Research

Types of research and potential methods to collect data and start shaping your ideas

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Research

Research is an essential tool when developing an idea. It helps us find out users' needs and opportunity fields, to identify gaps in existing services and to get inspiration from other fields.

In this module, we will learn how to organize the possibilities of research in order to achieve positive results. This is not necessarily a step-by-step instruction manual, but rather **a collection of useful methods** that can be applied based on "Service Design", a designer's method for creating and achieving positive solutions.

Let's start by defining the different types of research that can be applied in the context of digital tours:

❑ **Exploratory Research:** To learn more about an environment and get inspired by places, cultures, regions and target groups.

❑ **Confirmatory research:** To validate (or refute) assumptions generated before carrying out the research.

❑ **Dive into existing services**: To see what can be improved.

❑ **Find new ideas or concepts:** By using **prototypes*** or experiments and then getting results.

*Take a look at the tools related to this module

Preparatory Research

This first step is **your own preparation, or the work you do before starting**. It is about starting to dig deeper into the field.

It is more about finding the right questions and needs of a target group than trying to look for specific answers right away.

This research can include **desk research**. This means, for example, looking for information on social media, listening to podcasts, watching videos, etc.

The output of this type of research can be a **mindmap***, photos, videos, etc.

Self-documentation

Means **exploring a particular experience by yourself**.

This means, in our case, to actually explore a place and live the experience. This is a way to do the confirmatory research we mentioned before.

Depending on the field you want to explore, it's also possible to investigate online communities and the differences of perception and behavior online and in real life. This can be done using **social media analytics*.**

Use Fieldnotes, audio recordings, videos, pictures.

At a later stage of this module, we will see how to interpret the data you have collected.

Participant approaches

Methods to immerse yourself in participants'/users' lives:

❏ **Observation:** By "shadowing" or following somebody through a process or a period in time. This can be useful to identify behaviors, motivations, and needs. During this observation, it is important to observe not only what people are doing, but also what they are not doing.

❏ **Interviews:** These are useful for better understanding a group of people and their needs, emotions, expectations and particular experiences. You can get qualitative data from interviews, especially in face-to-face situations.

❏ **Focus groups:** These are also a type of qualitative interview with a group of people that can help to understand their opinions and ideas and the interactions between them.

Non-Participant approaches

Observing users' behaviors without actively interacting with them to collect data.

❑ **Analytics and statistics:** Use social networks and other online approaches (websites, blogs, chat rooms, etc.) to analyze the quantitative data of a larger group of people, such as age, gender, location, preferences, and so on. Take a look at the **social network analytics** tool related to this module.

❑ **Create archetypes of users: personas*.**
The quality of the results depends on the research data and knowledge you have about the group of people you want to exemplify.

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