User Research & Usability Testing

User Research & Usability Testing
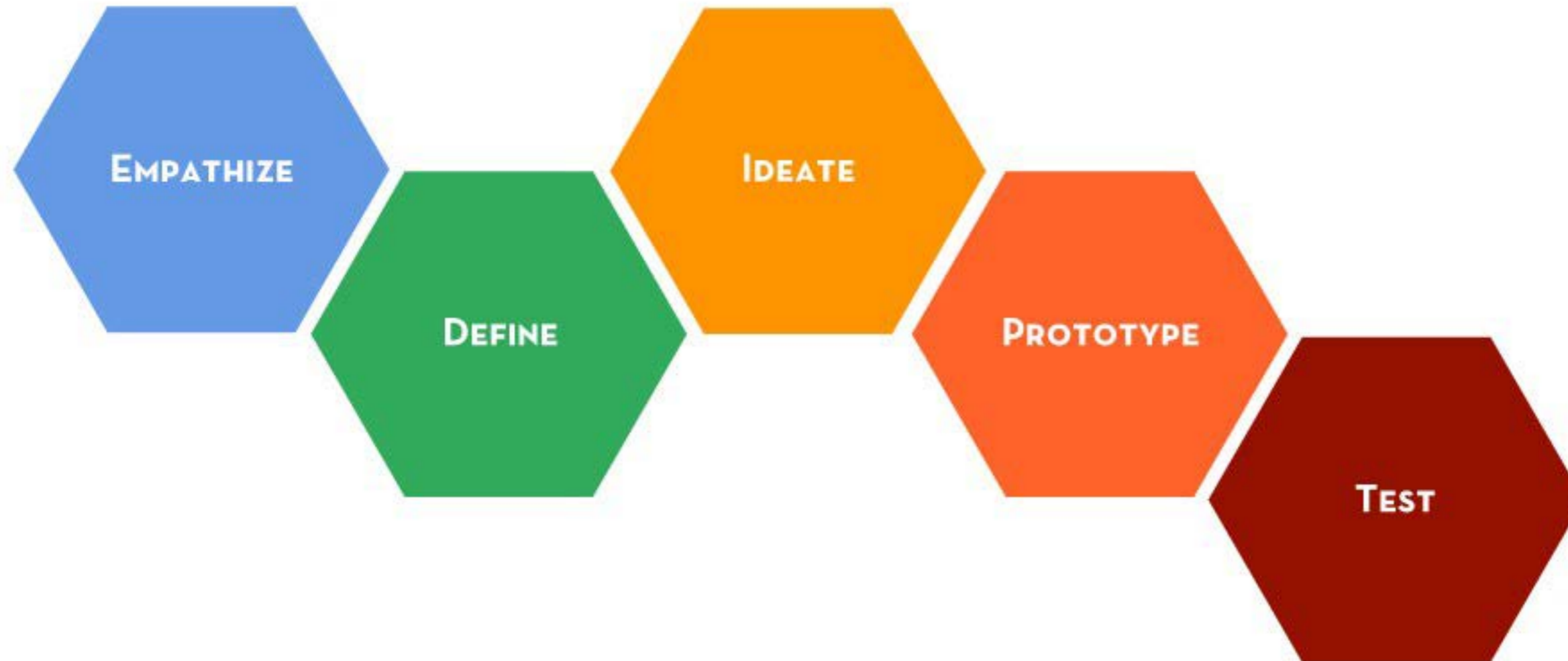
Why doing user research?

As designers, we always believe in our intuition and follow our "gut instinct". However, in the context where our design is used by thousands of people, we must continue to ask ourselves, is our design intuition enough?

