

**User**

**research**

**activity**

**cards**

# User research activity cards

Each of these 16 cards describes a different user research activity and explains when and how to use it effectively.

You can use them for inspiring different types of research and sharing ideas with your team.

Find more detailed advice on the Government Service Design Manual: <http://bit.ly/1hDJmO4>

## What do you think?

This is the first version of these cards. To help make the next version better, email your feedback to: [researchcards@googlegroups.com](mailto:researchcards@googlegroups.com)

Research activity

# Guided tour



Research activity

# Guided tour

Users show how they complete a task in response to your questions, with or without using your service.

Use when you want to understand which tools and information are useful and which ones aren't.

You should:

- connect people's descriptions of their actions to what they actually do
- make things easier, more effective or more enjoyable

Find out more at <http://bit.ly/1hDJmO4>

Research activity

# Pop-up research



Research activity

# Pop-up research

Go somewhere your users are likely to be. Recruit them to take part in short research sessions that day.

Use it when your target users are difficult to recruit. Your questions or tasks can be done in 15 minutes or less

You should:

- make immediate improvements based on findings. Try again
- use unexpected insights to open up new research areas and drive new ideas

Find out more at <http://bit.ly/1hDJmO4>

Research activity

# Sketch your idea



Research activity

# Sketch your idea

Sketch how a service or feature should look and behave together with users.

Use it when you want to know what features of your service are important to users, quickly visualise potential solutions or identify misunderstandings or false assumptions.

You should:

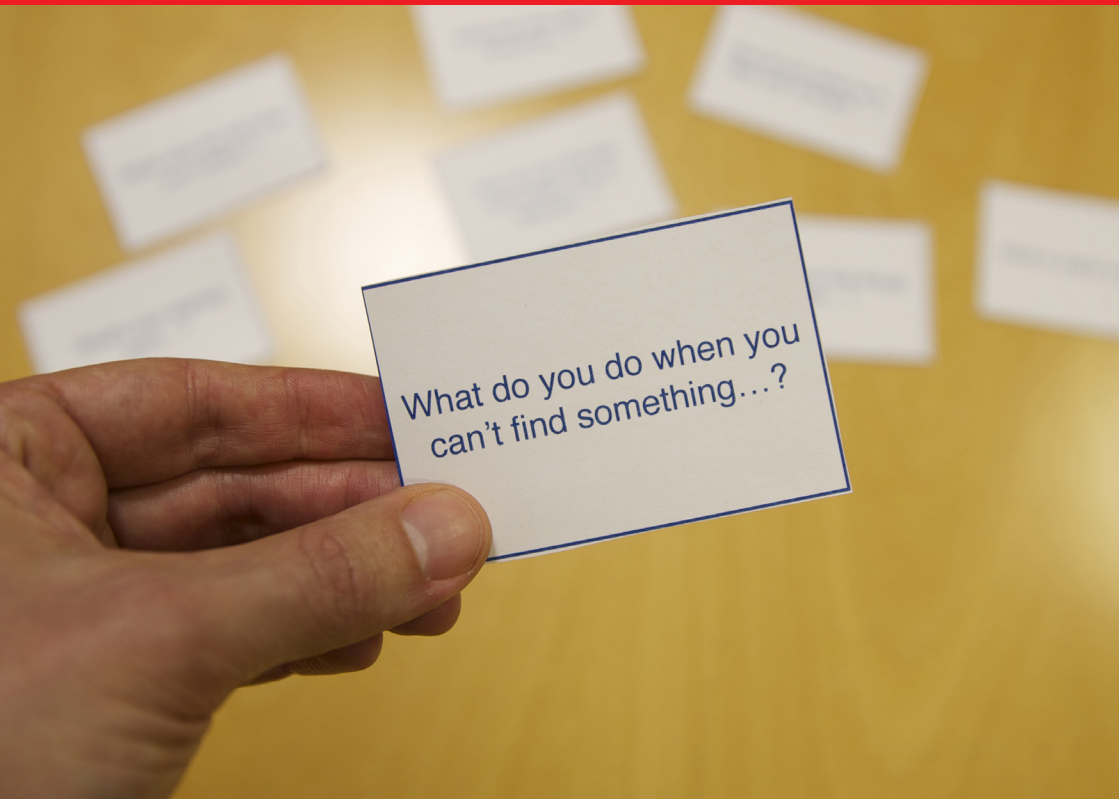
- annotate sketches with your notes
- review them with your team. Highlight interesting ideas

