
USER RESEARCH & PERSONAS

PERSONAS

PERSONAS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES


- › Create personas to define users
- › Identify benefits and challenges of using personas

PERSONAS

WHAT IS A PERSONA?

- An archetype of a group of users
- Created by conducting user research and summarizing trends into one or more archetypes.
- Does NOT represent a single person

Confident learner



Picture credits – [Nerdcoregirl, Flickr CC](http://www.flickr.com/photos/nerdcoregirl/)
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/nerdcoregirl/>

Samantha Bell
“I’d love to keep in contact with my friends”
Sam is about to go abroad for her gap year, so her parents decided to get her a new camera, to make sure she’s able to record everything she gets up to.
She likes the camera as it looks so modern, and it’s able to do so much more than a lot of her friends’ cameras.
She loves being in contact with people all the time, and finds it’s a great way to kill time like when waiting for the bus. She uses a lot of the more advanced features – panoramic shots, online upload and .
When she encounters a problem she ignores it most of the time - she’s not sure if she even got a manual with the camera. When she has trouble she can’t ignore she speaks to her friends, or goes into a camera store – she wants to be talked through the problem.

First time user
Female, 27 year old, single
Student
Sam prefers to learn how to things by trying things out by herself. She isn’t worried about “breaking” anything. If she does need help she would prefer to not to refer to a manual but “do it herself”.

Ideal features

- Ability to take pictures
- Ability to upload images to personal site using 3G/Wifi
- Allowing others to access her pictures remotely
- Long battery life
- Ability to name and add comments to uploaded images
- Ability to create several albums, and upload pictures to each

Frustrations

- Lack of wireless/3G access
- Slow uploads
- Low battery life
- Need to be plugged in to upload images
- Slow shutter speed
- Want to be able to name/add comments to uploaded images
- Getting online is confusing
- Creating new albums

Needs
In order of preference:

1. To share pictures with her parents
2. To share her pictures with her friends
3. To share her pictures with people she meets whilst travelling

Key attributes

	Low	High
Knowledge		●
Experience	●	
Help use	●	
Confidence		●

PERSONAS

WHY ARE PERSONAS IMPORTANT?

- › Communication tool.
- › Useful for summarizing what you know about your user.
- › Will help to highlight pain points and opportunities to tailor your product to your user
- › Keep your product focused on your key users rather than building for the whole world.
- › (Keep in mind it's just a framework, not a roadmap)

PERSONAS

WHAT SHOULD IT INCLUDE?

- Root it in reality. Based on the data you've gathered, not your imagination. No bullshit personas.
- Goals / Needs
- Behaviors
- Pain points
- Scenarios
- Biographical information (name, age, gender, location, income, etc)
- Optionally assign it personality traits (again, based on your research)

PERSONAS

SCENARIOS

- Short stories about a person using you product to achieve a goal.
 - Describes what they would do and why they would do it
 - Independent of interface
 - Gives the context in which a problem is experienced

PERSONAS

EXAMPLE



Vishal

Ph.D student in Philosophy at University of Pittsburgh

"How can I apply Lacan or Zizek to real-world issues?"

Vishal is 30-year-old from India. In undergraduate he majored in computer science but he didn't like it very much since he is more of a "thinker" than "do-er". In addition to this, his insatiable curiosity about what human consciousness is composed of has led him to pursue Ph.D in Philosophy. His dissertation topic is The Semantic Significance of Lacan and Zizek in Applied Philosophy. It's his 9th semester in this program and he has been truly enjoying his study so far, but now that the time to boil down all the big ideas he has been thinking and talking into a solid deliverable — a dissertation — has come, he came to feel insecure about himself and has been delaying his work. Moreover, his tendency to get interested in a lot of different topics not related to his dissertation has been hindering him from making progress.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Idealistic, Loves conceptual-level thinking
- Likes having conversation about his research topic with others than writing about it
- Curious about everything around him