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UX Booth, http://www.uxbooth.com/articles/complete-beginners-guide-to-design-research/
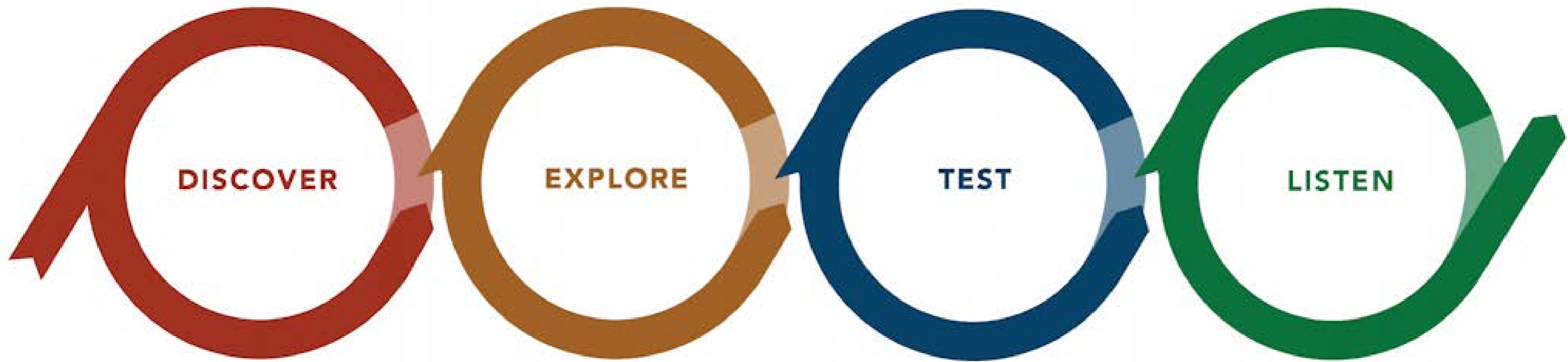
The answer is definitely, no. Despite our skills as designers, it's essential to validate our assumptions.

According to UX Booth, designer research (user research) helps designers identify and prove or disprove assumptions, and find commonalities across its target audience members in order to recognize their needs, goals, and mental models. Overall, research informs our work, improves our understanding, and validates our decisions. It's also one of the surefire ways we can end up dissociating ourselves from the project. Frequently, we are not the user of our design and, therefore it's important to understand the primary customer reality.

The goal of this document is not to do a deep analysis of each user research methodology, rather, the purpose is to suggest some exercises for each phase of the design process.
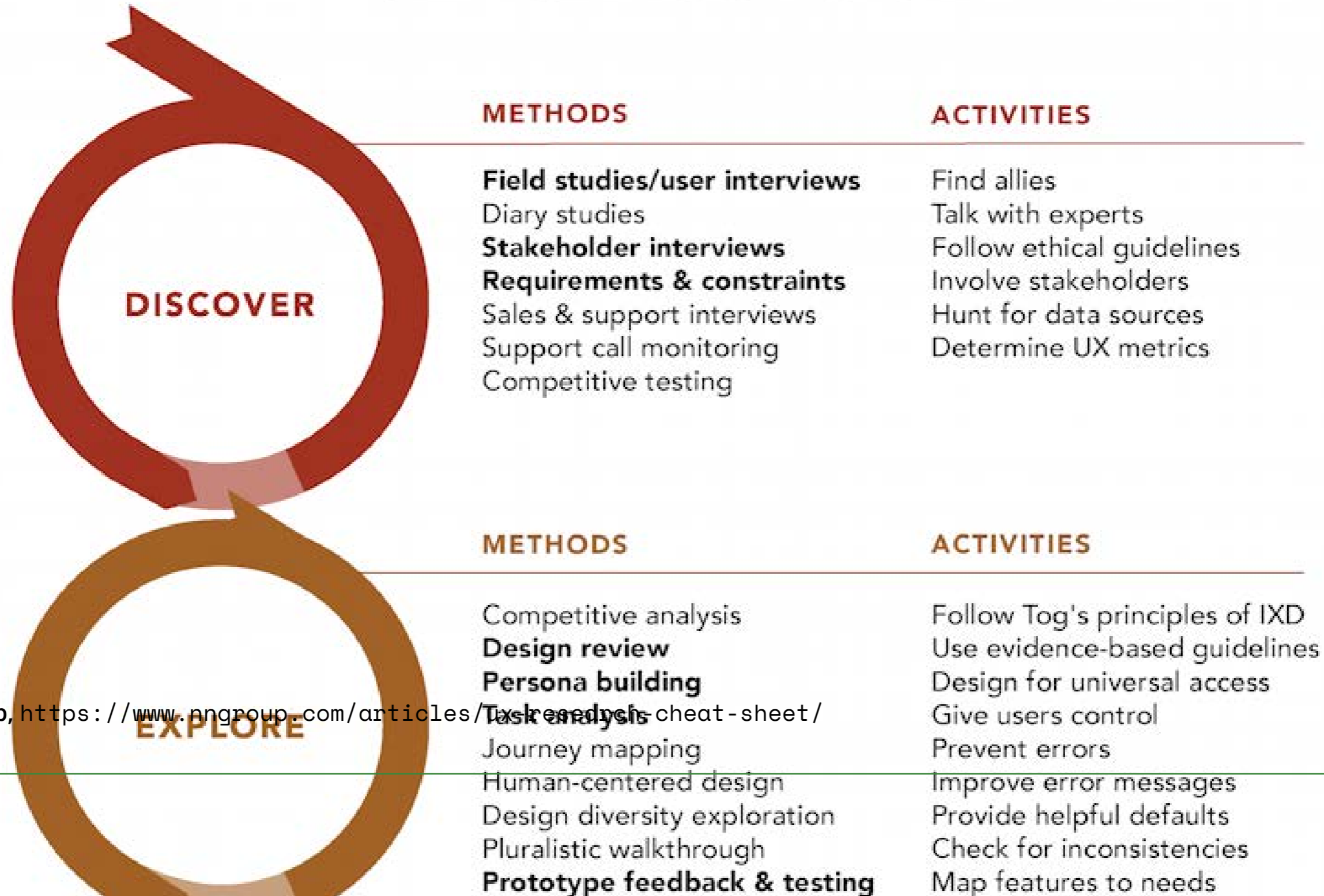
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Human-centered design, https://medium.com/re-write/do-ideo-google-and-apple-leave-enough-room-for-the-next-generation-of-human-centered-designers-f52771d4746f