Find out more at <http://bit.ly/1hDJmO4>



Research activity

# Conversation cards



Research activity

# Conversation cards

Show your users cards with pictures or words on them to prompt an open ended conversation.

Use it when you want the person you're interviewing to lead the conversation, within the scope of topics you want to discuss.

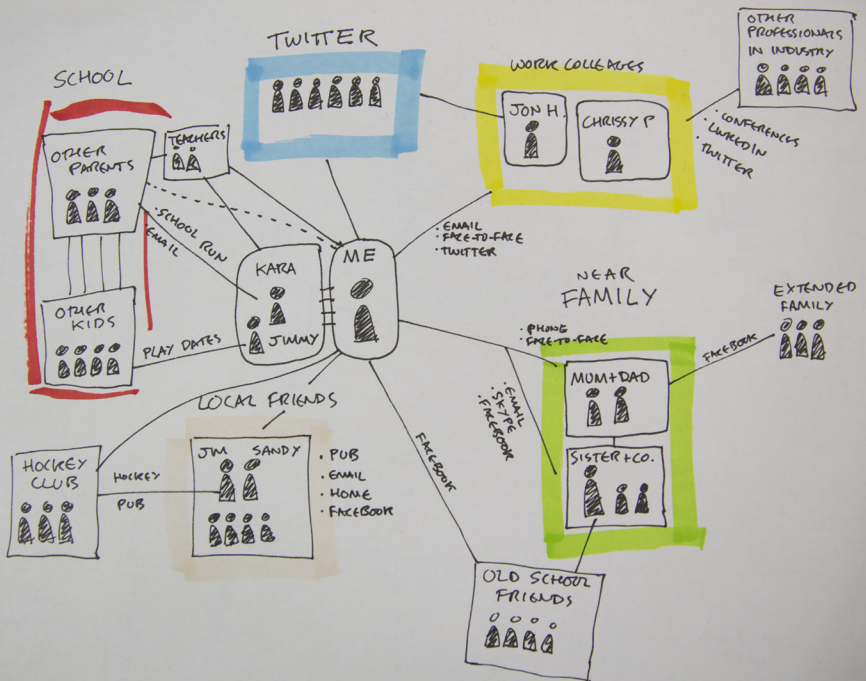
You should:

- note the words people use, the cards they pick first and the topics that trigger the strongest reaction
- update your content or process to better reflect what your users need
- create user personas based on the way different groups of users think

Find out more at <http://bit.ly/1hDJmO4>

Research activity

# Social network mapping



Research activity

# Social network mapping

Users map and discuss their personal networks.

Use it when users' relationships affect how they use your service and how you deliver it.

You should:

- use your findings to develop user personas
- expand the user groups you think about when designing your service

Find out more at <http://bit.ly/1hDJmO4>

Research activity

# Affinity mapping



Research activity

# Affinity mapping

Sort information into related topics and make sense of them. Use it when you're analysing findings from research together.

You should:

