

Knowing your users

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1 Question

What should I know about my users if I want to build appropriate software for them?

2 Answer

If you are building technical software for your users, you need to know what their level of expertise and experience is. If you can use a job title to describe their position, that is a great start.

You should define the users' strengths and weaknesses, that is, what you expect them to excel at and where they will require more of your assistance to succeed at their task.

Define the scenarios in which your users use the software you will build. What information do they have available? Which information do they need to gather? What kind of decisions do they need to make? Which decisions can be automated for them? Do they need to run the software in a specific environment? Do they need access to data to do their task? How is this data made available to them? When do they use the software? How frequently do they use the software? How much of their time is spent on the task they are solving using the software you're building?

Define what the users' goals are. You might be creating a text editor, if your users' goal is to transmit information between companies, they may not care at all about making the text fancy but they might appreciate your editor helping them correct grammatical mistakes.

You want to be as specific as possible when describing your users so that your decisions are guided by this persona you're creating. What kind of company are they working in? Startups, PME, large enterprises? Do they have multiple responsibilities or are specialized?

With all this information about your users you should be able to make more judicious decisions. This will help you scope your work.

3 References

- <https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/personas-why-and-how-you-should-use-them>
- <http://www.agilemodeling.com/artifacts/personas.htm>