User research course

Module 2: Evaluative research



Course outline

Module 1 – Why do user research?

Monday 6 March, online

Module 2 – Evaluative research

Tuesday 7 March, online

Module 3 – Other types of user research Wednesday 8 March, online

Module 4 – Putting it all together *Friday 10 March, Iasi*







FAMILY TIME

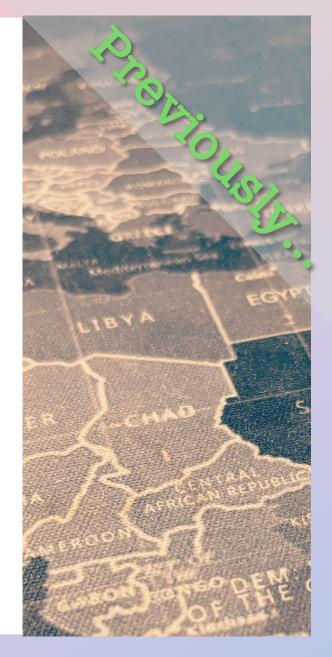
PARENTING

Zimbabwe & Botswana

THE ROU

Agenda: module 1

- 1. A little bit about me
- 2. User-centred design and user research
- 3. How insight drives innovation
- 4. The main research methodologies
- 5. Hands-on: How could a previous project have included user research?
- 6. The cost of doing user research and not doing it!
- 7. Case studies how user research has enhanced the user experience
- 8. Building a user research team and capability
- 9. Hands-on: Add research to that project if you were really keen!



Today...

Evaluative research

Evaluative research is what you use to check that your concepts and designs are on track to meet user needs.

It's the most common form of user research undertaken by agile teams and a perfect introduction into the wider discipline of user research.

That is why the topic deserves to have a module of its own!



Agenda: module 2

- 1. Planning a round of evaluative research
- 2. Recruiting participants
- 3. Writing a discussion guide
- 4. Preparing a virtual whiteboard for note-taking
- 5. Hands-on: Getting ready for a round of research
- 6. Moderating research sessions
- 7. Analysing the data and extracting insights
- 8. Researching in pairs: Why this is best
- 9. Hands-on: Analysing a round of research
- 10. Presenting your findings



Planning a round of evaluative research

Why RITE is right for Agile





Planning a round of evaluative research

- The RITE method (rapid iterative testing & evaluation) is the most common methodology used by agile development teams. It is used for getting fast feedback on a prototype from people who represent the product's target audience.
- Most of the **preparation**, **analysis** and **reporting** that's needed for a round of evaluation research can be done inside one 2-week sprint.
- So, in 2 weeks, we can test our design ideas to see if we're on track to deliver a **good user experience** and obtain useful feedback for **improving it**.
- The only task for user research teams that has to be started <u>before</u> the sprint is **participant recruitment**, since it can take 2-3 weeks for recruitment agencies to find the right people.
- This means you have to know in advance when you will conducting a round of research and who it will be with, but that's all you have to know before the sprint starts.



Planning a round of RITE

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10	
Write discussion guide											
Finalise discussion guide											
Pilot session											
Create note-taking board											
Run research sessions											
Analysis											
Group analysis session											
Discuss next steps with team											
Report to stakeholders											
Recruitment brief for next round											
Kick off next recruitment											



Recruiting participants

Making sure you're talking with people who truly represent your end users





Recruiting participants

- The most reliable way to recruit participants for user research is via a specialist research recruitment agency.
- They have large databases of people who are willing to take part in research and can match
 potential participants against the criteria that you share with them. These databases are
 usually limited to the recruiter's own country, but the best recruiters will be part of an
 international research recruitment network.
- Recruitment briefs build a profile of the participants you would like to talk to, so you need
 to describe carefully the characteristics you want your participants to have as those you
 don't want them to have.
- The recruitment brief should also outline when you want the research sessions to be and where/how you will meet the participants – will they come to a research lab, or will you meet them online?



Recruiting participants: Example

- The following example project was a recruit for 6 participants, plus 1 pilot participant for the day before.
- The prototype being evaluated was for a UK government service aimed at reducing the number of disabled and long-term sick employees leaving the workplace. At the time that the product was started, these employees were twice as likely to leave employment and never come back.
- The service is for employers and managers at small and medium-sized businesses. These
 companies often do not have a Human Resources team, so the service aims to give employers
 and managers the guidance that they would get from an excellent HR colleague.
- As a result, we wanted to speak to employers and managers exactly the kind of people who
 would benefit most from our service. So we briefed a recruitment agency to find us
 participants with that profile.



