

Empathy tools: Artifacts in the UX process

In this reading, you will learn about artifacts in the UX process. Artifacts are documents that design teams create to gather, organize and present information throughout the UX process. You will have an introduction to user personas, scenarios, user stories and storyboards. You will also cover UX UI designers' processes to create them.

User personas

A user persona is a model or character that portrays a possible user of your website or app. Personas aid the design team in focusing on the end users while designing a product. Personas have been used in marketing since the middle of the 1990s. They are essential to the software development process's user experience research stage. Personas help a product team constantly focus on their target users, ensuring that the designed product fits their needs and requirements.

Multiple user types can engage with a website or app. Developing user personas helps determine the range of users, their age group, sociometric position etc. User research is the first step in creating a user persona. UX designers can understand users' behavior and motivations by observing them and designing accordingly. A few user research methods are conducting customer interviews, making assumptions, and using web analytics, all of which are described in the next section.

Conducting customer interviews

Interview at least five people. After conducting several interviews, you'll notice that you're getting very little or no new information. That means you don't need to interview any more users. Also, make use of whatever information you already have. You may have some thoughts on your customers. Whether you have previously conducted research or you know something for sure.

Making assumptions

If you've been working on a product for quite some time. You may have enough information to make reasonably accurate assumptions about your customers. Just make sure to back them up later with research.

Using web analytics

Web analytics tools are an excellent resource for quantitative data, so make the best of them. They can tell you how your customers behave but not why. You'll still need to talk to them to find out what motivates them.

Creating a customer persona group

Once your research is complete, you divide the information into customer persona groups which will then be consolidated into single-user personas, concentrating on the primary needs of the most important user group and one significant pain point.

Tilly

Bio

She lives in Chicago and has recently been promoted to Sales



AGE 60
GENDER FEMALE
OCCUPATION SALES MANAGER
TECH LITERATE MEDIUM

“Loving aunt, great friend, bad gardener, somewhat impatient and avid, impulsive online shopper.”

Manager. She is currently single, likes to socialize with friends and go on exotic holidays.

Core needs

- Needs to find time to organize her life around her promotion.
- View all her expenditure in an overview.
- The time consumption of any service is very important

Frustrations

- Trying to find time to shop for basic items like food, clothes, etc.
- Speed at which items purchased online are delivered.
- Not much choice, if not prepared to wait.

First, add a header to your persona; this includes a fictional name, an image, a demographic profile and a quote that summarizes what matters most to your persona. These features ensure your persona is memorable and helps the design team focus on whom they're designing for. Add a personal background, a mini-biography of sorts. Then you create a psychological profile such as the user's needs, interests, motivations, and pain points.

This allows you to understand better why your user behaves in a certain way, including why they need or want to use your product. For Tilly, in the above example, it would be for expediency. When creating user personas, remember to focus on the context of the product you're designing while you want to build up a realistic character. There's no need to include pointless details that won't influence the final design.

User stories

A user story is a brief statement or abstract that describes the user and their need or goal. It establishes who the user is, what they require, and why they require it. Each user persona typically has one user story. User stories usually adhere to a straightforward template:

As a (*type of user*), I want (*a goal*) for (*some reason*).

- *Type of user*: This is the end-user or the user's role in the application software. For example: "*As an online banking customer.*"
- *A goal*: This is the action taken by the user on the application software. For example: "*I want to add a payee to my account.*"
- *Some reason*: - The outcome or desired value the user expects from the action performed. For example: "*so that I can transfer money to the payee.*"

In this example, the user story is:

"*As an online banking customer, I want to add a payee to my account, so I can transfer money to the payee.*"

User stories assist in documenting helpful information about users, such as the various needs and motivations for using a website or app. They also help the development team estimate the timeline required to deliver the final product.