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Nielson Norman Group, https://www.nngroup.com/articles/ux-research-cheat-sheet/

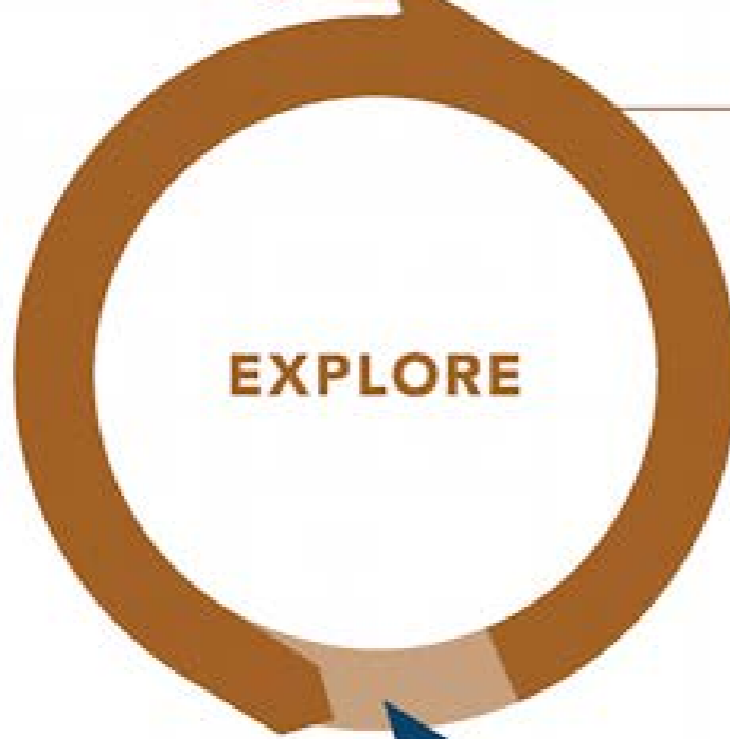# UX ACTIVITIES IN THE PRODUCT & SERVICE DESIGN CYCLE

DISCOVER

METHODS

Field studies/user interviews
Diary studies
Stakeholder interviews
Requirements & constraints
Sales & support interviews
Support call monitoring
Competitive testing

ACTIVITIES

Find allies
Talk with experts
Follow ethical guidelines
Involve stakeholders
Hunt for data sources
Determine UX metrics

