

USER TEST Card sorting

Card sorting



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Card sorting

WHAT IS IT?

Card sorting is a user-centered design method for increasing a system's "findability".

The process involves sorting a series of cards, each labeled with a piece of content or functionality, into groups that make sense to users or participants.

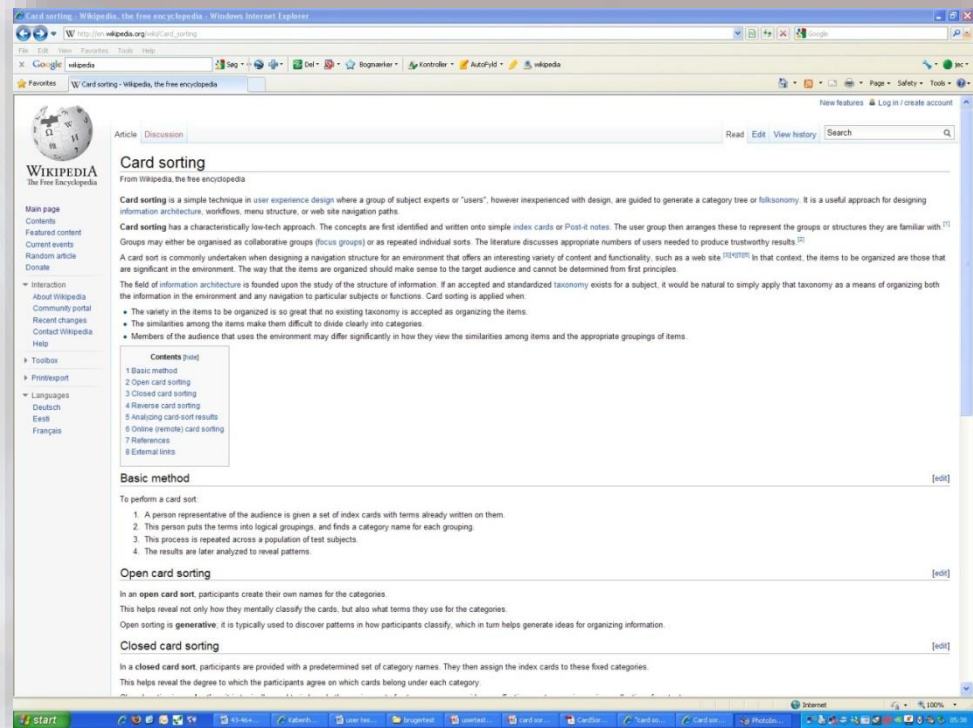


USER TEST Card sorting

Card sorting

WHAT IS IT?

Check out the Wikipedia definition and the links to Jacob Nielsen (card sorting test details; number of users etc...



Information design

- How do we arrange information?

As you already know::

Planning And Implementing Website Navigation

By [Kayla Knight](#)

🕒 June 6th, 2011

🏷️ [Navigation](#), [Showcases](#), [Web Design](#)

💬 [29 Comments](#)

Another really interesting article with info about the card sorting test

... that makes navigation difficult to work with in Web design is that it can be so versatile. Navigation can be simple or complex: a few main pages or a multi-level architecture;

Advertisement



USER TEST Card sorting

Card sorting

Overall **goal** – when it comes to your field of interest...

How
people
think

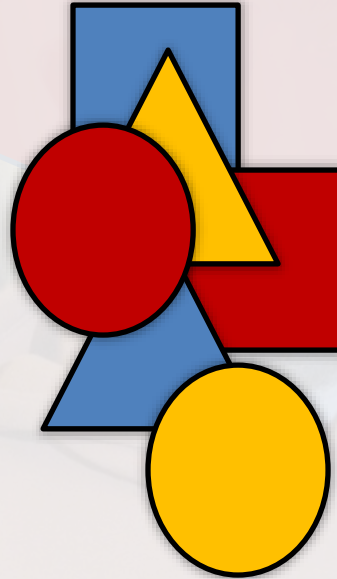


Web Site
> **Structure**

Card sorting

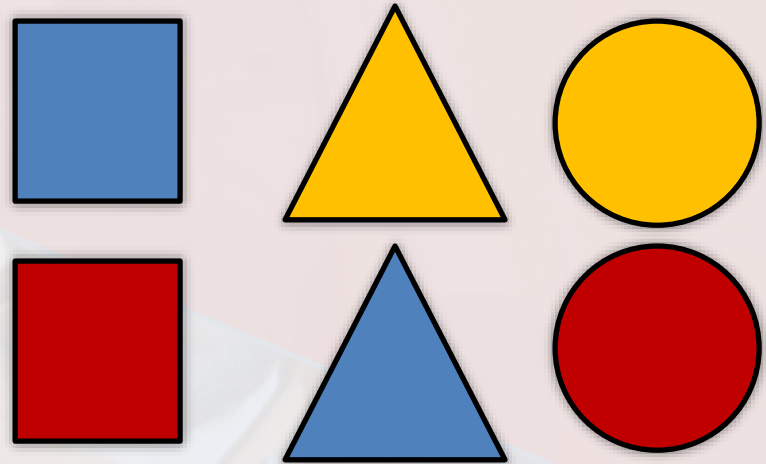
There are
different ways
to sort content.