Scenarios

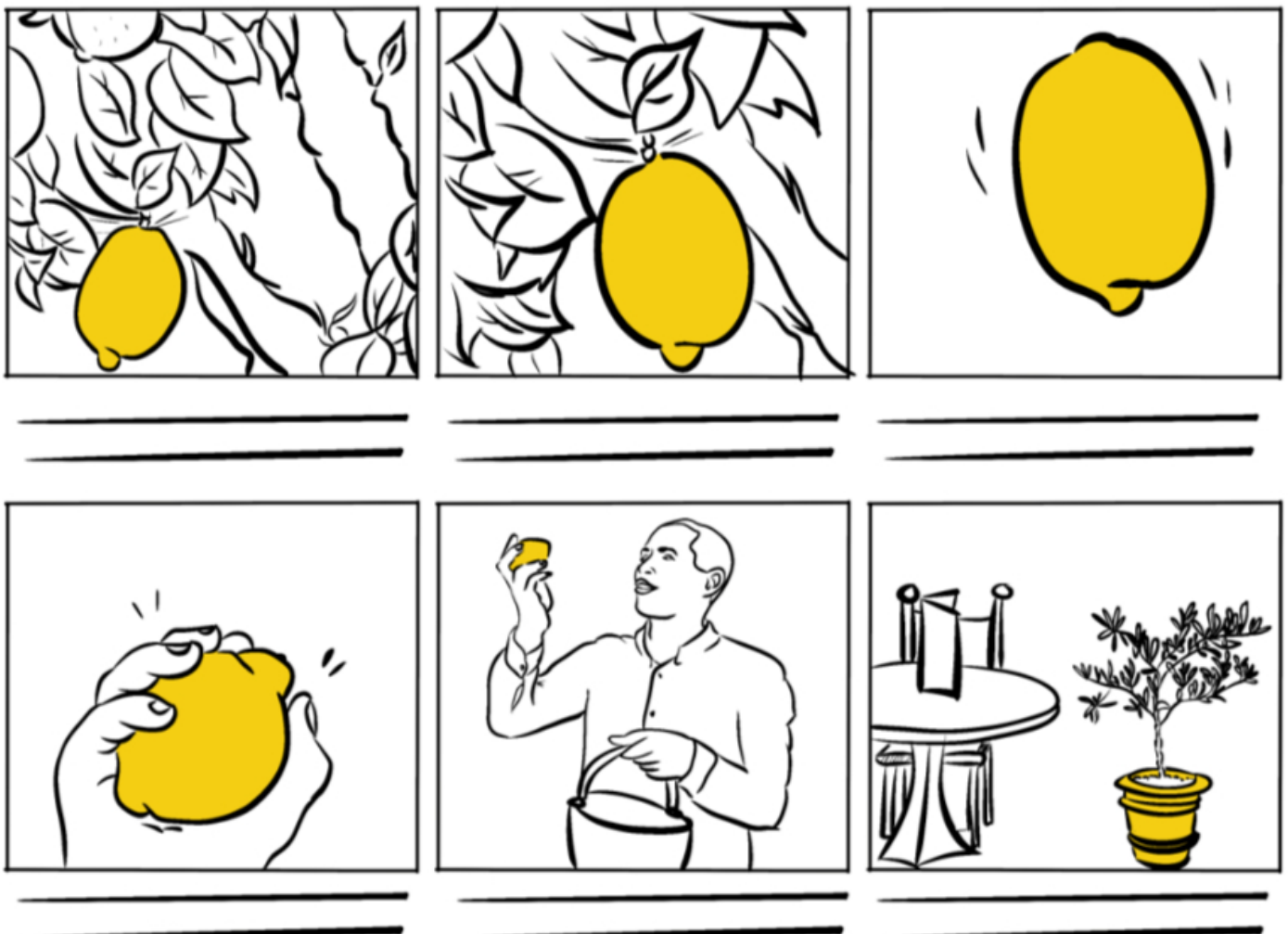
A scenario is a situation that depicts how users interact with your website or app. Scenarios describe the user's motivations for being there (their task or goal) and a question they need to be answered. They also suggest possible ways to achieve these goals. Scenarios are essentially an extension of the user story and can be applied to various target users. However, they can also be divided into use cases, which describe the sequence of tasks that any given user performs in a provided functionality or path.

For example, a scenario could describe how the user transfers money to a payee using a mobile device on his way to work. Scenarios help stakeholders visualize the design team's ideas by providing context for the intended user experience — frequently bridging communication gaps between creative and business thinking. Scenarios aid the design team in imagining the ideal solution to a user's problem.

Scenario mapping is the first step in scenario planning. The design team, developers, and product owners gather to discuss ideas and design a plan centered on their user personas. They think about the critical task that the user hopes to achieve after defining the primary user through persona development. The following step is to conduct a scenario analysis, contextualize the user's goals and walk through the steps the user would take.

Storyboards

A storyboard is a visual representation of how a user will interact with a product. Designers can create different storyboards: sketches, illustrations and screenshots, slideshows and animations, or live demos. Here's a sketched storyboard example:



Storyboarding is an excellent method for visually communicating design concepts to teams, stakeholders, and end users. Visualizing a design idea with an interactive storyboard, like high-fidelity prototypes closely resembling the final product, will help the audience remember, empathize, and connect with it.

How to create a storyboard

To create a storyboard, set the scene by defining:

- your persona,
- the environment (where the persona is) and
- the plot (what they want to achieve).

Then you begin to sketch out the basic idea for each scene and build it up with as many interactions as you want.

Summary

In this reading, you learned that the first step in designing for your users is to conduct user research, typically through user interviews, observations and other quantitative methods. You focused on empathy tools as artifacts in the UX process and how they are used. You specifically learned about user personas, scenarios, user stories, and storyboards. Remember that with each of these tools, it is essential to document the data you gather so you can use it as you create your artifacts in the UX process. It will also serve to back up your decision-making. Utilizing user personas, user stories, scenarios, and storyboards will assist you in identifying essential information about your users. They will help you create products that will delight them time and again. Everything you do to get closer to the user is a positive step towards a usable and enjoyable product.