

# PERSONAS

**When can the method be used?**  
When the user research is finished, a Persona can be used to summarise and communicate your findings. Personas can also be used during conceptualisation or when evaluating your design together with your team members or with other stakeholders involved in your project. Personas help you to have a consistent and shared understanding of the users' values and needs.

**How to use the method?**  
First, you need to collect information about your intended users, such as by doing qualitative research, using Contextmapping techniques, Interviews and Observations. On the basis of this information, you build up your understanding of the intended users: behavioural patterns and themes, commonalities, particularities and differences. From an overview of the characteristics of your target group, including their dreams and needs and all kinds of insights, you can cluster your users on the basis of their similarities and build the archetypes that represent a specific cluster. When the characteristics of the representatives are clear, they can be visualised, named and described. Usually a limited number of Personas per project, about three to five, is sufficient and still manageable.

## Possible procedure

**STEP 1**  
Collect a rich amount of information and insights about your intended users.

**STEP 2**  
Select the characteristics that are most representative of your target group and most relevant to your project.

**Personas are archetypal representations of intended users, describing and visualising their behaviour, values and needs. Personas help you to be aware of and communicate these real-life behaviours, values and needs in your design work.**

## STEP 3

Create 3 to 5 Personas:

- Give each Persona a name.
- Preferably use a single piece of paper or other medium per Persona to ensure a good overview.
- Use text and a picture of a person representing the Persona and visual elements of his/her material context, including relevant quotes from user research.
- Add some demographics such as age, education, job, ethnicity, religion and family status.
- Include the major responsibilities and goals of the Persona.



## Limitations of the method

- Personas cannot be used as an independent evaluation tool. You still need real people to test and evaluate your design.
- Individual representations of Personas do not communicate explicitly the fact that your design will be part of a social context, too. For that reason, 'Socionas' were developed, which represent characteristics typically shared by groups.

## Tips & Concerns

- Use quotes that sum up what matters most to the Persona.
- Do not look into details of your research when creating a Persona.
- Make the Personas visually attractive, thereby motivating yourself and others using the Personas during the design process.
- You can use the Personas to make storyboards.
- When making the Personas it helps to focus on a specific intended user, instead of trying to include everyone.

**REFERENCES & FURTHER READING:** Cooper, A., 1988. *The Inmates Are Running the Asylum*. Indianapolis: Sams. Postma, C.E.\*, 2012. *Creating Socionas: Building creative understanding of people's experiences in the early stages of new product-development*. Delft: TU Delft.

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