discussions facilitated by a moderator

Diary studies Users keep a diary to track interactions and experience with a product

Surveys Asking people open or closed questions

Card sorting Users sort information and ideas into groups that makes sense to them Start of your project

Tree testing Assess the findability and organization of information as users navigate a stripped-down IA
Start of your design or redesign process

Usability testing Users perform a set of tasks in a controlled setting All stages

Five second testing Collect immediate impressions within a short timeframe During initial ideation and throughout design Attitudinal

Evaluativ

Concept testing Evaluate the feasibility, appeal, and potential success of a new product During initial ideation, design, and before launch

Qualitative

Generative

After defining your objectives and planning your research framework, it's time to choose the research technique that will best serve your project's goals and yield the right insights. While user research is often treated as an afterthought, it should inform every design decision. In this chapter, we walk you through the most common research methods and help you choose the right one for you.

What are UX research methods?

A UX research method is a way of generating insights about your users, their behavior, motivations, and needs.

These methods help:

Learn about user behavior and attitudes

Identify key pain points and challenges in the user interface

Develop user personas to identify user needs and drive solutions

Test user interface designs to see what works and what doesn't

You can use research methodologies like user interviews, surveys, focus groups, card sorting, usability testing to identify user challenges and turn them into opportunities to improve the user experience.

UX Research Methods