EXPLORE

METHODS

Competitive analysis
Design review
Persona building
Task analysis
Journey mapping
Human-centered design
Design diversity exploration
Pluralistic walkthrough
Prototype feedback & testing

ACTIVITIES

Follow Tog's principles of IXD
Use evidence-based guidelines
Design for universal access
Give users control
Prevent errors
Improve error messages
Provide helpful defaults
Check for inconsistencies
Map features to needs

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Nielson Norman Group, https://www.nngroup.com/articles/ux-research-cheat-sheet/

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DISCOVER

METHODS	ACTIVITIES
Field studies/user interviews	Find allies
Diary studies	Talk with experts
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EXPLORE

METHODS	ACTIVITIES
Competitive analysis	Follow Tog's principles of IXD
Design review	Use evidence-based guidelines
Persona building	Design for universal access
Task analysis	Give users control
Journey mapping	Prevent errors
Human-centered design	Improve error messages
Design diversity exploration	Provide helpful defaults
Pluralistic walkthrough	Check for inconsistencies
Prototype feedback & testing	Map features to needs
Write user stories	Make software updating easy
Card sorting	Plan for repair and recycling
	Avoid waste
	Consider diverse contexts
	Look for perverse incentives
	Consider social implications

TEST

METHODS	ACTIVITIES
Qualitative usability testing	Protect personal information
Training research	Keep data safe

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User Research & Usability Testing

EXPLORE

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~~Persona building~~
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TEST

METHODS

ACTIVITIES

Qualitative usability testing
Training research
User group outreach
Social media monitoring
Forum post analysis
Benchmark testing
Accessibility evaluation
Test instructions & help