Recruiting participants: Example



User research course

Recruitment brief

Version 1

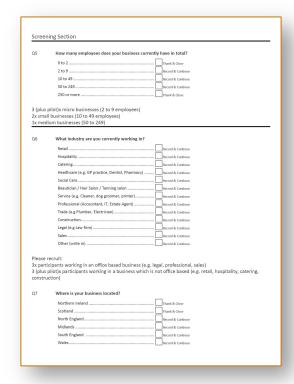
05 February 2023



Recruiting participants: What you'll get back

Date	06/01/23						
Client Name	Opencast Software						
Contact Details	Name: Jonathan Culling						
Contact Details	Email: jonathan.culling@engineering.digital.dwp.gov.uk						
Research Dates	25 th -27 th January						
Job Name	Project 8 – Canary Panel						
	7 @ £50	£350.00					
Recruitment	UNIT COST 7 @ £50	TOTAL £350.00					
Screener Amends (if needed)	1 @ £50	£50.00					
Project Management	1 @ £200	£200.00					
Incentives – 60-minute interview	7 @ £100	£700.00					
Incentive Handling Fee	15% of £700	£105.00					
15% of total incentive amount							
Total (excl. VAT)		£1,405.00					

Quotation



Recruitment screener

Depth Number	Date	Time	Age	Gender	Occupation	Social Class	Ethnicity	Q3. What is your current occupation and job title?	Q4. Do you have line management responsibilities?	Q6. How ma employees doe business currently
1 (pilot)	Wednesday 25th January	2pm	50	F	Safety and HR Manager	а	White British	Safety and HR Manager	Yes	250+
2		9.30am	56	м	Facilities Manager	а	White British	Facilities Manager	No	250+
3	Thursday 26th January	11.30am	67	F	Branch Teasurer	C2	White British	Branch Teasurer	No	2-9
4		4pm	52	F	Libriarian	CI	White British	Libriarian	Yes	50-249
5		9.30am	63	F	Health and Safety Consultant	C1	White British	Safety and HR Manager	Yes	10-49
6	Friday 27th January	2pm	66	М	Policy Advisor	CI	White British	Policy Advisor	No	10-49
7	4pm		45	м	Transport Manager	C1	White British	Transport Manager	Yes	50-249

Participant list



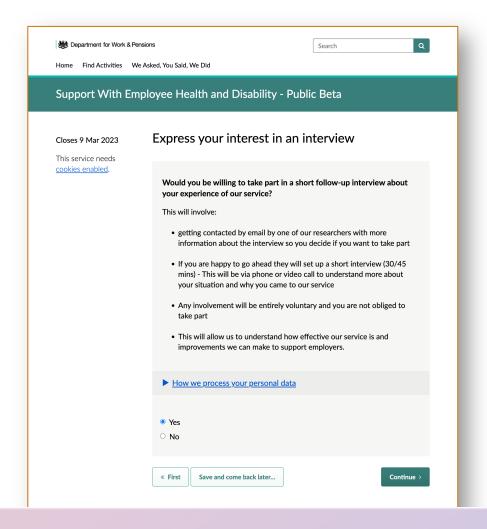
Recruiting participants: other methods

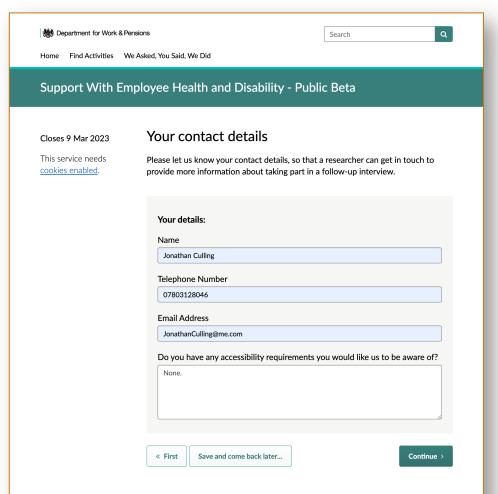
Recruiting via a specialist agency is **reliable**, but also fairly **expensive**. Here are some other ways that you can make sure your participants are truly representative of your target audience.

