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BA COMPUTER GAMES DESIGN

USER EXPERIENCE DESIGN

Card Sorting



Card Sorting

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- ② Card Sorting Methods
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Card Sorting Overview



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CARD SORTING OVERVIEW

Card sorting is a UX research technique in which **research participants sort labels for content into larger categories**. Card sorting provides insight into **how participants group a product's content**, enabling the UX team to design an information architecture that **makes sense to users**.

For example, if you're creating a website for a store that sells office products and services, how do you organise the categories on the website to encompass everything that's offered in a way that the **user can understand?**

Card sorting enables you to see **how users would organise the information**. If you conduct a card sort with multiple participants, you'll **see patterns emerge** that will help you organise the product's information architecture in a way that will **make the most sense to your users** [1].



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CARD SORTING OVERVIEW

There are two main ways to conduct a card sort – **open and closed**. Each option has its own pros and cons.

Open card sort:

In an open card sort, **participants organise a set of cards into categories**. They then label each category with **whatever name they think** fits it best.

Open card sorts help you to understand not only **how users organise content** but also the **terms they use** to classify these items.

This will ensure the UX team understands how **users naturally think about a product's content** when designing its information architecture [1].



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CARD SORTING OVERVIEW

There are two main ways to conduct a card sort – **open and closed**. Each option has its own pros and cons.

Closed card sort:

In a closed card sort, participants organise a set of cards into a **predetermined group of categories**.

Closed card sorts help you to **validate a group of categories that have already been defined** by the UX team.

Closed card sorting will shed light on **whether a set of predetermined categories are understood by users** and if they agree on what content belongs in each category [1].



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CARD SORTING OVERVIEW

There is also a **third hybrid approach** to Card Sorting exercises:

Hybrid card sort:

In a hybrid card sort, participants are given a **predetermined group of categories** that users can organise their cards into but it also enables participants to **create and label new categories if they want to**.

Hybrid card sorts help you to discover if **users understand a predetermined set of categories**. If not, the users will inform you on **how they would prefer the content to be categorised**.

This is especially useful if the UX team has arrived at a partial navigation structure but is **having a hard time deciding how the remainder of the content should be organised** [1].



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CARD SORTING METHODS

Card sorting can be conducted in a **number of situations**. Which option you choose will **depend on the amount of time and money you can spend** and **what you want to get out of the research** [1].



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CARD SORTING METHODS

Card sorting can be conducted in a **number of situations**. Which option you choose will **depend on the amount of time and money you can spend** and **what you want to get out of the research** [1].

In-person card sorting

Card sorting is traditionally **conducted in person** and can be remarkably analog when it's done this way. All it requires is **a participant, a set of cards and a facilitator** to explain what the participant must do.



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CARD SORTING METHODS

Card sorting can be conducted in a **number of situations**. Which option you choose will **depend on the amount of time and money you can spend** and **what you want to get out of the research** [1].

In-person card sorting

Pros: It's very **simple to execute** and participants can easily organise the physical cards in a way that will quickly **provide the insights UX designers are looking for**.

Cons: It falls on the person or people conducting the research session to **meticulously document the results provided by each participant** and then to **organise those results** so they can be input into whatever tool is being used to analyse the data.



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CARD SORTING METHODS

Card sorting can be conducted in a **number of situations**. Which option you choose will **depend on the amount of time and money you can spend** and **what you want to get out of the research** [1].

Remote card sorting

Card sorting can now be conducted using **software or web-based applications**. Researchers create a set of labeled cards with a **remote card sorting tool** and participants then drag and drop them into groups.

Remote card sorts can be **open or closed** and are **typically unmoderated**.



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CARD SORTING METHODS

Card sorting can be conducted in a **number of situations**. Which option you choose will **depend on the amount of time and money you can spend** and **what you want to get out of the research** [1].

Remote card sorting

Pros: Remote card sorting enables **participants from all over to be part of the research**, instead of just those that can make it to an in-person research location. This is also the **most time effective method for UX designers and researchers** as the remote card sorting tool can **analyse the data it collects**.

