

The Personas method: An instrument for visitor-centered products and services

Connected Audience 2017

Overview

- Visitor research
- Other disciplines / other museums
- Personas
- Scenarios
- How to ...
- Conclusion

Visitor research

Sources for information about visitors:

- Administration
- Public relations & customer care
- Museum education
- Visitor research, e. g.
 - visitor surveys
 - observation of visitor behaviour
 - interviews
 - focus groups
- Market research

Visitor research

The crucial question:

What does the typical user look like?

Example:

What statistics tell you about the typical German museum visitor: statistically the median body size is 168 cm (eye level at 156 cm), IQ = 105, age 28 years, second level education (Realschule), 56% male and 44% female (Rietschel 1988: 52)

How helpful is this information?

Visitor research

What museum curators consider to be the so-called “interested” or “ideal” visitor:

„Der ideale Besucher ähnelt der eigenen Person insofern, als dieser mit vergleichbaren Interessen und vergleichbarem Vorwissen gesegnet, jedoch etwas weniger informiert ist.“
(Tyradellis 2014: 102)

Visitor studies indicate that less than 5 % of the visitors comply to this cliché.

(Serrell & Raphling 1995: 54)

Visitor research

Problems with data from visitor studies:

- Abstract quantitative and/or qualitative data
- The data lack comprehensibility
- Problems with communication of data
- Problems in application of data
- Therefore it is necessary to make the data “actionable”

Other disciplines ...

... similar situations:

- Marketing (the origin of the method)
- Software development, information design
- Technical documentation
- Accessibility on the Internet
- Solution:
Application of the personas method –
using of typical user representations in
order to create user-oriented products and
services

Other disciplines ...

... similar situations: BBC Local Radio (England) and its project „Bullseye“ in the early 2000s (radio strategy 2010)

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BBC_Local_Radio#Dave_and_Sue>:

- „Dave and Sue“, two fictitious radio listeners: a couple in their mid-50s, he a plumber, she a secretary, both divorced with grown-up children, no interest in politics or high culture, listen to the radio to be entertained/diverted.
- In 2005 elected “Receptionist of the Year”, represented by two hired actors during the ceremony.

Other museums ...

The Gallo-Roman Museum in Tongeren, Belgium, used three “learning-type oriented characters” based on 500 interviews:

- Piet (28 % of the potential visitors):
10 years old, active, little museum experience, visits with class, high media affinity
- Mieke (10 % of the potential visitors):
34 years old, housewife, visits only in company (family, friends), practical
- Gust: (27 % of the potential visitors):
51 years old, visits both alone and in company, high museum experience, text-oriented

Other museums ...

use personas to make user data “actionable”:

- The Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC, ...
- The Tate, London, ...
- EU projects such as Europeana ...
 - M3.2.3 eConnect Personas Catalogue
 - M3.2.3 eConnect Personas Catalogue Update

Personas

What are personas?

- Personas are pretend users, i.e. fictitious characters who represent prospective user groups throughout the design process.
- Personas not real people because people are individuals and are not
 - based on data
 - typical / characteristic
 - general / universal
 - representing a target group