- Clients are often have access to **customer lists** (for example, people who have signed up for updates about the product you are designing).
 - They may offer to recruit participants for you, or they may hand you the list and ask you to do the recruitment. If they do, make sure that the customer data is handled **very securely**!
 - Either way, it's worth noting that it will take a surprisingly **large amount** of someone's **time** to recruit participants in this way.
- Alternatively, you can build your own **user panel** over time. This works best if it's a long-term project and if you're already using surveys for some form of quantitative research.



Recruiting participants: creating a panel

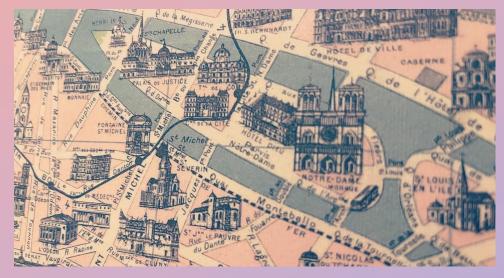






Writing a discussion guide

Making sure that you get comparable feedback by asking consistent questions





Writing a discussion guide

- It's always best for your conversations with research participants to follow the **same structure**. This really helps with your analysis it's **far easier** to compare how different participants responded to the same task or the same question, which in turn makes it easier to spot similarities and differences.
- Thus, with consistently structured research sessions, you'll know which observations are genuinely down to issues with your stimulus and which are down to the individual quirks of your participants.
- A discussion guide helps to give your research that consistent structure. It's best to start
 work on this a few days before the research, when you're beginning to get an idea of what
 your stimulus will be.
- However, as its name suggests, the discussion guide is a **guide**! If your sessions will be 60 minutes long, you should **avoid the temptation** to cram it with an hour's worth of questions and always leave space to dive deeper when a participant says something interesting.



Start with the research objectives

- The best way to make sure that your discussion guide remains focused and doesn't become bloated with unnecessary questions is to start from the **research objectives**. What are the **key things** that you want to learn from this round of research?
- Your **primary objectives** are your research's must haves, while **secondary objectives** are should/could haves that you will ask if there's enough time.
- If you write your research objectives down first and get them agreed with the team and stakeholders, it will really help you as you devise tasks and compose questions in the discussion guide. It will also come to your aid when clients review your discussion guide and try to add questions about their pet theories!



Writing a discussion guide: Example



User research course

Discussion guide

Version 1

05 February 2023



Preparing a virtual whiteboard

This is where RITE methodology enters the digital age



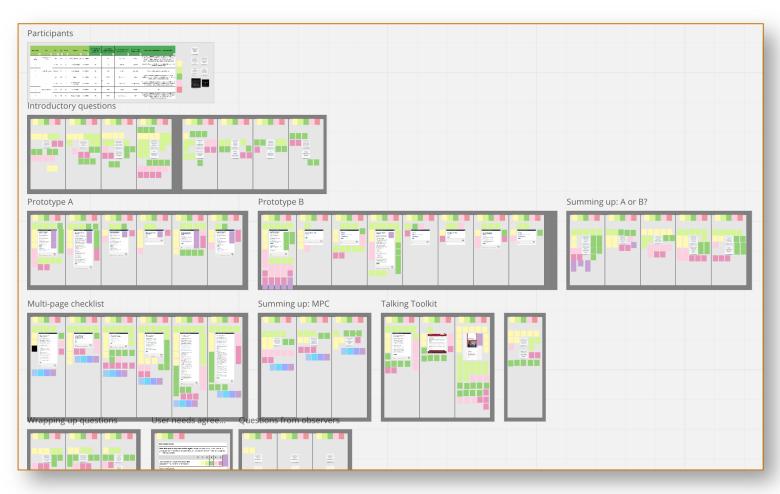


The power of real-time notes

- Don't expect yourself to take brilliant notes while you're moderating a research session. Your
 job is to concentrate on what the participant is saying and doing that's challenging enough
 in itself!
- However, if you can find someone to take notes for you in every research session, it will
 make the job of analysing the research data so much easier and quicker. This could make the
 difference between you reporting your findings in the same sprint or one sprint later!
- It's best to have the **same note-taker**, because their notes will be consistent. But it's not the end of the world if you have the spread the responsibilities!
- This form of note-taking became popular in the days of **research labs** with **one-way mirrors**. In those days, your note-taker would work in the observation room, sticking Post-Its onto print-outs of the screens that were being evaluated.
- If each participant was assigned a Post-It note of a different colour, you would quickly build up a picture of the features that elicited the most feedback or caused the most problems, and those that everyone found easy to use.



