User Research

#6: Sampling

Stephanie Troeth // University of Greenwich // March 2021

Who's the (end) user?

While you may have a product that's designed for a specific user in mind initially—or a specific need—what actually happens is that there will be a broad range of people who use it for different reasons in a variety of contexts.

Often, the first step is to understand our audience across the board.

What kind of user profiles?

- Are there already identified personas?

- Are there distinctive behaviours that can be grouped together?

- Try to talk to users who use your product or a competitor's.

- Try and identify users who might be likely to use your product.

How many interviews?

For the majority of usability tests, the conventional wisdom is that 5 users will find you 85% of the usability problems.

NNGroup conducted a study to back up this claim.

However, usability tests are in the 2nd diamond, where your problems are much more defined.

If you are conducting discovery research, you should ensure to speak across different user profiles, and up to 5 users per profile if possible.

https://www.nngroup.com/articles/why-you-only-need-to-test-with-5-users/

How many interviews?

An example: let say you have budget for only 15 interviews for a discovery project, and you have four distinct groups of users:

- people who have just started their working career
- people who have worked in their careers for at least 10 years
- people who are within 5 years of retirement
- people who have already retired

If you think the majority of people who will use your service/product is in the first two groups, you can speak to fewer number of people from the other two groups.

Survey sample size?

To be statistically significant for the UK population, you need 385 complete responses to your survey.

Sample Size Calculator

Find Out The Sample Size

This calculator computes the minimum number of necessary samples to meet the desired statistical constraints.

Result

Sample size: 385

This means 385 or more measurements/surveys are needed to have a confidence level of 95% that the real value is within ±5% of the measured/surveyed value.

Confidence Level: (?) 95%
Margin of Error: (?) 5%
Population Proportion: (?) 50% Use 50% if not sure
Population Size: (?) 68000000 Leave blank if unlimited population size.

Calculate ▶   Clear

https://www.calculator.net/sample-size-calculator.html

Example recruitment methods

- Specialist recruitment agencies

- Online panels

- Pop-up recruitment with your app

- Account managers within your organisation (B2B)

- On the street (for guerrilla research)

Examples of recruitment profiles

For a particular study, we recruited a segment split:

- key influencers & decision makers (C-level or senior business leaders).
- Elite consumers (working professionals)
- Consumers who are working professional who read "serious newspapers"

Examples of recruitment profiles

Recruitment criteria:

- Affluent high income earners

- Spread of ages between 40-60 years (Key Influencers) and 30-54 years (Elite)

- Even mix of gender

- Ideally reads [certain publications], or at least two similar publications

- May live or travel regularly to [a list of cities] for work or pleasure

- Mix of Google Map users and non-users

- Mix of high and moderate tech users

Examples of recruitment profiles

For a study on digital gifts:

- 4 x senders
- 4 x receivers
- All of whom who have sent or received digital gifts in the last 3 months
- Regularly used a mobile phone or tablet
- Even mix of gender

Exercise:
What kind of users can we talk to?

You've just been employed by a new startup. The CEO is focused on **minimising single-use plastic bottles,** and they are **open to developing new products**, **or services to support their vision**.

You will also have to think about **how this product/ service generates revenue** for the company.

Exercise:
What kind of users can we talk to?

Research Context	Research Objectives
Why are we doing this? What impact do we hope to achieve?	What do we want to learn?

Assumptions	Hypotheses	
What do we think we know?	What do we think will happen?	How will we know when it's proven?

Existing Evidence	Target Audience
What current research exists? E.g. analytics, market research, past insights.	Who is our target audience for this research?

Methodology

Which research method do we use?	What does this prove or validate?	Which are relevant participant profiles?

Next:

The Craft of Questions