OnionShare User Research Plan - Report

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User Research Plan Report: Work Conducted

The UX research pilot plan was developed through consultation, discussions and fact finding between Ashley Di Battista, Glenn Sorrentino, Micah Lee and Saptak Sengupta.

This report documents the steps taken to develop and deliver the current UX Research Plan funded by OTF.

The report includes identifying a core need, the action(s) employed and the deliverables available as a result of the work conducted. This is henceforth referred to as the "NAD" model.
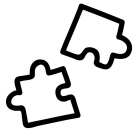
NEED 1: Establishing Research Purpose & Goals

ACTIONS:

1. Met with OnionShare and Science and Design stakeholders to determine the top needs for investigation for the current research study (UX)
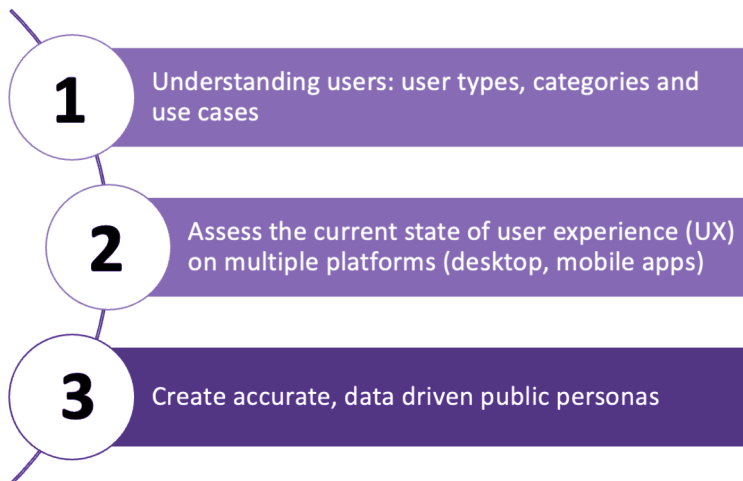
DELIVERABLES:

1. Identified 8 top research questions to explore via the UX Research study

Research Questions
Platforms used (e.g. Mac vs Linux) to focus efforts
Geography of use and need for additional translations
Functionality use, clarity, needs, simplification (eg "decoupling"
Who is the User? Personas via use cases, user definitions
What's it doing well? What can be improved?
Risk assessment: There's an inherent risk when receiving files anonymously. How do users assess and mitigate risk?
Credibility of content received: user processes
Workflows: How does the app get used in practice? What's the overall workflow?

2. Determined and operationally defined the purpose, goals and objectives of conducting UX research on OnionShare via key stakeholder discussions and quantification of the needs and purposes of the research: The purpose of the current research is to better understand OnionShare users. This research will serve to lay the groundwork for repeatable, ongoing long term assessment of user needs and experiences, allowing for fast response to needs as they may emerge, change or shift over time and use cases.

1 Understanding users: user types, categories and use cases

2 Assess the current state of user experience (UX) on multiple platforms (desktop, mobile apps)

3 Create accurate, data driven public personas

NEED 2: Exploring, Vetting and Building Appropriate Research Methods and Research Assets

ACTIONS:

1. The major areas for investigation were matched with the most appropriate research methodologies. The research questions were collapsed into 3 major areas of investigation, to be investigated using three different research methods.

2. Multiple user testing platforms were investigated by Ashley Di Battista. Maze was chosen as the best platform, given its options for direct integration with Figma prototypes, the quantity of options and testable elements via the available per month cost packages.

   Four use cases are identified as central to the OnionShare user experience:

   1. sharing information anonymously
   2. Receiving information anonymously
   3. Chatting anonymously
   4. Hosting a site anonymously

Each of these four use case conditions will be incorporated into the user testing as separate conditions. Live testing is not possible, as OnionShare is a downloaded program not a website.

Each of the elements must be designed and developed in Maze to allow for accurate testing, data recording and eventual analysis of the user engagement in each testing session. This includes but is not limited to development of the prototypes, the question blocks that lead to the testing experiences, informed consent for participants, screening questions regarding OnionShare use and user segmentation categories (e.g. multiple choice to indicate mastery of OnionShare, if they are new or long time users of OnionShare, job title categories, etc).