Preparing a virtual whiteboard: Example



bit.ly/vj2miro





SAMPLE FOOTER TEXT

Brief: Getting ready for a round of research

 Recruitment is already underway for a round of research on the Support with employee health and disability prototype:

bit.ly/dwp1nav

Password: **DWP43**

- The discussion guide and the virtual whiteboard are nearly ready, but there's a section that needs to be completed. This is about the new **expanded checklist** (more about this on the next slide).
- It's your job to look at the relevant section of the prototype and think about how you will find
 out whether it's meeting user needs. This will need to be translated into the questions you
 will ask your participants.
- Working solo, please complete the sections for the expanded checklist in the discussion guide.

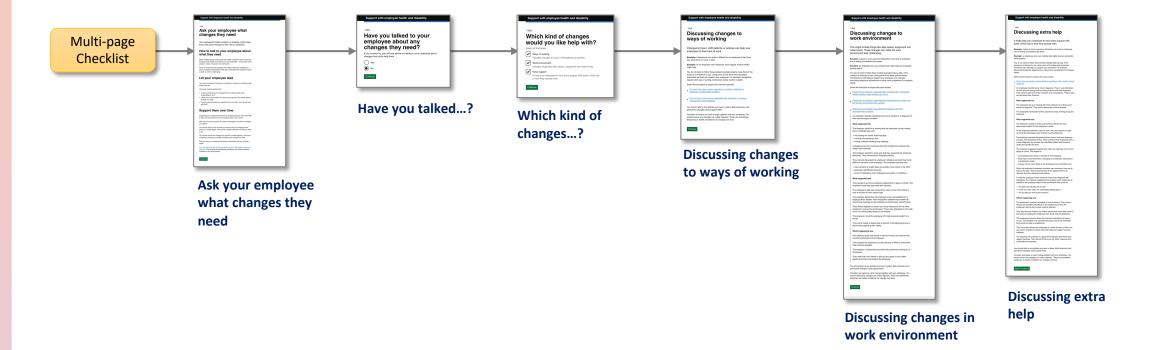


Brief: The expanded checklist (1 of 3)

- The expanded checklist gives examples of the reasonable adjustments that employers
 might consider when bringing back someone who has been off work for a while with a
 sickness or disability.
- The page has **gone down well** in research so far, but was starting to become very long as more and more content was added to it.
- The designers have now broken the single page into **3 pages** about the **different categories** of reasonable adjustments. So that we don't force users to look at all 3 when only 1 might be relevant, there is a **selection page** at the start, which allows users to select which of the categories they want guidance about.



Brief: The expanded checklist (2 of 3)





Brief: The expanded checklist (3 of 3)

Multi-page version of Checklist - 10 minutes

<Introduction to this task from the moderator>...

[Starting on Prototype A: Support with employee health and disability]

Please click on the link <u>Discussing changes to help your employee at work.</u>

Have you talked to your employee about any changes they need?

<Question about this page from moderator>

[Participant should <action>]...



Moderating research sessions

Time to make sure all your careful preparation pays off!





Moderating research sessions: Setting up

- In the days before COVID-19, it was common to conduct user research in a research lab.
 Colleagues and clients could sit in an observation room and watch the research through a one-way mirror.
- These labs were expensive to hire. Fortunately, research software such as **Techsmith Morae** made it possible to convert two ordinary meeting rooms into a research lab and an observation room. The research could be followed live on an ordinary TV monitor. You could also **travel** with kit like this and conduct research where your participants **live** or **work**.
- Since COVID, however, it's become much more common to use **video conferencing tools** like Microsoft Teams, Google Meet and Zoom, with screen sharing. Because you no longer have to be in the same place as the participant, it's possible to moderate **more sessions** in one day and the logistics are much easier.
- However, you do miss out on one important aspect the **user context**. This may be fine for most research, but if it's important to understand your participant's environment, it's still better to travel.



