Design for Future Needs
Glossary of Design Methods Relevant to Foresight Activities

Interaction Design Institute Ivrea

Actors   *See 'Users'*

Concept Models*   Diagrammatic representations of a solution's main categories and features that seek to reconcile business needs with user needs and technical capabilities.

Concept Testing*   Research with target users to evaluate the conceptual framework of a solution and generate refinements of that solution.

Context Research*   Review and gap analysis of existing user research, positioning the current experience within a relevant context.

Creativity Workshops   Fully immersive, day-long sessions dedicated to brainstorming aimed at stimulating innovative ideas for the design of products/services/systems. Often these activities are supported by sketching ideas (on post-its, boards, etc.) in collaboration among interdisciplinary workgroups.

Customers   *See 'Users'*

Diaries   *See 'Self-Observations'*

Design   *See 'Human-Centred Design', 'Participatory Design', 'Strategic Design'*

Ethnography   Type of social science research that investigates the practices and life of a community, by becoming one of its members. It is based on learning about a context and the people living in it, by understanding their values, needs and vocabulary. It usually requires long periods of time playing this role and a faithful report of what is experienced or observed avoiding any interpretation or evaluation as far as possible.
Within the field of interaction design, ethnography or video ethnography are methods used to capture human behaviour in the context of the person's natural environment, as a means of gaining insights about user behaviour and unarticulated needs, in order to create innovative solutions. A more adequate terminology might be cultural, design or industrial ethnography.

Experience Modelling*	User research that describes the dimensions of a user experience, suggests how to support an existing user experience, and identifies how to transform and redefine this user experience. This may include observing users in context, observing what people say and do to support the creation of useful models and frameworks that illuminate relevant aspects of experience and behaviour.
Experience Models*	A useful conceptual representation of a user experience; used as the foundation for opportunity generation and solution design.
Focus Group	Representative samples of a target group, usually involved in qualitative-quantitative research, with the aim of understanding behaviours, needs and preferences of a specific population relative to innovative products, services and systems that are under development.
Human-Centred Design or User-Centred Design	Putting People First. Human-centred design is based on the simple premise that in order to create and deliver valuable and compelling solutions for people, businesses or governments, designers have to understand experience and apply that understanding to strategy and design. This approach guides the systematic and iterative development of desirable, usable, useful and sustainable solutions for governments, businesses and their constituents.
Laboratory Observations	Qualitative or experimental studies used to analyse cognitive and behavioural responses of people in specific (recreated) situations. Usability laboratories usually apply techniques such as simulations, video observations or observation through mirror walls.
Map	*See 'Opportunity Map'*
Market Research	Quantitative studies often based on the use of questionnaire/interview techniques to uncover social phenomena and trends on a larger scale, providing results at a statistical level.

Models	*See 'Concept Models', 'Experience Models', 'Task Models'*
Modelling	*See 'Experience Modelling'*
Observations	*See 'Laboratory Observations', 'Self-Observations'*
Opportunity Map*	An experience-based analysis of gaps in the current experience that reveal new business opportunities.
Participants	*See 'Users'*
Participatory Design	A term used to describe various activities through which users provide input, ideas and feedback to researchers and designers to help shape the concept and design of new products and services.
Participatory Design Activities	Participatory design activities include concept testing, collaborative prototyping, card sorting and scenario testing - that aim to foster the evolution of concepts and the development of prototypes.
People	*See 'Users'*
Primary Research	Actual, unmediated field research dedicated to understanding users within their environments (home; work place; public, retail or entertainment environs). Research techniques include interviews, video ethnography and self-documentation by users etc.
Process Flows*	Visualised representations of the interactions between the user and product or service functions in the design solution.
Research	*See 'Context Research', 'Market Research', 'Primary Research', 'Secondary Research'*
Prototype Testing* (low/medium fidelity)	Testing interim solution designs with users in order to evaluate the usefulness and usability of the design.

Prototyping

Development of 2D-3D physical objects implementing ideas about future products/services/systems that can help to understand their benefits, drawbacks or other issues related to their future use by consumers in the intended contexts. The observation of user interaction with behavioural prototypes allows the designer to gain insights on what works, what doesn't and why, at an early stage of the design process.

Scenario Building

A character-based story line describing the assumed practical context of use for a product or service. It helps to communicate the essence of the product/service idea within a defined and probable context of use. In focusing on the 'what if' question, scenario building helps to delineate desired or problematic outcomes.
See also 'User Scenarios'

Secondary Research

A review of published articles, papers and other relevant documents useful to develop an informed point of view on the state-of-the-art within an area and to identify trends in the field.

Self-observations/ Diaries

Method used when it is difficult or impossible to directly access a certain place (like people's homes) or access is too time consuming. It consists of asking people to provide self-observations about their activities in the form of log reports or diaries, for example. Although this method involves the subjectivity of the participants in the data collected, it can be valuable to get a glimpse of life through the eyes of the people that are being studied.

Strategic Design

Strategic design helps to manifest the company's vision/image/goal of a marketplace to come, the position/placement of its products and services in relation to other competitors, and its answer to anticipated user needs. Strategic design is based on and shapes mid- to long-term business strategy and goals. It concerns the whole product system, i.e. the integrated body of products, services and communication with which a company presents itself to the market and society, giving form to its strategy.

Task Models*	Description of how users think about and accomplish goals which serves as a foundation the concept, functionality and features of a product, service or website, etc..
Testing	*See 'Concept Testing', 'Prototype Testing', 'Usability Testing'*
Usability	Usability is the extent to which users can access the functionality of a system with effectiveness, efficiency and satisfaction to achieve specific goals.
Usability Testing* (medium/high fidelity)	Testing final or near-to-final designs with users in order to evaluate the usability (i.e. ease of use) of the solution.
User	A term chosen to refer to people involved during the design, evaluation or actual usage of new products, services or technological systems. Actors, customers, participants and people are other terms in common usage and reflect the design philosophy most relevant to the situation or process described.
User-Centred Design	*See 'Human-Centred Design'*
User Scenarios	Personalised, fictional stories with characters, events, products and environments; used to shape the design of concepts, test prototypes and validate the design of the solution.
User Segments*	Representations of user groups that provide the basis for a strategic design that will meet user and business needs.
Workshops	*See 'Creativity Workshops'*
Reference	* Armstrong M., Burrell M., et al, (2001). User-centered Design at Sapient. *Poster.* New York: Sapient publication.