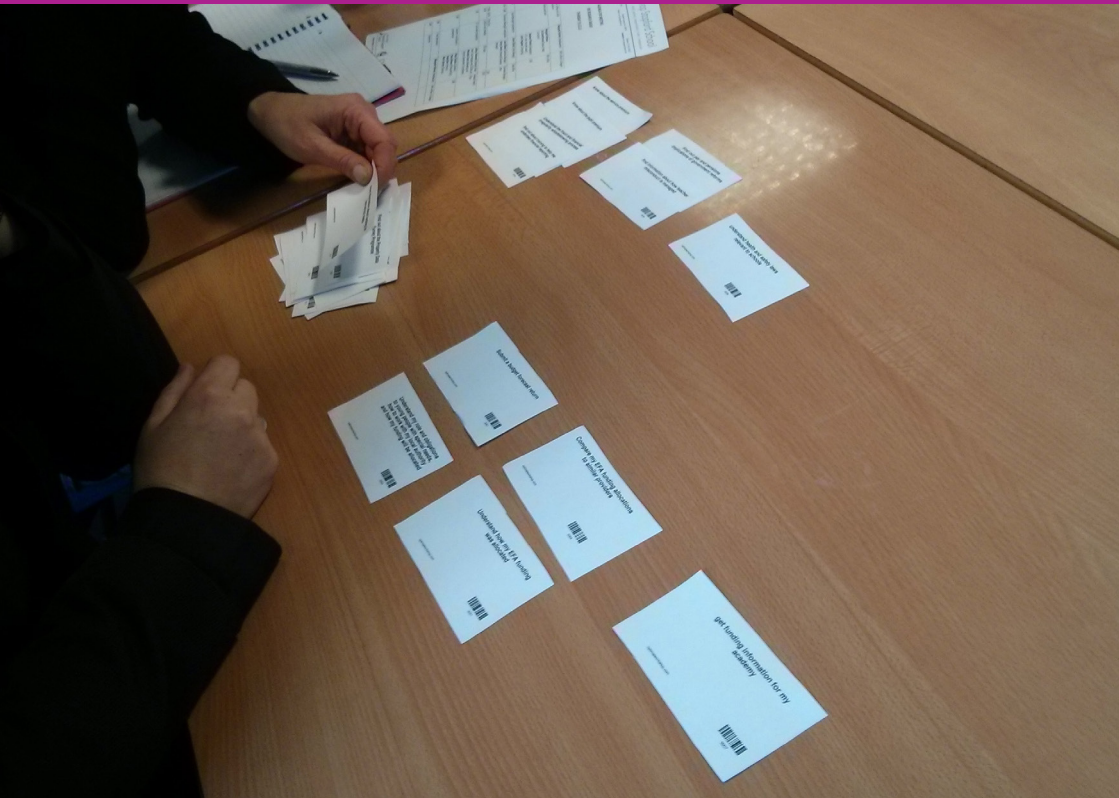
- reveal unexpected relationships in the data and discover insights
- agree what's most important in your groupings. In large groups, vote with stickers
- base what you'll do next on your findings. Share with the wider team

Find out more at <http://bit.ly/1hDJmO4>



Research activity

# Card sorting



Research activity

# Card sorting

Users group cards that represent different ideas into categories they've chosen.

Use it for improving your service by matching how content is structured to how users think.

You should:

- try reversing the card sort. New group of users place cards into the categories you've created, to see if they make sense
- improve how you structure information, label groups and content items, and link content

Find out more at <http://bit.ly/1hDJmO4>



Research activity

# Think aloud



Research activity

# Think aloud

5 users in individual sessions think aloud while performing tasks on your service.

Use it when you want to see if users can achieve what they want on your service.

You should:

- make immediate improvements to your website.  
Test again with 5 more users
- feed bigger issues into service strategy and policy
- use findings to interpret data from analytics.  
Make changes. Monitor them

Find out more at <http://bit.ly/1hDJmO4>

Research activity

# Write a diary



Research activity

# Write a diary

People record their personal experiences using words, pictures, video or audio for up to three months.

Use it when you want to know how users relate to your service over a longer period of time.

You should:

- highlight pain points and inefficiencies. Look for solutions
- monitor impact of changes over the course of the diary study
- make broader service improvements based on insights from diaries

Find out more at <http://bit.ly/1hDJmO4>

Research activity

# In their environment



Research activity

# In their environment

Spending time with a user to see how they go about an activity, without direct prompting.

Use it when you want to understand what people actually do, not what you think or they say they do.

