Journaling

»A method to document experience of design researchers & participants alike.«
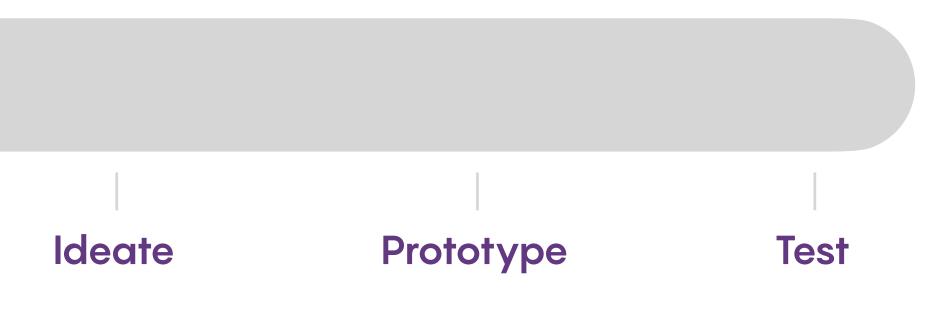
Contents

Introduction

Written by Participants:

To capture their thoughts and feelings about an activity or service over time

- Can provide insights into the participant's perception of the activity

Written by Researchers

- To record activities & gather information in the field during a session of Participant Observation/Field Observation

- Can be supplemented with sketches, photos, audio recording, and video recording.

- Is useful for analysis and synthesis later

Design Phases

Emphasize   Define   Ideate   Prototype   Test

Introduction – A Method of Empathy

Written by Participants:

- Number of participants: As little as 1, as much as 100.

- Estimated duration recommended A few weeks

- Facilitator: Depending on number of participants. Smaller studies only need 1 researcher/facilitator, while bigger ones might need 2 or more to analyze data.

Written by Researchers:

- Number of participants: 1 in Participant Observation, more in Field Observation

- Estimated duration recommended 30 minutes – 8 hours

- Facilitator: 1 researcher/facilitator

Materials

FAB LAB SIEGEN

Paper Notebooks

- Containing predefined instruction & prompts

- Fast

- Portable, easy to carry everywhere

- Non-intrusive, and doesn't break the no-device rule

- Requires longer duration & more effort to analyze & synthesize results

Google Forms

- Instruction & prompts are translated into forms

- Fast to fill out

- Easiest to use for recording daily entries

- Responsive, it can be used on mobile devices

- Easy to analyze & synthesize results

- Requires tedious effort to create multiple forms for longer studies

Google Sheet

- Instruction & prompts are translated as cells to fill out

- Easy to analyze & synthesize results

- More flexible & intuitive for longer duration of research & many participants

- Not intuitive on mobile devices

Instructions
Preparation

1. **Specify**

- The purpose of the journaling method study

- Data you want to collect

- The number of participants (depending on the size & time allocation of your study.)

2. **Prepare the tool**

- Prepare the journal tool with the data you want to collect (e.g. printing paper template, creating new forms on Google Forms, new sheets on Google Sheet.. etc

Instructions
Preparation

3. Recruit

• Use a screening survey to find participants that fit your criteria

4. Conduct Pre-Study

• Conduct a pre-study by testing your tool with participants in a pilot test

Instructions
Steb-by-Step

FAB LAB SIEGEN

Step 1

Distribute journal to participants/researchers

Make sure that pre-study has been conducted and any adjustment necessary has been made

Step 2

If other data collection is done (photos, audio recording, video recording), note in the written journal where in the process this data was collected

Step 3

Journal entries need to be monitored on a daily basis to ensure you are able to respond to questions by participants. Additionally, try to probe for more detail whilst the entry is still fresh in their minds.

Step 4a

As soon as data from the participants/researcher starts to arrive, it can be analyzed through Affinity Diagramming. You're essentially looking to identify high-level patterns across the full data set. See if you can find insights across multiple people, and compare those to demographic data.

Step 5

Share insights of what you learned to others, for example teammates, your manager, or friends. Often you will need to create a lengthy report or presentation to walk everyone through the design, method, and outcome of the study.

Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike — CC BY-NC-SA

Instructions
Tips

Remind participants who are keeping journals to contribute to them regularly. Encourage them to add sketches, photos, images, etc if they want.

Remind researchers in the field to differentiate between recording what they observe and their opinions/conclusions about what they observe. Both are valuable.

FAB LAB SIEGEN

Links

Hyla, M., & Accenture. (2018). Design Thinking in Instructional Design: Review of tools & Approaches. Accenture. https://www.accenture.com/de-de

Humphrey, B. (2020). How to run a user research diary study with participants. Dovetail App. https://dovetailapp.com/blog/user-research-diary-study/

Moran, K. (2019). DIY digital diary studies – UX Collective. Medium. https://uxdesign.cc/diy-digital-diary-studies-72563f65cf6e

FAB LAB SIEGEN

Contact

usability-siegen.de

fablab-siegen.de