3. Figma Prototype Development. Performed by Glenn Sorrentino. A clickthrough prototype based on OnionShare's MacOS desktop app. Intended to be used for assessment of core app functionality. This includes prototypes of each of the four Key Flows, plus the initialization screen: Initialization; Share Files; Receive Files; Host a Website; Chat

4. Survey development: The survey was developed using CryptDrive. It included targeting the key features of defining the users (e.g. job categories), uses of OnionShare (e.g. purpose of use for individuals) and experience with the OnionShare tool (e.g. new to the tool vs. expert; casual usage vs. daily multiple interactions).

5. Access to download and install data were acquired via sharing of the data analytics platforms (e.g. Apple Store, Google Play analytics; download and install data direct from web server) for analysis

DELIVERABLES:

1. **Unmoderated, anonymous, task and goal oriented user testing via Maze platform.** The Maze platform was selected as the user testing platform. Signup with site and preparation of content for testing initiated.

2. **Interactive Figma prototypes** were developed to be used to test usability in an as close to real life interaction process as possible. Figma prototypes for each user testing case (4 in total): Prototype; Figma

Prototype Info
OnionShare Testing Prototype

Flows
1. Initializing
2. Share Files
3. Receive Files
4. Host a Website
5. Chat

Notes
All flows click the Advanced settings option before the main CTA.

Clickpaths
1. Initializing: Autoplay after 4s
2. Share Files: 1. Start Sharing > 2. Add Files > 3. Anywhere > 4. Advanced Settings > 5. Start Sharing > 6. Autoplay Starting > 7. Autoplay Active State > 8. Notification Dot > 9. Close Tab (Exit to Home)
3. Receive Files: 1. Start Receiving > 2. Advanced Settings > 3. Start Receiving > 4. Autoplay Starting > 5. Autoplay Active State > 6. Notification Dot > 7. Stop Receiving > 8. Close Tab (Exit to Home)
4. Host a Website: 1. Start Hosting > 2. Add Files > 3. Advanced Settings > 4. Start Hosting (MISSING SCREEN) > 5. Autoplay Starting > 6. Autoplay Active > 7. Notification Dot > 8. Close Tab > 9. Close (Exit to Home)
5. Chat: 1. Start Chatting > 2. Advanced Settings > 3. Autoplay Starting > 4. Active > 5. Close Tab (Exit to Home)

1. Start   2. Loading   3. Loading Compl...

4. Home

3. **Anonymous survey.** A survey was developed on CryptDrive. The survey takes less than 2 minutes to complete and provides short multiple choice questions to assess the core experiences, features and processes of the users currently engaging with OnionShare.

4. **Data analytics - OnionShare downloads and installs usage data**. Access to data sources, dashboards and content were downloaded for data analytics in various platforms (e.g. SPSS, Excel, in-house services from each platform dashboard like visualizations, etc).

NEED 3: Reporting & sharing information with OTF

ACTIONS:

A variety of research plan deliverables were prepared, including:

1. Research plan document writing
2. Research plan presentation deck preparation
3. Research plan presentation recorded for async review / delivery (Dr Ashley Di Battista)
4. Preparation of next steps:
    a. Participant recruitment strategies
    b. Compensation strategies that ensure anonymity of participants is intact
    c. Finalization of Maze user testing experience
    d. Initializing the data collection: go live of survey and user testing
    e. Data analytics of download and install usage data
5. Timeline and milestone tracking: Key dates for each stage of the research process, as part of the current grant. Note that one week has been allocated for completion of each of the milestones. This timeline is flexible noting the presence of potential dependencies and contingencies (e.g. participant recruitment) that will impact the stages of the project.

DELIVERABLES:

1. [Research plan document (PDF)](#)
2. [Research plan deck (PDF)](#)
3. [Research plan recorded presentation](#) (Dr Ashley Di Battista)
4. Timeline and milestones

| Week 1 Write Research Plan | Week 2 Participant Recruitment | Weeks 3-4 Data Collection | Weeks 5-6 Data Analysis | Weeks 7-8 Reporting & Communication |

Research Plan Summary

The current research aims to assess OnionShare's desktop and mobile apps to create accurate user personas.

The expected impact on product or service design and development will be enhanced user experience, identified opportunities for improvement, and the ability to tailor future development based on user needs.

The current study is a pilot; in addition to the expected impact on product and service design and development, the research process and methodologies will be used to inform best practices for research at Science and Design, while laying the foundation for future research activities.

Next steps and follow-up activities will be to implement recommended changes, monitor user feedback, and conduct follow-up research as needed.

**Illustrations accompanying the "Need", "Action(s)" and "Deliverables" sections in this document are [attributable to RawPixel on FreePik](#)