Cons: If the remote tool is difficult to use, it can **lead to frustration**, cause participants to **abandon the study**, or **skew results by preventing participants from creating the categories they want**. In addition, participants **may not be able to see all the cards in a study on the screen of their device**, leading to a more disjointed card sorting process.



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How To Conduct a Card Sort



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HOW TO CONDUCT A CARD SORT

Conducting a card sort is a fairly easy process that roughly follows **these three steps** [1]:

- **Choose the content labels you want your test participants to sort**
- **Have research participants organise the items into groups**
- **Analyse the data**



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HOW TO CONDUCT A CARD SORT

Conducting a card sort is a fairly easy process that roughly follows **these three steps** [1]:

- **Choose the content labels you want your test participants to sort**

These should be **agreed on by the UX team**. Each individual item should be written onto a **separate card or piece of paper**. So for example, an office supply store will have individual cards that might include labels like staples, paper clips, pens and pencils.

The **Nielsen Norman Group** recommends **limiting the number of labels to between 40 and 80** to represent the most **important content** in your product. This will ensure there are enough items to provide insight into the way users organise the content but **not so many that they become overwhelmed**.



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HOW TO CONDUCT A CARD SORT

Conducting a card sort is a fairly easy process that roughly follows **these three steps** [1]:

- **Have research participants organise the items into groups**

Present the set of cards to the participant after shuffling them to **ensure they're in no particular order** and instruct them to **read each one** and **organise them into categories**.

If it's an open card sort, **participants should be instructed to organise the cards into as many categories as they'd like**. If it's a closed card sort, participants should be **instructed to organise the cards into a predetermined group of categories**.

Either way, the **groups the user creates can be as large or small as they'd like**.



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HOW TO CONDUCT A CARD SORT

Conducting a card sort is a fairly easy process that roughly follows **these three steps** [1]:

- **Have research participants organise the items into groups**

If there's a card that **the participant doesn't feel fits into any group** or that they don't understand, they should **leave it off to the side**.

Users should keep in mind that **this is a fluid process**, so if they **change their minds** about anything, they should feel free to **rearrange the cards in any way** they want to.



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HOW TO CONDUCT A CARD SORT

Conducting a card sort is a fairly easy process that roughly follows **these three steps** [1]:

- **Analyse the data**

After repeating this procedure with at least 15 participants from each group of users, it's time to analyse.

Go through the data to **see which items tended to be grouped together**, if there were groups or group names that frequently came up or if there were any other **patterns in the data**, such as items that were frequently set off to the side.

This will help the UX team **determine the navigation system and information structure** that will provide the **smoothest user experience**.



