

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.”

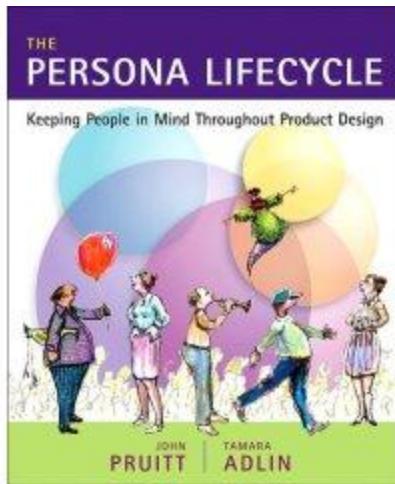
Kim Goodwin
VP of Design at Cooper

Why create a Persona?

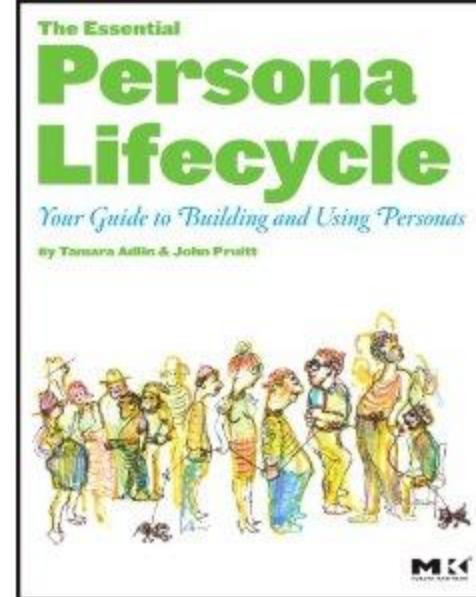
- Guide decisions about features, navigations and interactions
- Help stakeholders and designers keep the users in mind throughout the process
- Facilitate communication between stakeholders

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”



2006



2010

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?



5+ years
behind current
freshmen in
terms of
technology

don't have time
to learn new
~~stuff~~
stuff

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

Writing &
researching
with technology
/ social media/
blogs

like ~~the~~
web site

- Good place
- can

asking
for
help

Undergraduate

info
overload

no
jargon

Time

Technology

degree
center

Depts.

Undergraduate

120 students

160

160

160

160

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

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

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**

Richard the Researcher



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**

Sharon the Scholar



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)
- Goodwin, Kim. “Perfecting Your Personas,” *Cooper Interaction Design Newsletter*, July/August 2001
- Pruitt, John and Tamara Adlin. *The Persona Lifecycle: Keeping People in Mind Throughout Product Design.* (2006)
- Saffer, Dan. *Persona Non Grata.* (2005)

Questions?

Jennifer Ward

jlward1@uw.edu