

About Personas

What is a persona?

A persona is a descriptive model of typical users of our site. They are not real people but they are based on the behaviours and motivations of real people.

Why do we need personas for the hybrid trip planner?

The majority of existing research focuses on trends but is not directed at what people want from the website.

Personas give us a way of thinking and talking about how our site users behave, how they think, what they want to accomplish and why.

Personas also help eliminate 3 key design issues

- **the elastic user** - each team member has a different view on who the user is and what they want. This lack of focus will result in a lack of clarity about what the final product should do.
- **self-referential design** - this happens when team members project their own motivations, skills and mental models onto the design of the final product
- **edge cases** - without prioritising key user needs, the team can easily overspend resources on edge cases

How did we compose the personas?

- We have based our personas on the following research
- Reports on SouthAfrica.net
- Telephone interviews with international holiday makers
- 4 international (Canada, UK, USA, Germany)
- 1 on 1 interviews with 3 local holidaymakers
- Interview with a travel agent
- Website analytics
- Previous experience on travel websites

How many personas do we have?

This website will have many types of users, but we cannot create a successful design by prioritising them all. We have picked personas whose needs represent the needs of a larger set of key users.

We also acknowledge the existence of several secondary personas whose needs will be accommodated where possible.

Some definitions

Maximiser - a person who wants to see all the possible options and evaluate all outcomes before choosing. They seek and will only accept the best.

Satisficer - a person who takes less time comparing and purchasing products. They usually feel more positive about their choices and experience less regret than their counterparts.

Max Reynolds



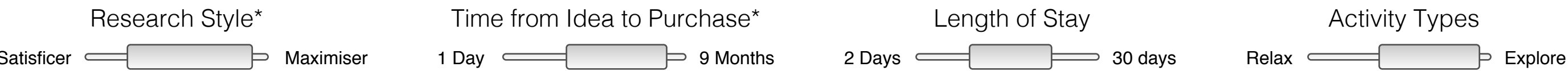
I travel quite a lot but this will be my first time visiting Africa. I want to find unique experiences, people & places for us.

Age: 25 - 40
Job: Middle Management
Gear: Win XP, Firefox, IE
PC Skills: High
Web Skills: High
Mobi Use: High



Behaviours

* = Guestimated based on experience



Scenarios

Finding inspiration
Max & Vanessa don't have a specific destination in mind, they just know they want to travel to an African country and they need inspiration. They know about the pyramids, Mt Kilimanjaro and Table Mountain. Max uses these terms as starting points for finding ideas using Google. He expects these searches to point him in the direction of other holiday ideas.

Looking for reviews and opinions
Max likes to use review sites to get a wide range of real world opinions before he buys. He visits TripAdvisor, Timeout and several blogs found through Google to see what people have to say about holiday experiences in Africa.

Freestyling in CapeTown
Max & Vanessa have been in Cape Town for 5 days. They've seen all the big things they wanted to see and now they're looking for something to "kill time". Max goes onto Google and looks for "things to do in Cape Town". He expects to see a list of things that they can do or see.

Goals / Objectives

Feel like I'm making good use of my research time
Feel confident I know what to do next
Organise and book my own holiday online
Share ideas with Vanessa while we're at work
Learn what other people thought of their experiences in South Africa
"I want to see the best of SA in a single trip"

Concerns

"I worry about my safety in Africa, particularly Egypt (riots) and SA (crime)"
"There seems to be so much available, how do we choose?"
"Should we fly into Jo'burg or Cape Town. How easy is it to travel between the 2 cities?"
"Do they have public transport? How will we get around?"
"Will I be able to get internet access, even on my BlackBerry?"

Frustrations

"I always find something nice, but when I come back I can't find it"
"How do I find the local non-touristy places. I want authentic experiences (and I don't want to pay tourist prices if I don't have to)"
"I don't want to be treated like a tourists, I want the real thing."

Personal Background
Max is a fairly organised individual who travels a lot, sometimes alone, with friends and more recently with his lovely wife, Vanessa. They're always looking for travel opportunities because they want to "get it done" before settling down. He usually organises their trips, but they always make final decisions together.

