

Research-driven Design

Research-driven design is essential for making informed communication choices.

The Design Process

1. Task Definition
2. Research
3. Ideation
4. Refinement
5. Solution

The Value of Research in the Design Process

- Research helps you understand client's needs, preferences, and market
- It can support a concept
- Advocate for an aesthetic
- Measure the effectiveness of a solution
- Research adds value to design solutions by helping you to:
 - Craft more effective messages
 - Improve communication with target audience
 - Assess project development
 - Justify design decisions
 - Positions the designer in the role of a strategic consultant
 - Increases value of and compensation for work

Research Types, Tactics, and Strategies

Research is a process of gathering, sorting, and processing information.

Research Types

Quantitative + Qualitative - think quantities and qualities

- Quantitative - measures objective, logical and numerical data
- Qualitative - measures subjective data such as feeling and opinions

Primary + Secondary Research - refer to proximity and specificity of source

- Primary - original research for project
- Secondary - potentially relevant research completed for a different project

Formative + Summative Research - is categorized on when and how it is used

- Formative - exploratory research done at the beginning of a project
- Summative - conclusive research done at the end of a project

Research Tactics

Actions or strategies carefully planned to achieve a specific end

Photo Ethnography - subjects record their daily experiences with still or video cameras

Visual Ethnography - a researcher records daily experiences of the subject with still or video cameras

Observational Research - systematic process of viewing and recording human behavior and cultural phenomena without questioning, communicating with, or interacting with the group being studied

Demographics - collections of statistical data that describe a group of people or a market segment that generally include information on a variety of quantifiable cultural, economic, and social characteristics

Psychographics - quantitative tactic used to measure subjective beliefs, opinions, and interests in order to understand the opinions and preferences of the group being studied

Focus Groups - small organized discussions led by a moderator whose goal is to gain insight into the participants view about a given topic

Surveys & Questionnaires - tactic for collecting quantitative information by asking participants a set of questions in a specific order

- Survey - questions administered by a researcher
- Questionnaire - participants answer the questions on their own

Web Analytics - web statistics collected by tracking user behavior online

Iterative Design - a cycle of prototyping, testing, and refining

Personas - fictional end user profiles developed to help identify user motivations, expectations, and goals

Visualization - rapid prototyping for communicating concepts easily; ex. sketches, computer renderings, models, and storyboards

Color Theory / Color Predictions - studying basic color psychology and color trends to aid color decisions

Design

Research & Writing Methods

Research Strategies

Employ one or more research tactics for data collection and evaluation

Competitor Analysis - process of evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of an organization's competitors

Literature Review - a comprehensive investigation of all documents, publications, articles, and books regarding a specific area of study

Ethnographic Research - research focused on the link between human behaviors and culture

Marketing Research - a form of sociology that focuses on the understanding of human behavior as it applies to a market-based economy

User Testing - aka usability testing, employs a variety of techniques designed to measure a product's ability to satisfy the needs of the end user

Visual Exploration - primary research used to solve problems of form and communication that usually includes multiple variations of color, imagery, typography, and structure.

The Big6

A systematic process to find, use, apply, and evaluate information for specific needs and tasks.

1. Task Definition

- Define the information problem
- Identify information needed

2. Information Seeking Strategies

- Determine all possible sources
- Select the best sources

3. Location and Access

- Locate sources (intellectually and physically)
- Find information within sources

4. Use of Information

- Engage (e.g., read, hear, view, touch)
- Extract relevant information

5. Synthesis

- Organize from multiple sources
- Present the information

6. Evaluation

- Judge the product (effectiveness)
- Judge the process (efficiency)