

# INFORMATION DESIGN

## CARD SORTING

Card sorting is a research method for discovering how people understand and categorise information. Card sorting can be used to get participants group and label information in a way that makes the most sense to them rather than just how you think it should be grouped and labelled.

Card sorting is useful when you want to:

- design a new website or section of a website, or improve an existing website
- find out how your users expect to see your information grouped on your website
- understand and compare how users conceptualise different concepts or items

Here's an example of a card sort:



# TYPES OF CARD SORTS

Card sorting involves creating groups of cards that represent a concept or item. This is done by getting participants to group the cards in a way that makes sense to them. There are three types of card sorts:

- **Open card sort** – Participants sort cards into groups that make sense to them, and label each group themselves
- **Closed card sort** – Participants sort cards into predefined groups that are given to them
- **Hybrid card sort** – Participants sort cards into predefined groups that are given to them, but can also create their own groups

## ACTIVITY

We are going to conduct an open card sort. To do this you'll complete the sort the card **individually** first, and then compare with the other members in your group. As a group, you will decide on the most appropriate grouping of cards and the labels for these groups.

1. Individually, sort the cards into groups that you think make logical sense.
2. Look at the groups of cards, and write a label on a post-it that you think best describes the grouping. Sort each card into a column under the appropriate label.
3. When everyone has finished this compare what you've found with the other members in your group:
  - a. Are there similarities in groups?
  - b. Are there dissimilarities in groups?
  - c. Are there similarities in the labels for the groups?
  - d. Are there dissimilarities in the labels for the groups?
  - e. Why do these dissimilarities arise?
4. As a group decide on which groupings and labels you will settle on and why?

*It could be majority vote but it could also be that someone else had a grouping that you hadn't thought about but agree with.*

# QUESTIONS

1. What was the main purpose of card sorting?

2. Do you think that the card sorting was a useful exercise for understanding the natural grouping of the content? Why or why not?

3. Why was it necessary to do the activity individually before comparing your result with your group?

4. How would you go about doing the card sort as a closed card sort?

5. What do you think the pros and cons are for open and closed card sorts?

6. What is a real-world use of or somewhere that you think would benefit from card sorting?

7. How many people do you think you would need to participate in a card sorting activity? What factors influence how many people you choose?

8. Do you think there is a minimum or maximum number of cards that you can use in a card sorting activity? Why or why not?

# CARDS

Tornados a problem in small towns	Tip's from history's richest man	Why young people don't care about politics
Deal for young homebuyers	Top spellers go head to head	Is marriage still relevant?
Should women be more confident?	Freezing temperatures delay snow fall	Dunedin flats destroyed by fire
The secret world of octopuses	Link between alcohol and cancer being studied	Understanding the new job market
Why I hate self-checkouts at supermarkets	Councillor to visit drought-hit farm	Whale comes to the aid of humans
20 surprising things about the UK	A wonderful alternative to Burning Man	Digital transfers case goes to trial
Cate Blanchett selling \$22m house	Amazing new photos from space station	Credit card flight awards costly
Explosion in factory injures 12	Man attacked by shark in Sydney	Movie giant buys up small cinema
New 'zero hours' work rules set by Government	Trump in trouble with conservatives	One critical after Eastern motorway crash
Do rich kids have rights?	Man charged with Mumbai airport bomb threat 'said Bombay'	Spotify sued over songwriter rights

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