

User Scenario

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What is a user scenario?

A user scenario is a narrative, which describes how a user might interact with a website or software application. In a user scenario, a specific task is specified and a narrative is written describing how a user might accomplish this task. A user scenario is different from a user story, which is often written by the user himself.

Why are user scenarios important?

User scenarios are important as these enable usability experts and developers to get into the mindset of potential users. With user scenarios the focus is on users' needs rather than the technological aspects of design. Another benefit of user scenarios is that they are written in a language that all team members should understand, regardless of specialism. There are many different user scenarios created for any one product or application design. Because the scenario should avoid technical processes, these should leave team members open-minded as to how these actions can be performed.

How to create user scenarios

User scenarios are created by writing clearly what interaction needs to take place in order for a task to be carried out. A scenario should be understood by those who do not have a technological background. The user scenario should not just be confined to the user's interaction with technology, but also the other things that happen while this interaction takes place. User scenarios can therefore include cultural information and context and a description of the circumstances that lead the user to use the product or application. For example, a user scenario describing how someone uses a mobile phone app could include information that the device is used while the user is on the train, or that an action is interrupted by an incoming call. This information can help developers adapt their designs to improve the usability and user experience of an application.

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Last update: **2020/06/04 21:40**