Moderating research sessions: The pilot session

- You've written your discussion guide, created your virtual note-taking board, the participants have been recruited and the research sessions are all booked in. So you're **well-prepared**.
- But **can you be sure** that the research is going to be a success? Are you sure that you'll be able to cover all the tasks and questions in your discussion guide?
- Because it's so important to get the maximum from your research sessions and there are so
 many things that <u>could</u> go wrong, it's very sensible to run a pilot session the day before to
 double-check that everything is in place.
- This can be with a **colleague** who's not on your project team, or you can even **recruit** a pilot participant in the same way that you recruit all the others. Pilot sessions work best when you can make them **as much like the real thing** as possible.
- Don't organise the pilot session too soon before the first proper participant though you
 need to give yourself time to update the discussion guide and note-taking board if necessary!



Moderating research sessions: Dos & Don'ts 1

- Moderating user research is a **soft skill** that is hard to teach, but you'll find yourself getting more comfortable with it over time. However, here are some things to bear in mind:
- You should always make the participant **feel at ease**, because that's how you'll get the most out of them. If the participant joins a video call to see you and several observers all looking at them, this can make the feel **overwhelmed**. So it's worth asking your observers to turn off their cameras or even set up a separate channel for observers.
- Remember that participant details, such as their full names and contact details, are
 confidential. The recruiter will give you a sheet with this information so that you can contact
 participants if they are late, but you should not share this information with the team or leave
 it lying around. Ideally, you should delete the files as soon as you no longer need them.
- The same thing applies to any video or audio recordings that you make of the sessions. The
 recordings are there to help you with your analysis and you want want to include short
 snippets in your presentation (with the participant's consent), but these should be
 anonymised and stored for no longer than necessary.

Moderating research sessions: Dos & Don'ts 2

- Instead of diving right in with tasks and questions for the participant, it's wise to ask some
 introductory questions about them, their roles and their previous experience with the topic
 of the research study. Learning a bit about each participant will allow you to adapt your
 questions and make them more personal, so you'll get richer answers.
 - For example, "Tell me about the last time that you...".
- You'll always get more out of your participants if you ask open, non-leading questions.
 - Instead of asking "do you like this?", say "what do you think of this?",
 - Instead of asking "could the navigation be improved?", say "how did you find getting around the website?",
- Remember that your discussion guide is only a guide you don't have to stick to it rigidly! If a
 participant says something intriguing or unexpected, you should always take the opportunity
 to really understand why they said that. To really understand what drives people's thoughts
 and attitudes, use the Japanese technique of the 5 Whys.

Moderating research sessions: Participants

- If your recruiters are doing their job properly, **most** of your participants will be **great** and you'll learn a lot from them.
- But what would you do with a participant who...
 - Won't stop chatting?
 - Clams up or gives one-word answers?
 - Arrives late?
 - Doesn't show up at all?
 - Gives you the answers they think you want?
- All of these participant types can be **frustrating** and you probably won't want to see them
 again. At the end of the session, let the recruiter know and ask them to be **blacklisted** and/or
 not paid their incentive.



Choosing a lab facility - UK

If lab research is the most appropriate methodology and your client is planning to view the research, then it is best to choose a professional lab facility.

These places have separate **viewing rooms** where observers can plug in their laptops, take notes and watch the research in comfort. Labs will also record and **publish** the sessions for you, so that anyone can follow your research remotely.

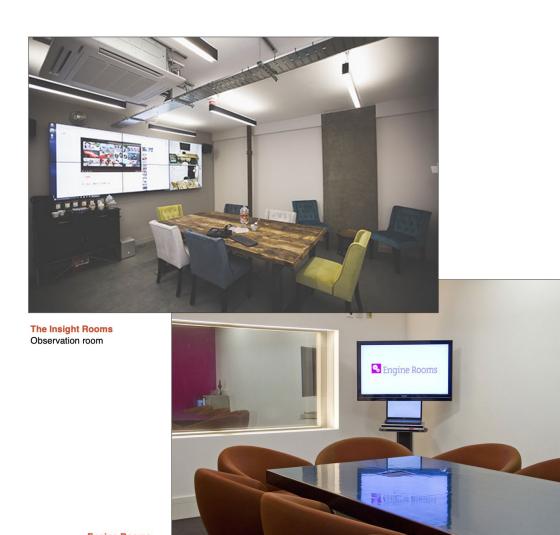
When researching in **London**, we recommend the following research facilities:

