

# Observational study

## □ What is it

- Watching and analysing users in their natural environment to understand their behaviours, needs, pain points, and the context in which they interact with products or services.
- Observing how users may interact with a service or product is a great first hand way to understand its usability in real world settings. Conducting observations can be straightforward for most services and can be a relatively fast way to identify problems, needs and opportunities that might not be apparent through other research methods or self-reported feedback.

## □□ Who

- User researcher.

## □□ Running the technique

- Prepare - Decide the learning objectives for the observational study, typically structured(checklists) or unstructured(qualitative). Recruit a relevant sample size of participants associated to a target user profile. Decide on the type of observation-controlled or naturalistic.
- Run the exercise- Be mindful of user research ethics, and be open on how data collected will be used. Explain the purpose of the exercise, and the task that you wish the participants to undertake.
- Capture insight. What are users actually doing? As opposed to what you expected they might do. What routines do users have with the service? How are they integrating it into their lives? Record details – adding granularity and specificity to an observation can make it much more meaningful. Ensure you're examining activities in their whole; look at how the service is used in context and the flow of their broader needs and not just at the service itself.
- Summary analysis. Use visualisation to highlight key learnings both from a quantitative and qualitative viewpoint

# ☐☐ Authoritative source

- <https://outwitly.com/blog/research-methods-observations/>

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