You should:

- share photos, audio, video and artefacts to build empathy and understanding of your users' experiences
- highlight unexpected problems or opportunities
- draw attention to importance of users' surroundings
- use your deeper understanding to rethink how your service works for users

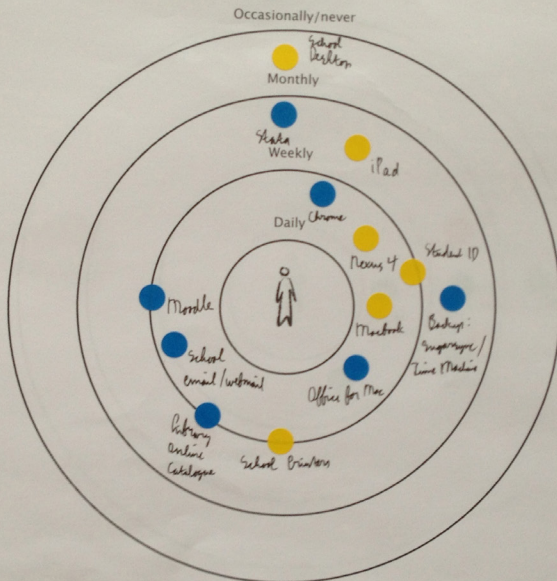
Find out more at <http://bit.ly/1hDJmO4>



Research activity

# Map your use

Bad experience



Good experience

Research activity

# Map your use

Users mark services they use on paper against two measurements. For example: regular or occasional use, good or bad experience, useful or fun.

Use it when you want to understand how users feel about and use multiple services.

You should:

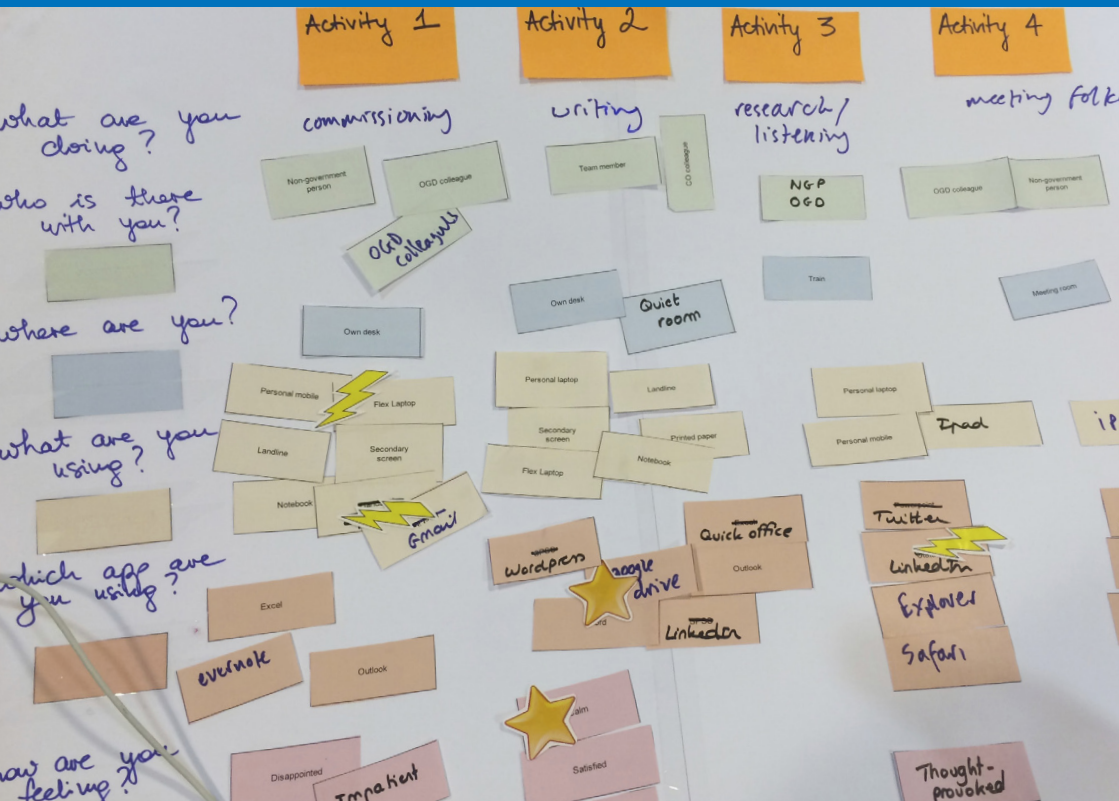
- find the best way to position your service, based on how it fits into your users' lives
- find gaps or problems that might point to new opportunities for your service

Find out more at <http://bit.ly/1ckNkl2>



Research activity

# A day in the life



Research activity

# A day in the life

Users describe a typical day in their lives.