The Insight Rooms

1st Floor, 140 Old Street, London EC1V 9BJ http://theinsightrooms.com/

Engine Rooms

183 Eversholt Street, London NW1 1BU http://www.enginerooms.co.uk/



Engine Rooms Observation room

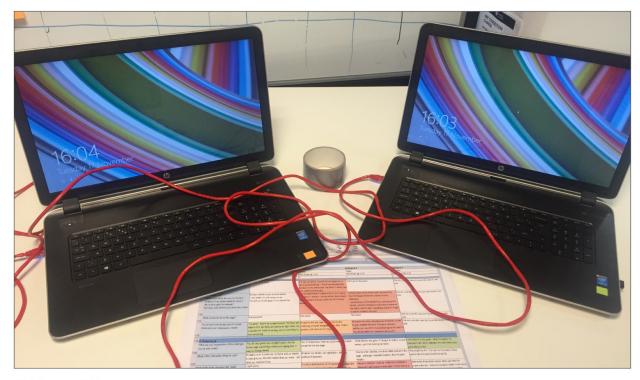


Mobile research laboratory

Investing in a **mobile research lab** means that you can conduct professional lab research anywhere in the world. A mobile lab costs less than **3 days' hire** of a London lab facility.

All you need is two **PC laptops** in separate rooms linked by good wifi, **Techsmith Morae** software and a camera rig called **Mr. Tappy,** which is used to record a participant's interactions with mobile devices.

The software records and relays your participant's screen interactions and insets their facial expressions along with their comments, so that **observers** in the second room can watch in **real time**. Session recordings can also be saved and shared online or on DVD.



Mobile research lab

This allows you to conduct user research anywhere in the world. The moderator and participant sit is one rooms and observers can watch from a second room.



Analysing data

Turning observations and feedback into insights.





Analysing data: Top-down analysis

- As soon as the last research session has been completed, it's very tempting to launch straight into your detailed analysis, looking page-by-page at the feedback participants have given and figuring out what that means for the design of that page.
- But if you do that, you might miss the **bigger picture**. Maybe all of this feedback is connected in some way? Is there an overriding reason for that way that participants have been responding?
- Another thing to consider is that it's **not** at all **satisfying** for your audience if you present a
 series of observations, without any real insight. It's a bit like watching a movie with a lot of
 good one-liners, but no plot.
- That's why I always recommend that you start with a **top-down analysis**. Without referring to your notes, what were the **top 5**, or **10**, learnings from this round of research? When you've done that, then it's time to start the bottom-up (detailed) analysis.

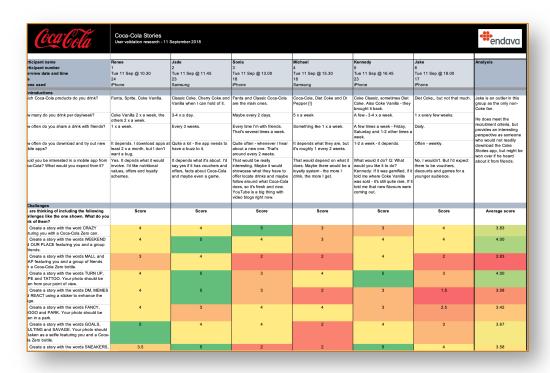


Analysing data: Collaboratively

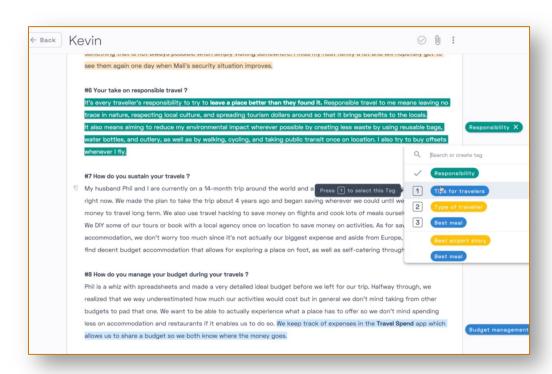
- Your research will always benefit from **getting the team** (and even the client) **involved**. The more involved your colleagues have been in the research feedback, the less disagreement you're likely to get further down the line.
- **Collaborative analysis** is a great way to do this, and it doesn't take up too much of anyone's time.
- To do this, set up a video meeting soon after you've completed the top-down analysis and invite the team to your go through the **research whiteboard** with you. Divide the attendees up into teams (to analyse different tasks, for example) and ask each team to analyse the Post-Its from each participant page by page, adding a new colour Post-It with their **conclusions**.
- Coming back together at the end, get each team to present their conclusions and use another new colour Post-It to make notes summarising the **issues** and suggesting the **How Might** Wes? These become mini-briefs for the design and development teams to work on.



