

PERSONAS

Personas are fictional characters created to represent different user types of a product or service. They are used to shape the design focus and to identify opportunities and challenges in designing for different user groups.

Estimated Timescale: 1-2 Hours

Materials: Cardboard, Pens & Paper, Image Material (Old Magazines, etc)

Who should be involved?

Anyone who you're designing with / for - cultural heritage professionals, designers, technologists etc.

Why should you use this method?

Personas are a way of representing potential future users (for example, museum visitors) in the design process. Using personas helps to build understandings of their values and thought processes.

STEP 1 (ADVANCE PREPARATION)

- Write a brief - defining a set of personas.

STEP 2

- Divide larger groups into small groups of 3-5 people (ideally people of different profiles).
- Have the facilitator designate each group with a single persona on which to work with. For example, in the case of museum visitors, the personas might include a grandmother, a grandfather, a father and a child.
- Ask each group to form and visualise a story relating to what may motivate their persona to visit a museum and what they would like to experience as part of a museum visit.

STEP 3

- Provide each group with materials (paper, magazine cut-outs, markers, etc.) for the purpose of visualising their given persona.
- Each group had to create a story or scenario of what kind of experience they would like in a particular kind of museum.

STEP 4

- Ask each group to present their given persona in poster format to the other groups.
- Allow others to contribute constructive feedback and to ask questions.

WHAT NEXT?

- Use the personas as formed by the groups as a springboard to further conversation or to explore new areas in the design process.

Tips for successfully carrying out this method

- Encourage the groups to make the personas as visual as possible.
- Consider that not all visitor groups will fit into the given set of personas. Encourage the cultural heritage professionals in the group to talk about their typical visitor groups.

