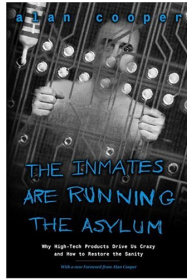


The use of personas in web design



Use of personas

- Popularized by Alan Cooper's book
- "Personas are not real people...they are *hypothetical archetypes* of actual users...defined with *significant rigor and precision.*"



Benefits of personas

- Users' goals and needs become a common point of focus for the web site decisions.
- By always asking, "Would Jim use this?" the design team can avoid the trap of building what users ask for rather than what they will actually use.
- Design efforts can be prioritized based on the personas.
- Disagreements over design decisions can be sorted out by referring back to the personas.
- Designs can be constantly evaluated against the personas, getting better designs into usability testing.

Constructing personas


- Contextual interviews
- Surveys
- Focus groups
- Usability testing

Typical elements

- Photo(s)
- Name
- Age
- Goals
- Personal details/family life
- Income/spending habits
- Work/job details
- Use environment/artifacts
- Activities/use scenarios
- Knowledge/Skills/Abilities
- Goals/motives/concerns
- Likes/dislikes
- Quotes
- Market size/influence

Examples

USDA SENIOR MANAGER
DANIEL FERRELL



Matthew Johnson
Program Director, USDA

- \$1.2 million salary
- Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics
- Contributes using knowledge, information, interpersonal, and technical skills
- Uses email extensively, uses the web about 1.5 hours a day for his work

Key Attributes

- Focused, goal-oriented
- Data driven
- Concerned about maintaining quality across all output of program under direction

"Can you get me that staff analysis by Tuesday?"
Matthew spends most of his time at work, researching and reviewing research reports, preparing memos and letters for agency heads, and supervising staff efforts in local sales and promotion.

Common misperception of personas

“Personas are to Persona Descriptions as
Vacations are to Souvenir Picture Albums.”
- Jared Spool



Typical process

- Jam session leading to consensus, then specifics, e.g.,
 - Each person on a “team” describes one assumed user type
 - User types are then clustered together
 - Priorities identified, “stakeholders” consulted
 - Specifics added to fill out archetype
