User Personas

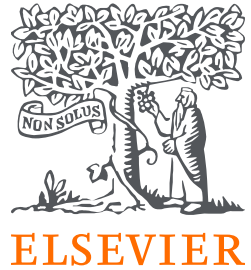## Designing for users with disabilities

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About Elsevier

> Elsevier is a global information analytics business specializing in science and health

Our Mission

Lead the way in advancing science, technology and health

Prolific publisher in disability research and accessibility

Session overview

1. Personas: an introduction

   - What and why

2. Conducting user research

   - Preparation, participants and sessions

3. Writing and using personas

   - Methods and strategies

Personas: an introduction

What are accessibility personas?

- Fictional characters representing user types

- Based on user research

They:

- Create empathy and demystify accessibility

- Are reference points for design and user experience

- Help reduce misconceptions

How can personas help you?

- Better understand user needs / preferences

- Highlight needs, behaviors and motivations

- Guide improvements / ideation in products

- Enhance user engagement and satisfaction

The role of editorial illustrations

- Visual associations enrich personas

- Make them more memorable

- Socialise people with disabilities being an important part of a customer base

- Increase reach and usage
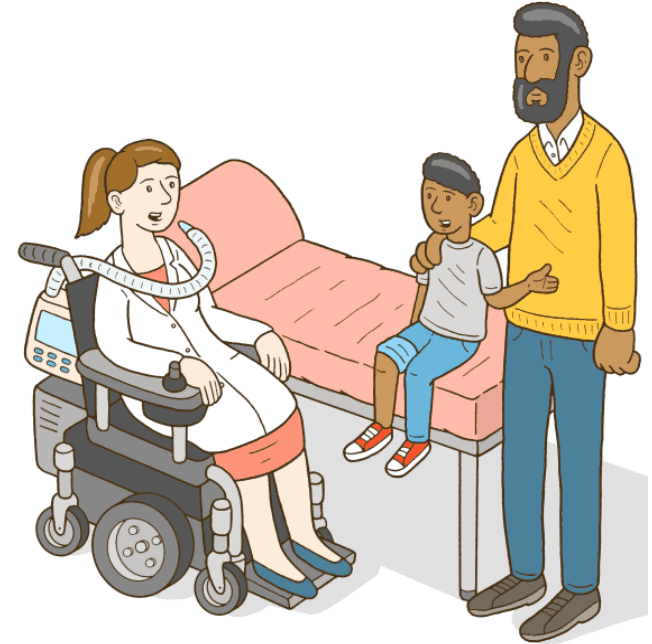
Personas at Elsevier

