Persona Development and Use

or, How to Make Imaginary People Work for You

Jennifer Ward
Head, Web Services
University of Washington
What is a Persona?

“detailed descriptions of imaginary people constructed out of well-understood, highly specified data about real people”

Pruitt & Adlin

The Persona Lifecycle (2006)
What is a Persona?

“an archetype of a user that helps guide decisions about features, navigations, interactions, and visual design.”

Kim Goodwin
VP of Design at Cooper
Why create a Persona?

• Guide decisions about features, navigations and interactions
• Help stakeholders and designers keep the users in mind throughout the process
• Facilitate communication between stakeholders
Role in the Product Design Cycle

• Does not replace existing processes
• Helps structure user-centered thinking throughout the design and development process
• Is yet another tool in our toolbox – Always pick the right tool for the job!
• Creates a shared understanding of “UW Libraries users”
Methodology: Assumption Personas

• Can be done without user research
• Helps surface assumptions and myths about your users with everyone on the team
• Highlights gaps in information about our users
Methodology: Data Driven

• Mine research articles for facts about user behavior and habits
  – Pew Research Center, Gartner Research, etc.
• Existing data/user information
  – Surveys, online reference queries, statistics
  – Ethnographic and field research, usability test results, focus group data
  – Campus factbook/population data
• Conduct new research
Workshop

• Describe one or two “typical” patrons
• What do patrons struggle with? What do they find frustrating?
• What are patrons’ goals? What do they want to accomplish?
• What roles or actions do they take to achieve their goals?
• What specific tasks or activities are associated with different roles? What motivates these tasks or roles? What are patrons’ attitudes and feelings towards these activities?
5th years behind current freshmen in terms of technology

don't have time to learn new

like having a website

use all forms of social technologies personally/in research/w/ students

writing & researching with technology/social web/blogs

smart phones, etc
Undergraduate

- Asking for help
- Info overload
- No jargon
- Time
- Technology
- Regret
Validating with Research

• 37 sources used to validate assumptions
• Determine overlap between assumption and data: where do they match up?
Research Analysis

• Critical dimensions to understanding different types of Libraries patrons:
  – Discipline
  – Technology Use
  – Frequency of Use
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>End Goals</th>
<th>Supporting goals</th>
<th>Library Objectives</th>
<th>Pain Points/Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduate from college</td>
<td>complete class assignments</td>
<td>pick a research topic</td>
<td>unfamiliar with library jargon</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>learn about topic context</td>
<td>intimidated by all the choices</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>access course materials</td>
<td>find a good research starting point</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>find basic scholarly materials for class assignments</td>
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<td>access reserves</td>
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<td>access media</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advance my career with education</td>
<td>develop new skills related to my profession</td>
<td>find research starting points for interdisciplinary topics</td>
<td>too many choices!</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>find authoritative scholarly information</td>
<td>getting from citation to full text</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>look up citations from materials I already have</td>
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<td>find older scholarship</td>
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<td>find newest research</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>access authoritative reference materials</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conduct innovative research</td>
<td>publish articles</td>
<td>keep current with the literature</td>
<td>don't learn about new technologies/library tools</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>collaborate with other scholars</td>
<td>organize my research data</td>
<td>too many research materials to keep track of</td>
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<td></td>
<td>teach classes</td>
<td>share materials with students</td>
<td>takes too long to learn new library systems when they change</td>
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<tr>
<td>Save the salmon</td>
<td>write a grant proposal</td>
<td>find authoritative information</td>
<td>don't have UW net ID access</td>
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<td>Have fun</td>
<td>watch movies</td>
<td>find media</td>
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<td>listen to music</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Our Personas

- Brooke the Beginner
- Richard the Researcher
- Sharon the Scholar
- Paul the Professional
- April the Alumna
Brooke the Beginner

I'd rather use an online article that ‘kinda works’ than go to the hassle of finding a book in the library.

- New to the research process and academia
- Working on several assignments in different disciplines, but not an expert in any of them
- Will take the first thing that’s good enough
Accessing full-text articles online is my primary use of the library and is central to my research…but I still go to the library for some reference materials that aren’t online.

- Dedicated full time student with significant knowledge in his area of study
- Working on a long term, in depth project
- Will pursue all avenues to obtain materials related to his research
I have to stay current on my field and do the research work—get the grant money, do the work, publish, etc. Those are the priorities at a research institution.

- Expert knowledge in her research area
- Ongoing, in-depth projects using primary sources
- Long term user who has already learned existing systems
Paul the Professional

I feel like there's information in all of these drawers, and I don't know which drawer to open.

- Returning to school after several years, still working full time outside of school
- Some subject matter knowledge and strong technology skills
- Very little time on campus, so all research work is done remotely
April the Alumna

I have a library card, why can’t I use the research databases?

- Former UW student who now has access to some (but not all) library services
- Remembers extensive resources at the Libraries and would like to use them for a personal project
- Asks for help via email and phone
Resources

• Cooper, Alan. *The Inmates are Running the Asylum: Why High-Tech Products Drive Us Crazy and How to Restore the Sanity.* (1999)


• Saffer, Dan. *Persona Non Grata.* (2005)
Questions?

Jennifer Ward
jlward1@uw.edu