Protect personal information
Keep data safe
Deliver both good and bad news
Track usability over time
Include diverse users
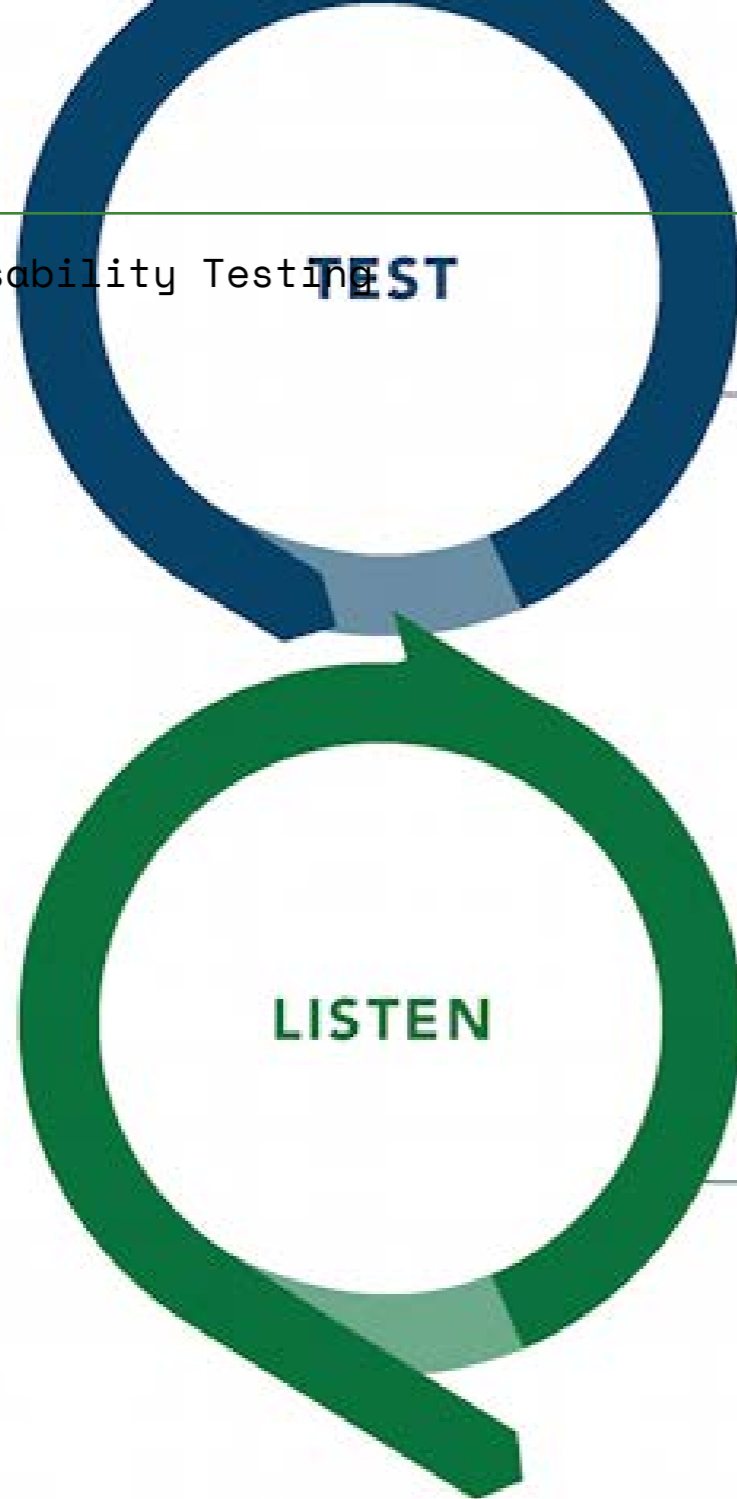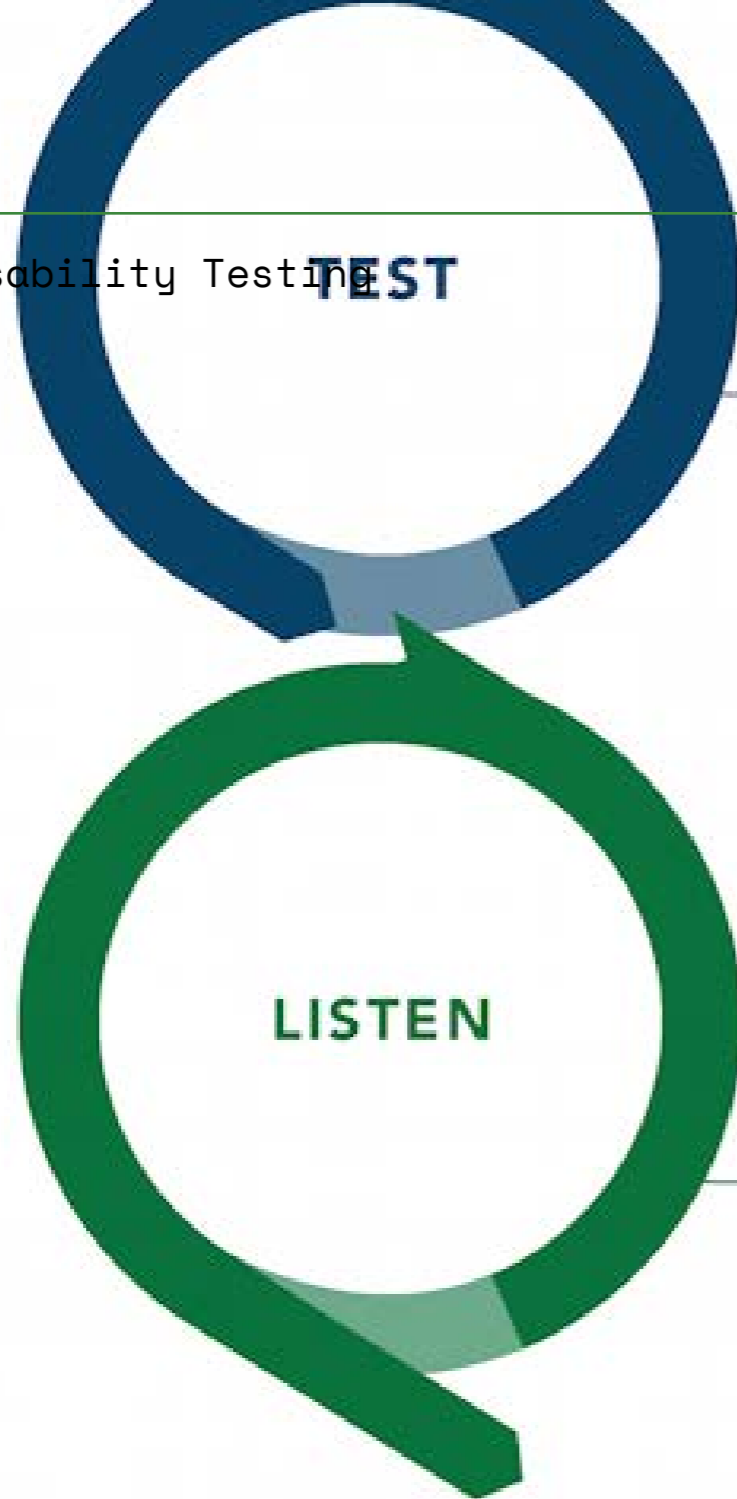Track usability bugs
Make training information