(And the best way may not be
what you were thinking....)



Card sorting

There are
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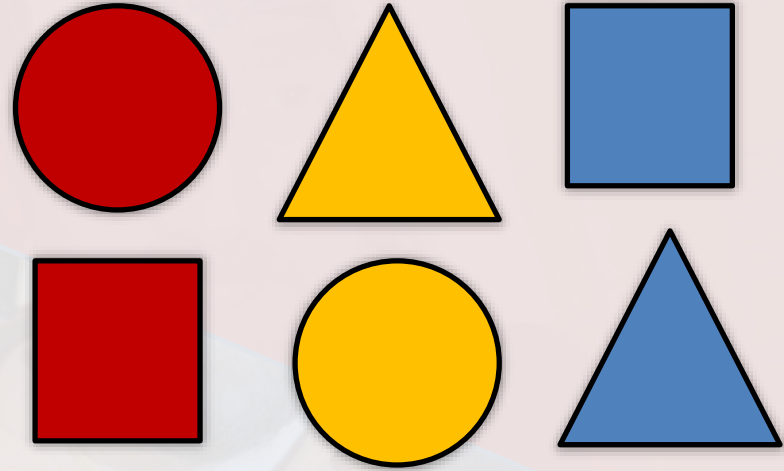
USER TEST

Card sorting

Card sorting

There are
different ways
to sort content.

(And the best way may not be
what you were thinking....)



Card sorting

How can we insure
that different
people find what
they're looking for?

Answer:

CARD SORTING WITH THE PROPER PEOPLE!!!

(and this is easy, since this time "proper people" are yourselves...)



Card sorting

WHY USE IT?

It's a quick, inexpensive, and reliable method, **which serves as input** into your information design process.

Card sorting generates an overall structure for your information, as well as **suggestions** for navigation, menus, and possible taxonomies.



Card sorting

WHY IS IT USEFUL?

You learn...

how different people think about, organize,
and expect to access your content...

and a bit about the language/terminology used
by a particular group...



Card sorting

DISCOVER



Open Sort / Closed Sort

(which begs the question, “what is your goal?”)



VALIDATE

USER TEST

Card sorting

Card sorting

Electronic gadgets e-shop



USER TEST Card sorting

Card sorting

Electronic gadgets e-shop

Open sort

?

telephones

tv

watches

Hair dryers

?

Telephone number

Email add.

imployees

?

pricelist

Shipping info

complaints

?

login

news

On sale

?

faq

USER TEST

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Card sorting

Electronic gadgets e-shop

Closed sort

products

telephones

watches

tv

Hair dryers

Shopping chart

pricelist

Shipping info

On sale

contact

Telephone number

Email add.

employees

news

login

faq

complaints

Card sorting

Preparing for a typical card sorting exercise requires the following:

1. Selecting content
 - *current content areas*
 - *planned/future areas*
 - *free listing with participants*
2. Selecting participants
3. Preparing the cards

Card sorting

Label tip:

Labels/descriptions should be short enough that participants can quickly read the card, yet detailed enough that participants can understand what the content is.

Use same typography and same shape!

Card sorting

TIPS:

- ✓ make sure objects being sorted aren't themselves classifications-- make them sortable!
- ✓ don't expect the same results-- discrepancies are good
- ✓ look for more info in the conversations than in the results
- ✓ be clear on your intentions-- validating (closed sort) or learning (open sort)
- ✓ don't equate final card sort as your site structure -- look at this as input. translation still required.
- ✓ run this session with actual site visitors!!! (no proxies!!)
- ✓ do use internally, to get different groups aligned on issues of labeling/ structure
- ✓ run with individuals and with groups
- ✓ how someone would sort something, and which areas they would actually use (or use more often) are different!
- ✓ be clear about your labeling, use a variety of labels and descriptions. (mobile vs clamshell vs flipphone) - unless you are testing labels, as well


Card sorting

"I don't recommend designing an information architecture based purely on a card sort's numeric similarity scores. ..

Much of the value from card sorting comes from listening to the users' comments as they sort the cards: knowing why people place certain cards together gives deeper insight into their mental models than the pure fact that they sorted cards into the same pile."