Analysing data: Other methods



Analysis matrix



condens.io – an analysis tool



Researching in pairs

Research is more efficient in pairs – and more fun!





Researching in pairs: Why this is best

- If you work alone, you'll find it very hard to prepare, moderate, analyse and report a round of
 research in two weeks. Having a partner on the research days makes a big difference,
 because the notes that they take in real time can save days of listening back to recordings and
 making your own notes.
- So researching in pairs makes the difference between fitting and not fitting a round of research into a sprint cycle. But there are **other benefits**...
- Researching in pairs presents an ideal training opportunity. Your partner can take notes
 until they feel confident enough to moderate a session, then you can swap roles. Other tasks
 can be shared in the same way and soon you'll have a new researcher for your team.
- Your helper doesn't need to be a junior researcher, either. **Designers** are often waiting for the outcome of your research before they make updates, so can afford the time to get involved and they can make excellent research partners.



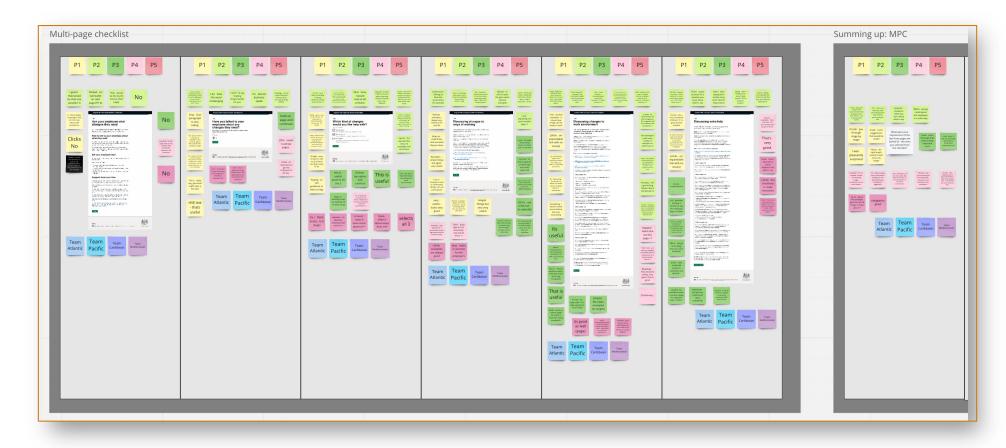


Brief: Analysing a round of research

- The Post-Its from our recent round of research have been analysed **all except** for the section about the **expanded checklist**!
- It's your job to go onto the board and see what conclusions you can draw from the comments made by the individual participants.
- Choose an unused colour for your team's analysis Post-Its and write your conclusions down.
 Did participants have any issues with the prototype? Were they any suggestions for improvement made by more than one participant?
- When the teams have had a chance to analyse, we'll come back together and share our conclusions.



Find your team colour on the Miro board



bit.ly/vj2miro



Presenting your findings

Whether presenting to your team or the client's boardroom, it's important to be clear and impactful





Presenting your findings

Everyone has their own **unique presentation style**, and I don't want to teach you how to present. However, there a few things that I always try to think about when I'm writing a research report deck:

- For me, the most important thing is to give enough context for the audience to understand the
 page or user journey you're referring to. That's why I always include a screen grab if I'm talking
 about a particular page, or a series of small screen grabs if I'm talking about a user journey. There
 are some examples on the following slides.
- Adding sufficient context helps the hand-on audience the people who will see your report after you've presented it. If you write with them in mind, then your slides should be understandable at any time – for example, you can attach them to a JIRA card and they will need no further explanation.
- It's important to include **evidence** from your participants (but equally important not to identify those people). Quotes, audio clips and video clips all help to add authenticity to your report, but be careful to attribute these to a participant number (if it's **significant**, you can include demographic information like their gender or their user group).