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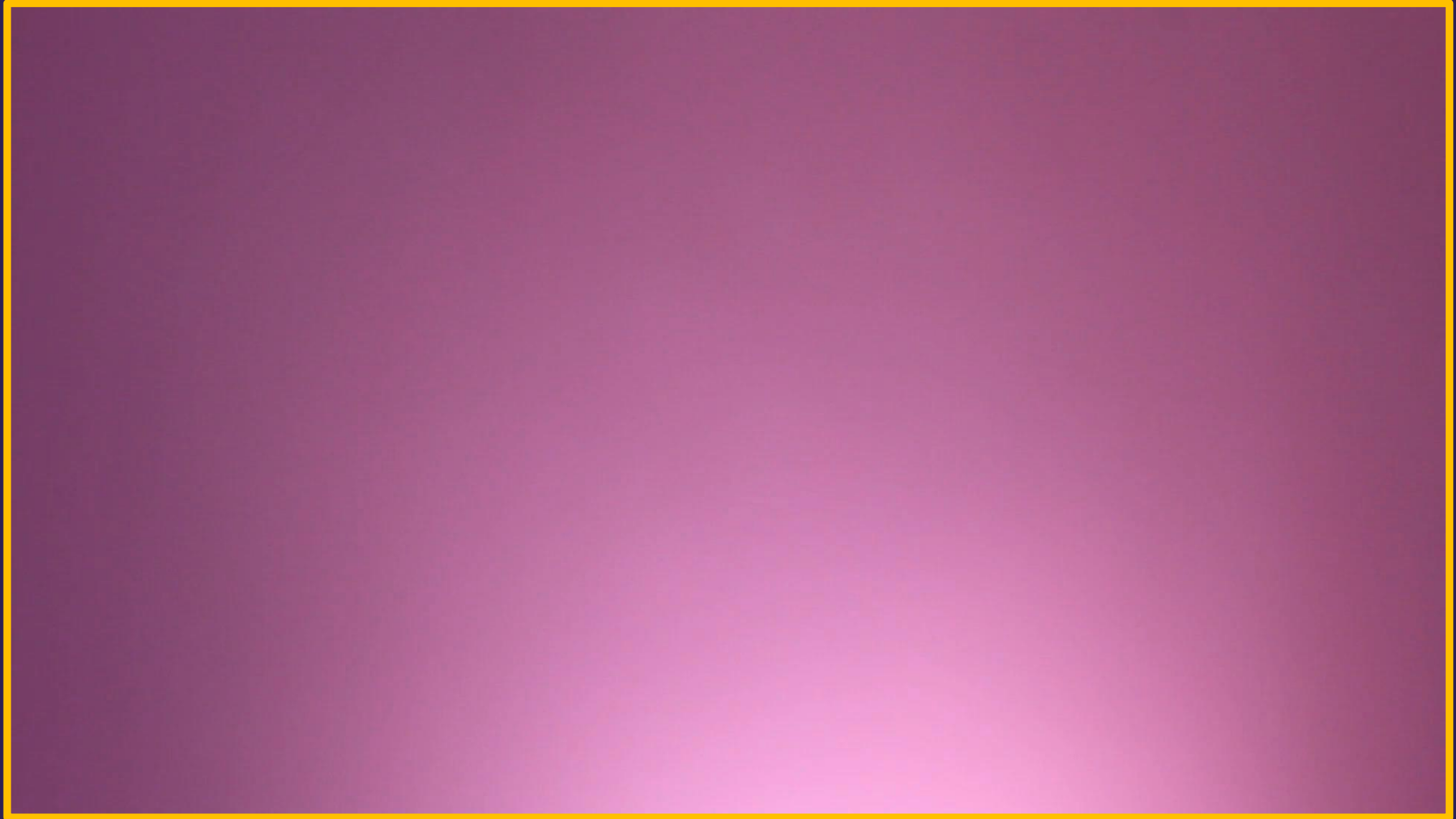
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Card Sorting Exercise



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Career Foundry: *How To Do Card Sorting in UX Design* (7:29) [2]



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CARD SORTING EXERCISE

The following items on the next slide are all required on a University website.

Perform a Card Sort to develop a sensible menu structure for the site.





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CARD SORTING EXERCISE

- Undergrad course info
- Postgrad course info
- Staff details
- Campus maps
- Open day details
- University history
- Student email
- Staff email
- Faculty details
- Department details
- Admin departments
- Research groups
- Research papers
- Moodle
- Contact details
- Consultancy services
- Venue hire
- Student union
- Sporting facilities
- Clubs and societies
- Shops
- Part-time courses
- Job vacancies
- Ratings and rankings
- Awards
- Scholarships/bursaries
- University events
- Library locations
- Student fees
- How to apply
- Visa applications
- Student accommodation
- Press office
- Alumni newsletters
- Student exchanges
- Student stories
- Research ethics
- University regulations



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Card Sorting Summary



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SUMMARY

Card sorting is a **powerful but simple way to discover how users would organise the content** in your product. While it isn't difficult to conduct a card sort, there are many **important decisions** to make about how to conduct this UX research technique – open or closed card sort, moderated or not, in-person or remote, etc.

No matter which options you choose, a card sort is bound to **offer a wealth of information** that will ensure your **product's structure and information architecture is as intuitive for your users** as it can be. Ultimately, card sorting will **enhance the user experience** of the end product [1].



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Card Sorting Bibliography



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