- 8 published

- Grouped by disability type

- Personas are linked to a product / domain

Blindness

Low vision

Color blindness

Cognitive differences

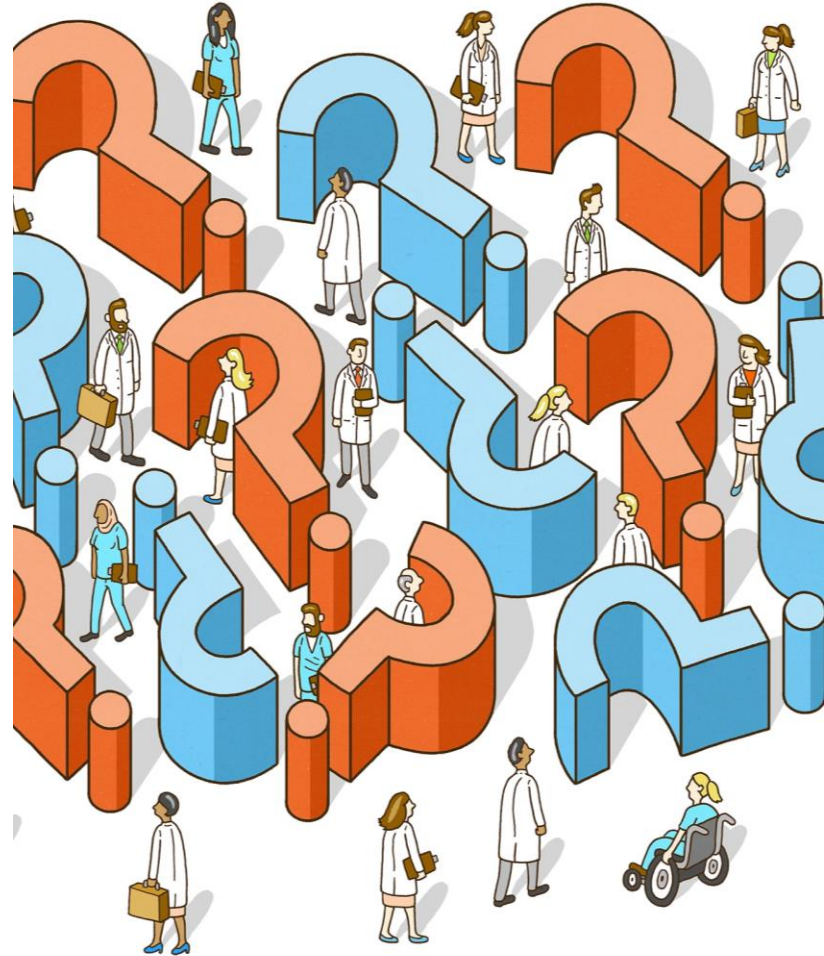**Motor disabilities**

Deaf and hard of hearing

Speech

Conducting user research

Preparation

Getting buy-in

- Establish who is funding the work

- Network internally; find your champions

- Align with wider Persona work

Deciding on imagery

- Decide if you are producing supporting imagery

- What format will the imagery take?

  - pictograms, illustrations

- Is there branding guidance to follow?

Researching surrounding materials

- Are personas being used already?

- Model accessibility personas after existing personas for familiarity

- Work with teams using personas to understand how they are being used
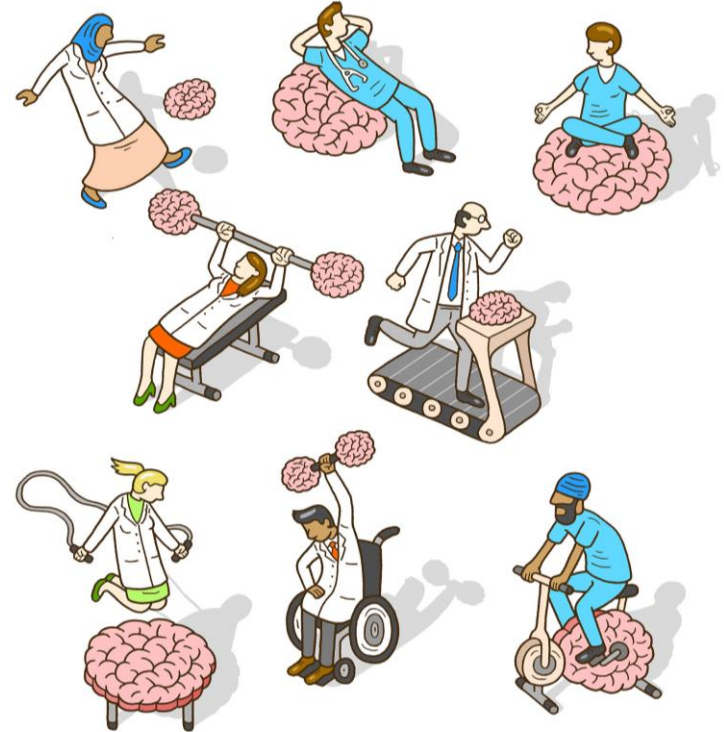
Choosing research methods