Use it when you want to understand more about users' activities, where and when they do things, who with and what tools and information they use.

You should:

- create or improve user personas reflecting how groups of users manage their days
- share the findings of how your service fits into users' daily lives with your team

Find out more at <http://bit.ly/1hDJmO4>

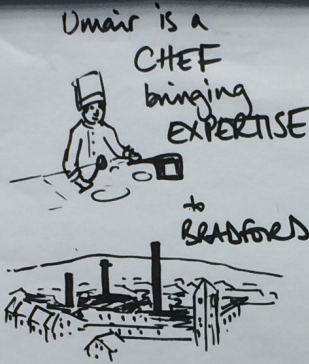
Research activity

# User persona

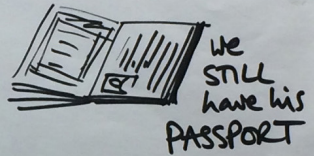


**UMAIR**

35, single  
Pakistani national  
6 months - 1 year?



He was previously  
**REFUSED**  
for a Tier 1  
application...



What are  
UMAIR's I.T.  
skills like, and  
does he have a  
smart phone?  
I reckon no, though  
I bet his phone does  
web

He's using a small,  
unknown legal rep co.



Say you earn  
£26,000/year,  
even if you  
don't. It helps.

WORKS ON  
IT



FOR A BIG  
MULTINATIONAL  
**BANK**

Research activity

# User persona

A rough portrait based on research data that demonstrates typical behaviours for a group of users.

Use it when you want to help your team understand the needs of different users.

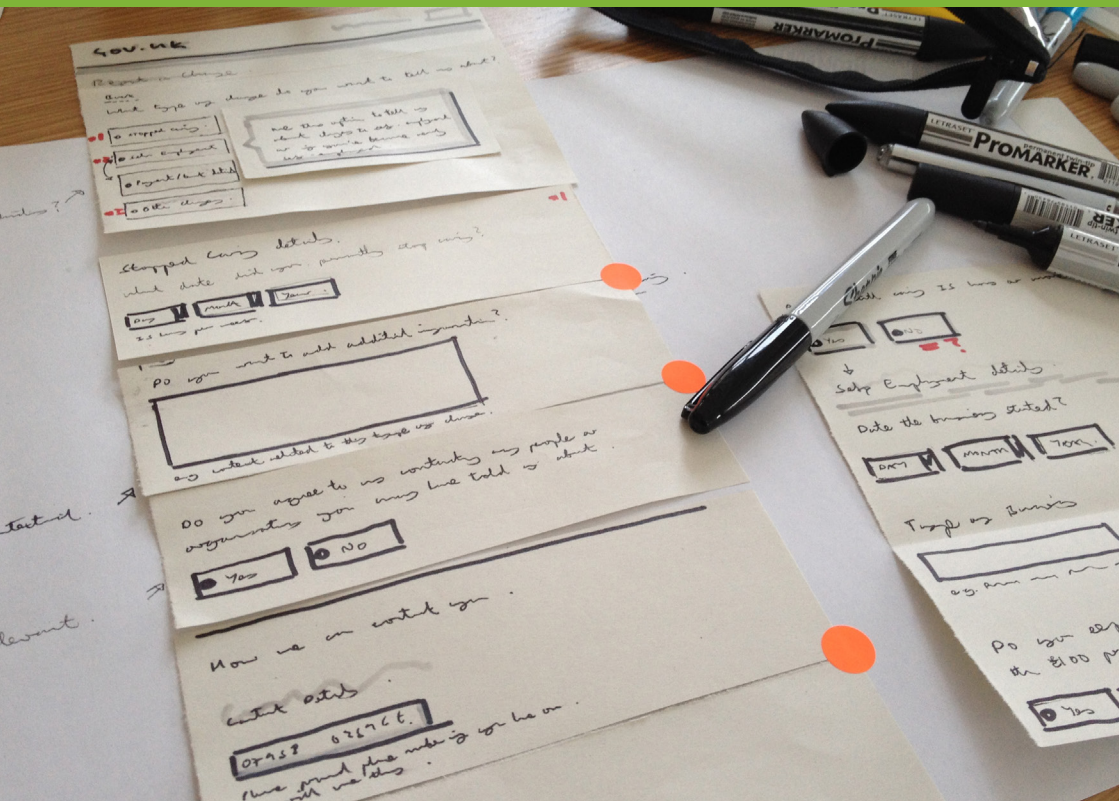
You should:

- present and share the personas with your team
- find ways to make personas readily available, for example by putting up posters
- keep updating your personas as you do more user research

Find out more at <http://bit.ly/1hDJmO4>

Research activity

# Paper prototyping



Research activity

# Paper prototyping

Sketch how a service might look and behave.

Use it when you want to try out a few ideas without getting bogged down in specifics.

You should:

- walk through your sketches with users and stakeholders. Test your assumptions. Discover potential problems
- prompt wider conversations about how users and stakeholders relate to the service

Find out more at <http://bit.ly/1hDJmO4>



Research activity

# My user journey

CLAIMANT: INTERVIEW #1

SUBJECT!  
A HEALTH NOTICE  
LEASE RAN OUT!

ACCOUNTANT & LIQUIDATORS  
"GIVE YOU A FORM"

TAKE HOME  
↓  
FILL IN.

SPEAK TO PRACTICE MANAGER FOR INSURANCE INFO.

HAD PHONE MESSAGES

SENT TO ACCOUNTANT/LIQUIDATOR

SPEAKING TO COLLEAGUES:  
HOW MUCH? HOW LONG?

DIDN'T HEAR ANYTHING

About the job:  
Receptionist in a medical practice  
12 yrs.

LOST FORM

CHASED FORM

- 3 weeks -

DIDN'T HEAR ANYTHING.

→ PAY

"We haven't got it."

Look up a chart:  
Not very accurate.

Takes about a month...  
get holiday pay, get a month

DO I HAVE ALL THE INFORMATION!

LOOKS MORE THAN IT WAS

STARTING DATE  
GROSS SALARY  
NET

BONUSES? INC. TAXES

PERSONAL WORKS AS OVERTIME...

START DATE OF HO. YEAR.

HOLIDAY TAKEN & OWED

Pretty quick!

VERY DISTRESSED

SCARY FORM

STRESSFUL

PANIC

All I had was a letter from RPS - came on time, said sorry

Expected it to be sorted...

Very efficient.

Emotional & distressed time.  
Things get neglected  
I had support from colleagues  
It's nice to have a network.

Didn't expect anything in terms of payment of payment - very grateful

I think difficult, but the form filling was the most stressful - Can provide all the information - I had someone to help me out.

MORE SCARED IF ONLINE  
IS THERE A HELPLINE?

Research activity

# My user journey

A user maps their evolving relationship with a service.

Use it when you want to understand how users move from awareness, to action, to using the service and to find what support they need on this journey.

You should:

- improve the design and content to help users at different stages of their journey
- challenge how you think about your service and the options you give users
- use the ‘user journey’ format to communicate the design of your service to your wider team

Find out more at <http://bit.ly/1hDJmO4>



Research activity

# Remote research



Research activity

# Remote research

User research over the phone, with a screen sharing tool. Use it when you want to:

Use it when you want to quickly test assumptions and direct further research and design. Or when you want to speak to users that are far apart, in time or space.

You should:

- review findings with wider team. Agree on the next stages of research and design
- highlight surprising findings. Think about the best ways to explore them further

Find out more at <http://bit.ly/1hDJmO4>