

Executive Summary

There is often a problem when we use standard market segmentation techniques for designing Internet offerings. Knowing more about the preferences of your target audiences does help you attract and sell to customers; however, it doesn't help you design a product that will let users achieve their goals.

Task-based segmentation is a technique that defines your target audience by the tasks they perform to achieve a goal. It is an invaluable foundation for conceptual research, which is research that reveals how people think about getting things done.

Conceptual Research Fills Gaps

There are three basic classes of research: ability, preference, and conceptual. Ability research shows what users understand, and preference research examines what users prefer. Conceptual research shows how users innately approach a goal, how they think about it, and how they get things done.

By applying conceptual research, you can learn how users would intuitively achieve a goal, and design your product accordingly. But before conducting conceptual research, you need to know whom to study.

Task-Based Segmentation Locates Target Users

Task-based segmentation facilitates conceptual research, preventing your company from wasting capital on studies that bring less useful market data to bear on your product development process. This technique ensures that your studies engage the best possible participants to help you shape your product.

This report is a step-by-step guide that walks readers through task-based segmentation, and breaks it down into six easy steps:

- 1. Prepare your team** by setting aside preconceptions.
- 2. Brainstorm tasks** efficiently, and use the best format to express them.
- 3. Group tasks** to create user goal sets.
- 4. List performers by task group** using the spreadsheet provided with this report.
- 5. Group performers** by identifying patterns in your spreadsheet, and by using proven techniques to sort a complex data set into easily recognizable user groups.
- 6. Define audience segments** by organizing information for instant visualization, filtering with applicable business data, and focusing on profitable user groups.

Readers will come away with a solid understanding of how to sort and track the detailed information necessary to select ideal study participants.