Personas

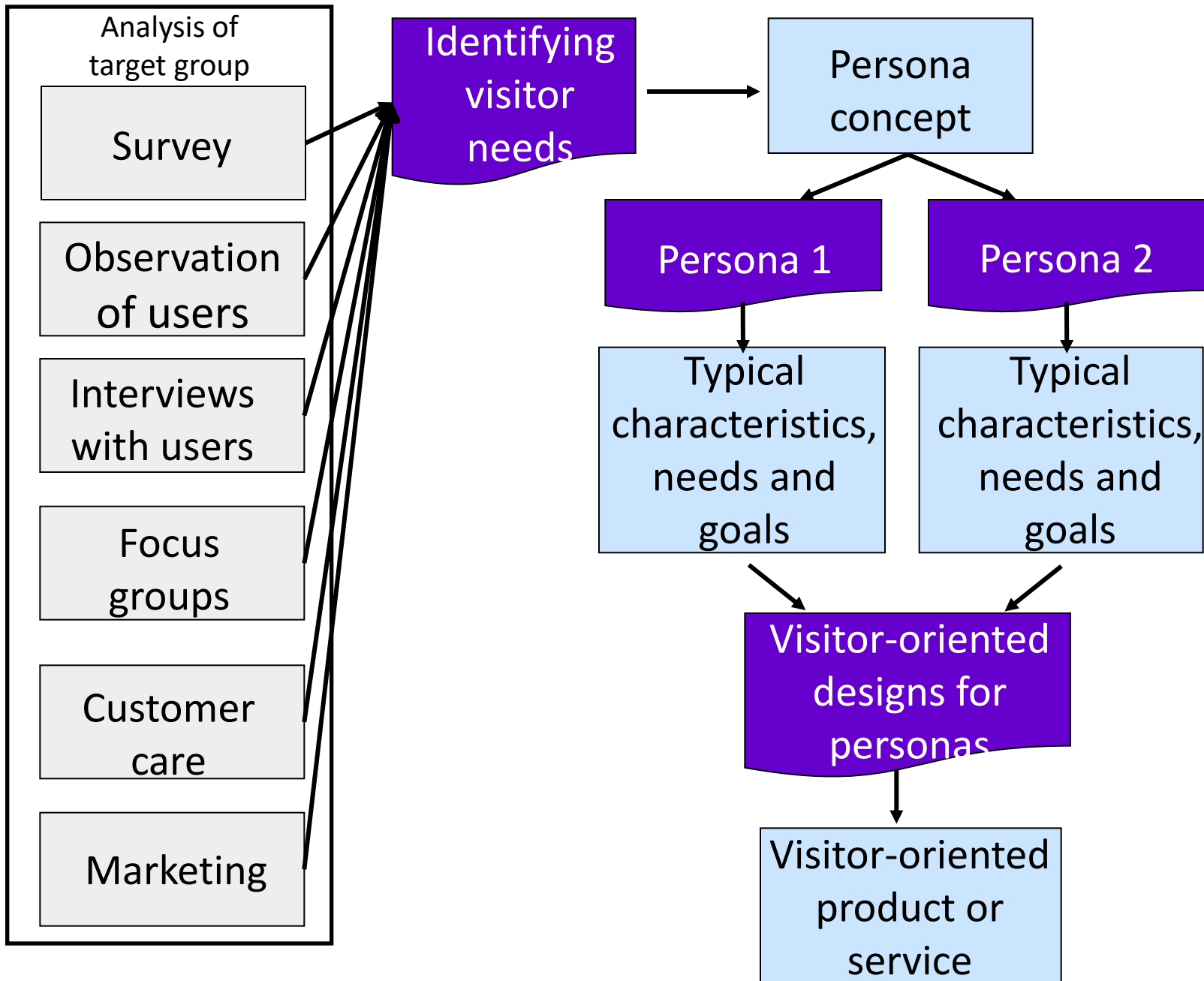
What can personas do?

- They humanize vast and disparate data sources.
- They rely on our ability to remember details about individual people.
- They create associations and empathy in the project team.
- They provide a common and aligned understanding for the whole project team.

Personas

What do personas look like?

- Meet the personas
Christian Michels and Else Schultheiss!



Personas

Steps in working with personas (1 of 3)

- Develop a cast of characters for the project
- Identify the primary/secondary personas or contrasting personas
- Identify the personas who are not users
- Define the personas' needs, goals, interests
- Define the constraints the personas face
- Develop the social and personal aspects of the personas

Personas

Steps in working with personas (2 of 3)

- Define the knowledge, habits and possibilities of the personas
- Define the tasks the personas want to do with the product or service
- Define the devices the personas use
- Enrichment of personas, e.g.
 - motivation for the visit
 - mode of visit (alone, in company)
 - patterns of movement in exhibit rooms
 - holding time of objects, texts

Personas

Steps in working with personas (3 of 3):

- Create Skeleton personas and descriptions
- Write scenarios for each persona that explains how the persona will use the product or service
- Role-play the scenario taking the role of the personas
- Use the findings to design the product or service

Skeleton personas

Name	Else Schultheiss	
Age	64	
Marital status	Name	Christian Michels
Educational ach	Age	32
	Marital status	Married, no children
Profession	Educational achievement	MA in business adminstration
...		
Type of museum	Profession	controller
...
Hobbies	Type of museum visitor	first visit
Media affinity	...	
...	Hobbies	Sports, music, cinema
Information need	Media affinity	
...
	Information needs	

Name	Else Schultheiss	
Age	64	
Marital status	Name	Christian Michel
Educational achievement	Age	32
Profession	Marital status	Married, no children
...	Educational achievement	MA in business administration
Type of museum visitor	Profession	controller
...
Hobbies
...	Type of museum visitor	first visit
...
...	Hobbies	Sports, music,
...

Scenario 1
Else uses traditional media in the exhibit

Scenario 2
Christian plans the visit to the museum ...

Scenario 3
Christian reads texts in the exhibit ...

Scenario 4
Christian looks for information on ...

Personas

Personas are “facts & fiction”, so

- add narrative aspects but don't overdo it!
- avoid stereotypes (prejudice)!
- avoid clichés (movie-like characters)!

Scenarios

- A scenario is a narrative, a short story
- It tests ideas for functionality, design or marketing of a product or service.
- It describes the situation of use:
 - a real situation,
 - usually a typical situation,
 - with details but not over-elaborate.
- It shows how the persona(s) behave and what they experience.
- It is told from the perspective of the protagonist(s), the central character(s).

Scenarios

- A scenario can have different designs:
 - problem oriented
 - test oriented
 - idea generating
 - ...
- It is a vehicle for team communication.
- It weaves a compelling and memorable narrative.

Thanks for listening!
Do you have comments or questions?

Join us for the how-to section
of the workshop!

