

Case Studies in Design Informatics 1

Tutorial 4: Designing for Diverse Audiences and Contexts

In the last tutorial, we explored how we can design and develop technology responsibly through the AREA framework, a tool that helps those involved in technology research to do so responsibly. In this tutorial, we will dig deeper into the questions of how to be reflexive and participatory in our design process.

In today's activities, we will explore how we can design for, and with, diverse audiences and for diverse design contexts. As designers and researchers, we may consciously or unconsciously make assumptions about the groups we are designing for. As we discussed in last week's tutorial, it is important for us to reflect on, and challenge our assumptions, as well as to ensure we are engaging appropriately with key stakeholders to ensure our design is responsive to real needs, preferences and values of particular groups.

As always, the session will start by taking attendance. The Tutor will then ask you to discuss a question: Thinking back to the last tutorial, what does it mean to be reflexive in the design process?

If you're not sure, you can just say "I don't know". This is not a test!

All subsequent activities will be completed using the [Miro board](#).

Activity 1: Choosing a group and design context (10 mins).

Get into groups of 3-4. First, decide which of the following target groups from the following list you would like to focus on in the rest of the tutorial:

- Older adults (70+ years of age)
- Children (7-12 years of age)
- Adult wheelchair users
- Teenagers (13-17 years of age) with cognitive disabilities

Next, imagine you are designing something for your target group. Pick a design context, either choosing from the following list, or developing your own.

- Developing new modes of computationally-mediated communication for your group
- Teaching your group about digital literacy
- Supporting your group in accessing tourist destinations
- Developing platforms that help your group develop community

Activity 2: Listing and challenging assumptions (30 mins)

In this section, we will start listing and reflecting on our assumptions about our target groups.

Part one: Listing assumptions (10 mins)

On the Miro, list assumptions you might make about your target group in relation to your chosen design context. What might their needs be? What challenges do you think they might face? What might a designer need to pay attention to when designing a technology for them?

Part two: Reflecting on assumptions (10 mins)

Now, start reflecting on where your assumptions have come from and add post-its saying why you have made them. Do you have direct experience with engaging with your target group? Do you have lived experience as a member of that group? Are they based on things you have read or experienced? Might any of your assumptions be stereotypical or biased?

Part three: Identifying what you don't know (10 mins)

Based on the previous activities, are there things about your target group you are not sure about, that would be important to find out during the design process? What are they?

Activity 3: Considering who to involve in the design process, how and when (20 mins)

Part 1: Considering who to involve in the design process (5 mins)

Who might you consider involving in the design process as participants or co-designers? Would the target group itself be appropriate to involve? If not, why not? Are there any other stakeholders who would be appropriate to involve, and what insights might they bring?

Part 2: Considering methods you might utilise and stages of the design process (15 mins)

Spend some time thinking about design methods you know, and browsing the following links for other methods:

<https://www.designmethodsfinder.com/methods/search/all>
<https://hcitang.org/uploads/Teaching/ideo-method-cards-2by1.pdf>

List which methods might be appropriate to utilise to find out more about the target group and design context, and to challenge/validate your assumptions. At what stages of the design process would these methods be most valuable? What could they help you find out?

Activity 4: Discussing (20 mins)

With the rest of the time, the tutor will ask your group to present and discuss the outcomes of the activities.

Wrapping up:

In this tutorial we have explored how to surface and challenge our assumptions of target groups. This is important to avoid unconscious stereotyping and oversimplified thinking when considering who we are designing for. From next week onwards, our lectures and tutorials will focus on specific design methods that actively involve target groups.