The Process of Ideation

As we have seen in the previous parts of this module, with the research types and methods set and the data and key points already collected from various stages of work, we now know how to establish the roots of an idea for a city tour.

We can also plan the ideation process through several other tools and methods. These methods for ideation are some of the many approaches you may wish to use in developing your idea further. They can be used at any stage of the ideation process, and they all have the aim of helping you not to get stuck, as well as to help you think about all the different aspects involved when working on complex project like a city tour.

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➢ **Starting point**

Review all the research you have done with fresh eyes and try to define the scope of your project. Do some additional research if needed. The ideation stage is where we decide an exact target group for our tour, the specific technologies we want to use and the places or the paths we want to take. All of this is based on our previous research.

➢ **Immersion and inspiration**

Use the raw data from the research phase as an inspiration. Remember to review your notes, pictures and all the material you collected again. This step is important, no matter if you already have the whole idea in your head, because new ideas can always arise. For example, raw data can be very useful for organizing the storytelling aspect of your tour. (You'll find further information about storytelling in **module 3**.)

➢ **Split the challenge**

This is key for managing a project. Don't think about everything at once. Instead, split the project's activities into different tracks and tasks. To help with this, you can

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review the tool related to **checklists** in this module. Possible tracks could include target groups, places, technology, management, community management, etc.

➢ **Select contributors**

You don't have to do everything on your own! Consider finding help from other stakeholders. For example, you could ask for help from experts like designers, programmers, etc., depending on your idea.

➢ **Generating many ideas**

Choose several methods of ideation to shape your idea or help you think about different ideas so you can decide which one is best. On the next page you will find some ideation methods to help add depth and diversity to your work.

➢ **Idea selection**

Once you go through the ideation methods above, you should have many ideas. Sometimes you can combine them, or you can create some rankings to decide which ideas are best, most easily carried out, etc.

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➤ **Prototype**

When the process of ideation is finished, then you're ready to explore, challenge and evolve your ideas in real life. Think about this whole process as a loop: after developing a prototype, you may want to come back to look for new ideas in the ideation process or even return to doing more research to improve your ideas.

Methods for ideation

➤ **Ideas from research: Journey maps and system mapping**

Using the results from the research stage, you can create journey maps, system maps and personas. You can also grasp some ideas by simulating processes and experiences. For example, you can simulate a tour based on the journey map, stepping into the shoes of the characters you created in the research stage.

➤ **From user stories**

Another way to step into the shoes of your audience is through their own experiences. For example, you can conduct interviews and generate new ideas based on their results. This process can also be a part of a testing phase: you can

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create a prototype of a tour and ask users to describe the experience or answer specific questions.

> **Brainstorming**

Brainstorming is a well-known method that you probably have heard of before, and that's because it works! This can be done in a group or alone, and it allows you to write or sketch all the ideas you may have without restrictions, letting your imagination fly for a while and being open to wild or unusual ideas. Afterward, you can cluster similar or complementary ideas and select the best ones for your tour.

> **Checklists and cards**

These methods are usually used by a group and are very useful for storytelling. They involve using a set of cards to develop ideas. There are many different sets that you can use, and you can also create your own.

One of the most representative card sets are *The Oblique Strategies,* developed by Brian Eno and Peter Schmidt in 1975.

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➢ **Analogies and association**

This is a way to use ideas that already exist and adapt new solutions to your problems. You don't always have to create something new, sometimes it is about shaping existing things from another perspective or from a new field.

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