Jurgen Hock



Now that we've retired, we have a bunch of things that we want to do. Going on safari with lions and elephants is one.

Age: 40 - 60
Occupation: Retired
Gear: Windows XP, IE
PC Skills: Medium
Web Skills: Medium
Mobi Use: Low



Behaviours

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Research Style*
Satisficer Maximiser

Time from Idea to Purchase*
1 Day 9 Months

Length of Stay
2 Days 30 days

Activity Types
Relax Explore

Scenarios

Learning about Safari
Jurgen & Freda have always wanted to go on a Safari trip. He wants to get a better idea of the options out there. He'll to get a travel agent to book it all, but he wants to make sure that he's prepared for that conversation.
He looks up different types of safari's on Yahoo (his email provider).

Looking for a surprise
Whenever they go on holiday Jurgen and Freda have a complete itinerary drawn up so that they known what they will do and when.
Jurgen however likes to surprise Freda with a special little detour.
Now that they've booked, he wants to find one such experience for their trip to South Africa.

Goals / Objectives

- Learn about different types of Safaris
- Feel like I know enough about Safari to make a decision
- Find out what kind of luxury money can buy on Safari
- Find a special experience as a treat for Freda like dinner at a vineyard
- Print out some information to take to the travel agent
- Have a unique luxurious experience

Concerns

- "I want to make sure we're comfortable"
- "Does 5 stars really mean 5 stars?"
- "Will I easily find my embassy when we arrive?"
- "I hear about crime in SA, do I need to worry about that?"
- "Can we easily find a hospital?"
- "Will there be wild animals everywhere?"
- "How will we talk to local people?"
- "How will we get around in SA?"

Frustrations

- How do I know which Safari is best?
- "I can't increase the size of the text on my screen"
- "It always prints out funny"
- "Can I read this in my language?"

Personal Background
Jurgen and Freda have started travelling a lot since he retired. They go on 2 holidays a year (summer and winter). They like to see as much as they can of the world without compromising too much on comfort and luxury.

Zanele "Za"



I'm not interested in Magalies or Haarties. Why can't I just find somewhere different for us to go near Joburg - like 2-3 hrs drive?

Age: 18 - 35

Occupation: Bookkeeper

Gear: Windows XP, IE

PC Skills: Medium

Web Skills: Medium

Mobi Use: High



Behaviours

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Research Style*

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Activity Types

RelaxExplore

Scenarios

Nothing planned, let's go away
Za and Joey have got nothing planned this weekend (for once). It looks like the weather will be lovely and they want to drive somewhere for the weekend.

- They just need a decent place to sleep, nothing fancy
- She likes to make sure that there's a good restaurant or pub wherever they're going because they both like to eat out
- Za uses her BlackBerry to look for things for them to do

Planning for a family trip
Za's sister and husband live in KZN. Za wants to plan a long weekend trip for both couples somewhere in "neutral territory" between Gauteng and KZN.

- Both couples have agreed a rough budget and Za knows the kind of thing that her sister likes
- Za will spend lunch breaks and downtime at work searching for places
- Za will share the ideas with everyone to get a final decision

Goals / Objectives

- Quickly find a getaway within a short drive of here
- To find decent, good value accomodation
- Find that place in KZN that my colleague mentioned
- Find out as much as I can using my BlackBerry
- Share ideas with other people going on the trip
- Feel like a great holiday organiser
- Have a "holiday" experience without leaving SA

Personal Background
Zanele & Joey typically spend weekends out and about in Jozi. But once in a while they like to go away for a weekend. They usually decide last minute on whether they will go away. Za will usually sort everything out, confirming with Joey along the way.

Concerns

- I want to find a bargain, but I don't want to stay in a dump like last time.
- Can we get some GPS coordinates or something so that we don't get lost?
- I don't want to have the same experience as last time

Frustrations

- Can't I just see everything within 2 hours drive of Jozi?
- This looks weird on my phone
- How do I share this with everyone else?
- This site takes so long to load
- How do I know that this place is good?