Focus groups

- Study sessions with multiple participants

User interviews

- Session with a single participant

Surveys

- Questionnaire often distributed to many participants

Choosing research methods

- Card sorting

  - Group and label items on cards according to preference

- A/B testing

  - Compare two versions of a webpage / product

Focus Groups

Produce **qualitative** results

Pros

- Multiple perspectives

- Questions can be tailored to the participants

Cons

- Can be time-consuming

- Participants may be hesitant to share around other participants

User interviews

Produce **qualitative** results

Pros

- Participant may be more comfortable being alone

- Can dive deeper into participant's answers

Cons

- Can be time-consuming

- Only one perspective can be represented per session

Surveys

Can produce **qualitative** and **quantitative** results

Pros

- Can get quantitative and qualitative data

- Many perspectives

- Inexpensive

Cons

- Can't immediately ask follow-ups

- Inaccurate answers more likely

- Survey fatigue

Who to recruit

- Specific assistive technologies

- Fields of study

How to find participants

- Previous study respondents / participants

- Networking

  - Conferences, speaking engagements

- User complaints / inquiries

- Community groups / organizations

Incentivizing participants

- Honorariums

    o   Ensure gift card services are accessible

- Helping make product more accessible for future users

Conducting user research

Running research sessions

Who Joins the Call?

- Limit number of people on call

- Include at least one UX team member from the product

- Designate one / two people to follow the guide and prompt user

Training other team members

- Basic assistive technology training

- Common terms that may be used by the participant

- Providing recordings or transcripts of previous sessions
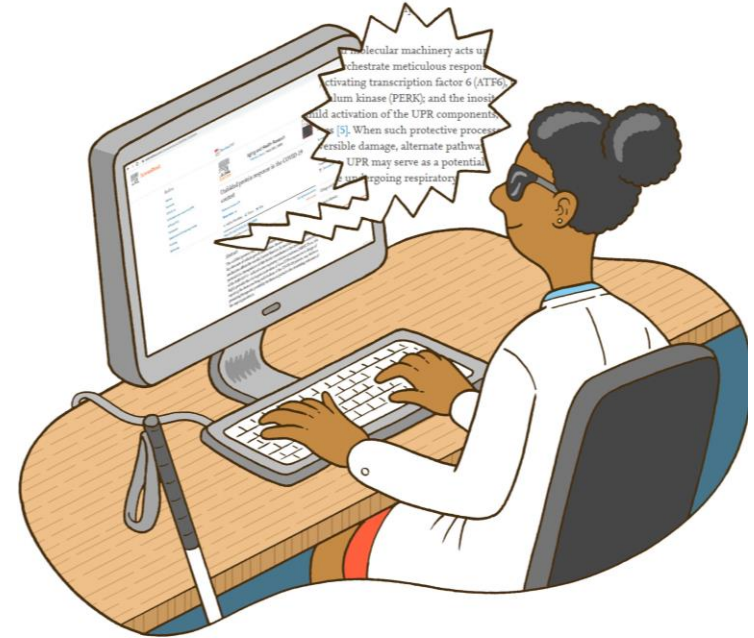
Good practice guidelines

- Ask participant to verbalize their thought processes

  - Prompt the user if necessary

  - Allow functionality to be discovered during exploration

- Be present

  - Designate note-taking to a team member who is not

    asking questions

Starting the session

- Introduce everyone to the participant

- Obtain written consent when possible
  - Otherwise, obtain verbal consent

- Discuss expectations of the session

- Discuss use of recording/transcriptions

Be flexible

- Sometimes things will just go wrong!