-Jacob Nielsen


Card sorting

 boxesandarrows

Stories Ideas Forums People Events Jobs About Search

October Issue, 2008

Donna Spencer



159 Reputation points

Donna Spencer is a freelance information architect and interaction designer, a mentor, writer and trainer. She has 8 years experience working in-house and as a consultant doing both strategic and tactical design. She has designed large intranets & websites, e-commerce & search systems, complex business applications, a set of design patterns and a content management system. She believes deeply in the value of user-centred design and uses a range of user-centred approaches on her projects – from quick analysis of existing research to deep ethnography. She also believes deeply in team-based and iterative design – continually surprising her colleagues by talking to people rather than

Card sorting: a definitive guide

by Donna Spencer and Todd Warfel on 2004/04/07 | [\[41 Comments\]](#)

Introduction

Card sorting is a technique that many information architects (and related professionals.) use as an input to the structure of a site or product. With so many of us using the technique, why would we need to write an article on it?

While card sorting is described in a few texts and a number of sites, most descriptions are brief. There is not a definitive article that describes the technique and its variants and explains the issues to watch out for. Given the number of questions posted to discussion groups, and discussions we have had at conferences, we thought it was time to get all of the issues in one place.

This article provides a detailed description of the basic technique, with some focus on using the technique for more complex sites. This article does not cover some issues such as the use of online tools, which will be covered in a future article.

Why

Card sorting is a quick, inexpensive, and reliable method, which serves as input into your information design process. Card sorting generates an overall structure for your information, as well as suggestions for navigation, menus, and possible taxonomies.

While card sorting might not provide you with final structure, it can help you answer many questions you will need to tackle throughout the information design phase. For example, more than likely there will be some areas that users disagree on regarding groupings or labels. In these cases, card sorting can help identify trends, such as:

“Card sorting is a great, reliable, inexpensive method for finding patterns in how users would expect to find content or functionality.”

Card sorting – in brief...

What is Card Sorting?

Card Sorting is a technique for exploring how people group items, so that you can develop structures that maximize the probability of users being able to find items.

Card Sorting:

- Is easy and cheap to conduct
- Enables you to understand how 'real people' are likely to group items
- Identifies items that are likely to be difficult to categorize and find
- Identifies terminology that is likely to be misunderstood.

When is a Card Sorting appropriate?

Card Sorting is appropriate when you have identified items that you need to categorize.

Card Sorting is particularly useful for defining web site structures.

How is Card Sorting conducted?

Card Sorting can be conducted in a variety of circumstances using various means – one-on-one, during workshops, by mail, or electronically. The following is the basic process.

Names of items to be categorized are printed on individual cards. Cards should be large enough to accommodate the names in a font that participants can read easily when spread out on a desk or table—at least 14 point.

Participants are asked to group items in a way that makes sense to them.

Participants may also be asked to name the resulting groups.



Once all participants have completed the exercise, enter the data in a spreadsheet, and examine the groupings. There will be general agreement about many items, and these groupings will be fairly apparent. For example, all participants may group 'Technical Support' with 'Complaints' and 'Product Assistance'.

You can use cluster analysis to get a pictorial representation of the resultant groupings. An easy way to do this is using IBM's EZSort program (free from www.ibm.com/easy).

Pay special attention to items about which a consensus does not exist. Would re-naming the item improve the situation, or does it need to be included in more than one category?

Who should participate?

Make sure that all participants are representative of the eventual users of the structure you are designing.

Try to get as many participants as convenient, and at least six. However, be aware that the more participants you have, the more data you will need to analyze.

People vary widely in the amount of time they take to sort cards. As a rule of thumb, allow half-an-hour for a participant to sort 50 items.

Variations

There are many variations on the basic technique.

By making the cards slightly larger, you can add some simple questions. For example, ask whether terms are understood (yes/no/unsure) and whether there are suggestions for alternative terms.

It is possible to have people collaborate in grouping the items. However, this runs the risk of reaching a consensus that is not an accurate reflection of any one individual's perceptions.

Preparing for a Card Sort

- Ensure that each term is as clear and unambiguous as possible
- Ensure that you have included all the items you need to categorize
- Shuffle or randomize cards prior to each participant session
- Script a set of instructions so that all participants have the same understanding of the process
- Leave participants alone while they are sorting the cards to avoid placing them under unnecessary time pressure, but make sure they can contact you easily to ask questions or when they have finished
- Provide additional blank cards for people to write group names
- Provide rubber bands so that people can gather groups of cards together.

YOUR first TASK:

What should be on the cards?????

Curriculum Multimedia Design and Communication programme – Collective part

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