GOALS

- Finish his dissertation by the end of tenth semester
- Stop just talking about big ideas and get down to write about them

FRUSTRATION

- Finds it very hard to just start writing something
- Good at talking about big ideas with his friends, but finds it very frustrating to materialize them into a deliverable

DREAMER



PERSONAS

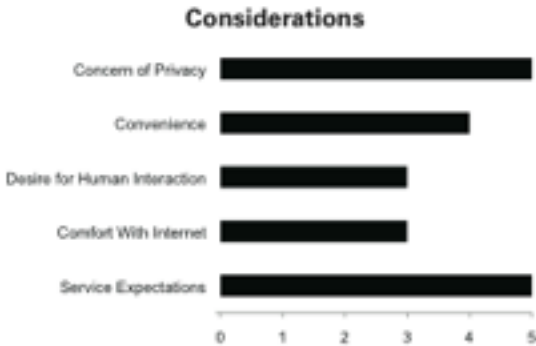
EXAMPLE

Sandra Harrison

Port Angeles Flower Market
Florist



Age: 31 years old
Home: Port Angeles, WA
Health: Healthy, with occasional Eczema outbreaks



“I’m so busy all the time, I wish there was a convenient way to communicate with my doctor and make appointments from my laptop.”

Scenario

Sandra was about to open up for business one morning when she noticed she started to get a minor itch on her right shoulder. She believed that it was not a big issue, and since she was going to start work, she did not have time to worry about it. As the day went on, the shop was getting busy; however, the itch began to irritate her when she was trying to assist with customers. One of the customers pointed out that Sandra’s neck was bright red with little white bumps. Sandra knew it was an eczema outbreak, but this time it was different.

Sandra began to worry, and with a series of phone calls from customers requesting various floral arrangements, Sandra did not have the time to go to a doctor or even have an opportunity to call her Dermatologist to schedule an appointment. Considering that Sandra is on her laptop scheduling and organizing the new orders that came in, she wants to find out how severe her eczema condition is right now, and whether it is considered a medical emergency. She tries to find a few websites that could answer her question, but she is unaware if the answers from the websites are valid. In addition, some of the websites required her to input certain information about her medical history, and she felt uncomfortable because she is unsure about the website’s security and credibility.

Personal Information

Hobbies: Arts and Crafts, Biking, Movie time with family

Favorite Movies: Bridges of Madison County, Forrest Gump, Titanic
Jerry Maquire

Favorite Music: Carrie Underwood, Toby Keith, Garth Brooks, Shania
Twain, Patsy Cline

Favorite Food: Caesar Salad and Home Fries

Personal Habits: Runs errands for family, takes long bike rides along the
Foothills Trail, attends self-improvement classes

Family life: Married for 7 years, two boy (ages 3 and 5). Very dedicated
wife and mother.

Social Life: Active but busy with family, occasionally goes to movies.

Living Situation: Lives with family in a ranch style house in suburbs of
Port Angeles. They have 2 dogs, 3 cats, 1 goat, 1 horse, and
several chickens.

Values: Dedicated to her loved ones, puts their interests before her own.

Responsibilities: Works 40+ hrs/wk, keeps household stocked with
groceries and other necessities, drives children to and from
school and activities.

Technological background: Not tech savvy, uses a laptop for online
shopping and to communicate with friends and relatives on facebook.

Life Goals: Own a floral shop, successfully raise her children, enjoy time
with grandchildren in the future.

Health Goal: Incorporate medical treatment for eczema into her busy
schedule

Life concerns: Family’s health, eczema condition, not be able to own her
own floral shop.

PERSONAS

EXAMPLE

Persona template

Bio & Demographics	Behaviours
Stories & Scenarios	Goals / Needs

PERSONAS

CHALLENGES OF PERSONAS

- They can be artificial / abstract / fictitious
- They are a composite sketch of multiple people all rolled into 1
- They don't have opinions
- They can't talk back, answer questions, or give feedback

USER RESEARCH & PERSONAS

Q&A