- Participant may be unable to access the meeting invitation / link

- There may be problems sharing screen reader audio

- Standard consent forms may be inaccessible

Challenges we faced

- Inaccessibility of video software

- Differences between participants

- Each participant has a unique way of navigating a webpage

- Students may have less experience in user testing and verbalizing their thought processes

Writing and using personas

Synthesizing your research

- Consider grouping similar participants

- Distil your findings into broad clusters

  - Pain points

  - Tasks

  - Technology used

- Consider using research coding
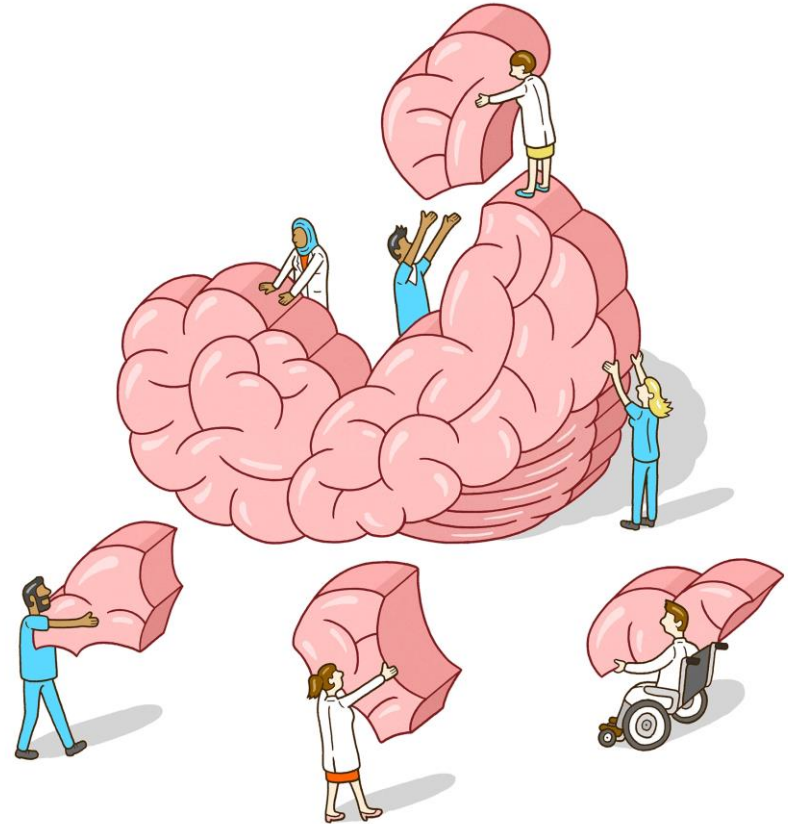
Supporting desk research

- Build out your foundational understanding

- Find lived experience; use reputable sources

- Explore tools, strategies, software, technologies

- Identify trends and patterns

  - example: usage statistics for assistive technologies

Drafting your personas

- Define the core attributes of each persona

- Relate tasks and pain points

- Protect the **anonymity** of participants

- Give your persona a name!

Tasks

- Treating pediatric patients
- Writing patient notes
- Keeping up-to-date with current research
- Reading research articles
- Attending conferences

Accessibility needs

- Treating pediatric patients
- Writing patient notes
- Keeping up-to-date with current research
- Reading research articles
- Attending conferences

Pain points

- Treating pediatric patients
- Writing patient notes
- Keeping up-to-date with current research
- Reading research articles
- Attending conferences

Using supporting imagery

- Use relatable, but precise, imagery

  - Feedback from people with lived
    experience is invaluable

- Visuals help humanize personas and
  make them memorable

- Ensure accurate alternative text

Storing your personas

- Share widely

  - Avoid storing in isolated or private drives

- Centralized, easy access for all departments

- Ours are in our brand guidelines

  - Reinforces accessibility as a core value

Sharing and advocating for personas

- Create a socialization strategy

  - Give presentations

  - Present workshops

  - Post widely across communication channels

- Promote use in existing workflows

  - e.g. product planning exercises, design reviews

How we use our personas

- Brand-related project planning

- Training workshops

- Product feature scoping and designing

- Imagery used widely

The potential impact of a collection

- Myths busted!

- Enhanced user experience and satisfaction

- More innovation

- Improved inclusivity

Thank you!

Questions?