Executive summary

Participants were **enthusiastic** about the Coca-Cola Stories app and said that they would download it (if it were available in the U.K.). Most areas of the app were found to be intuitive and attractive.

The **renaming** of the app from WOAH to Coca-Cola Stories and the **new** artwork were well received, as these made the purpose of the app clearer.

Features that need the **most attention** before the next round of research are:

- 1) The can-tags on the gallery feed: these will work better if there is a clearer visual connection between the physical can and the tags on screen. An example sketch is shown below.
- 2) The **consents screen** should be simplified, because it represents too much of a barrier in an otherwise very streamlined sign-up process.
- 3) The relationship between **coins** and **gems**, and the activities they are awarded for, needs to be clearer.
- 4) Reintroduction of a tutorial and/or on-screen contextual help.

Please see the **observations** and **recommendations** section of this report for more detail.

Can-tag suggestion

Introducing an element of 3D will help users associate the words used in Coca-Cola stories with the words on









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Methodology

This was the first round of research using the work in progress app build, which was used at the start of each session. The clickable prototype was used for the remainder of the tasks, to cover aspects of the Coca-Cola Stories app not yet added to the build.

As we progress towards release in January 2019, each round will use the **build more** and the **prototype less**.

In this round of research, participants:

Used the build to Create an Account,

Used the prototype to browse the **Home** screen and **feed**, **Scan a Can** and post a **Coca-Cola Story**, view the **Win** section and view the **Profile** section.

Both build and prototype were installed on an **iPhone** and an **Android** phone. Participants were invited to use the handset they were most familiar with.

Screens from the research

Top row: Screens from the app build Second and third row: Screens from the prototype





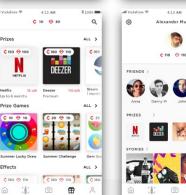












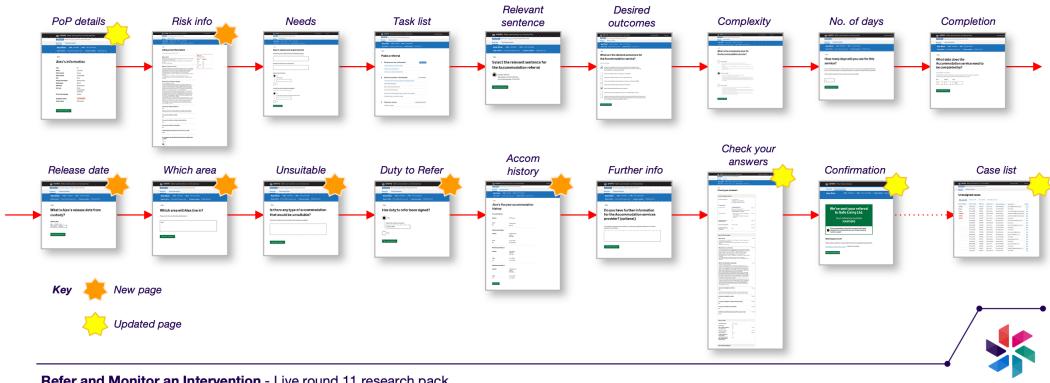


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User: PP **Theme:** Urgent referrals **EVALUATION**

Urgent accommodation referrals prototype

The prototype sought to add key information that has been missing from urgent accommodation referrals.



Refer and Monitor an Intervention - Live round 11 research pack

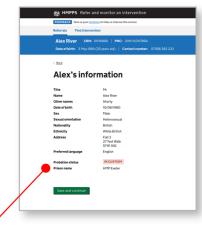


MoJ D&T

User: PP Theme: Urgent referrals EVALUATION

PoP details - extra information was missed by most participants

- All six participants raced through this page and did not notice the In Custody tag and the prison name, which had been added to the page following multiple requests for this information from both PPs and SPs.
- This suggests that in actual use, probation practitioners might be unaware that this key information has been passed on to the service provider.
- A "road bump" like the one proposed a while ago would ensure that users
 pay more attention to this page, and also take the time to revisit and
 update nDelius if the information is inaccurate or missing.
- It was also pointed out that, when in custody, the Prison Offender
 Manager contact details were important, as this was the best person to help the service provider set up meetings and calls with the person in prison.





Participants tended to skip through this page, missing this added information









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Module 4 - Putting it all together *Friday 10 March, Iasi*