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Nielson Norman Group, https://www.nngroup.com/articles/ux-research-cheat-sheet/

LISTEN

METHODS

ACTIVITIES

Surveys

Pay attention to user sentiment

Avoid waste
Consider diverse contexts
Look for perverse incentives
Consider social implications

TEST

METHODS	ACTIVITIES
Qualitative usability testing	Protect personal information
Training research	Keep data safe
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Social media monitoring	Track usability over time
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Benchmark testing	Track usability bugs
Accessibility evaluation	Make training information
Test instructions & help	

LISTEN

METHODS	ACTIVITIES
Surveys	Pay attention to user sentiment
Analytics review	Reduce the need for training
Search-log analysis	Communicate future directions
Usability bug review	Recruit people for future research
Feedback review	
FAQ review	
Conference outreach	
Q&A at talks and demos	

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Nielson Norman Group, https://www.nngroup.com/articles/ux-research-cheat-sheet/

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UX Activities

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One thing to mention, each project is different, so designers are not expected to execute each activity into a rigorous order. Rather, each designer should embrace an organic process and always focus on the learning outcome as they go.

Discover

As student designers, the discovery stage is the phase where you try to clarify what you don't know. By assessing your own knowledge, either for a specific feature or a full new product, it's important to understand what people really need.

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Nielson Norman Group, https://www.nngroup.com/articles/ux-research-cheat-sheet/

Discover

_ Field study
_ Diary study
_ User interview
_ Stakeholder interview
_ Requirements & constraints gathering

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Nielson Norman Group, https://www.nngroup.com/articles/ux-research-cheat-sheet/

Explore

And whereas the discovery phase is more about clarifying, exploration methods are great for understanding the problem areas which can be determined by scoping out initial design outcomes and defining users' needs.

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Nielson Norman Group, https://www.nngroup.com/articles/ux-research-cheat-sheet/

Explore

_ Competitive analysis
_ Design review
_ Persona building
_ Journey mapping
_ Prototype feedback & testing (clickable or paper prototypes)
_ Write user stories
_ Card sorting

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Nielson Norman Group, https://www.nngroup.com/articles/ux-research-cheat-sheet/

Test

The testing phase is focusing on validation to make sure design solutions work properly for the target audience.

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Nielson Norman Group, https://www.nngroup.com/articles/ux-research-cheat-sheet/

Test

_ Qualitative usability testing (in-person or remote)
_ Benchmark testing
_ Accessibility evaluation

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Listen

Good designers are required to listen within every phase such as before or during the design artefact process, and also once the project is done. The verb "to listen" is not only limited to the literal definition of hearing a sound emitted orally though. It also applies to really listening and paying attention to results that you gain through the monitoring and analyzing of various types of data.

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Nielson Norman Group, https://www.nngroup.com/articles/ux-research-cheat-sheet/

Listen

_ Survey
_ Analytics review
_ Search-log analysis
_ Usability-bug review
_ Frequently-asked-questions (FAQ) review

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Nielson Norman Group, https://www.nngroup.com/articles/ux-research-cheat-sheet/

Conclusion

Finally, it's important to understand the real users and to validate assumptions. But, do users always dictate every product and design decision? As the designer, it's important to get a clear sense of what is the take away based off of the user research as this will ultimately give some direction to your design decision.

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Tools

Usability Hub

_ First click tests
_ Design surveys
_ Preference tests
_ Five second tests
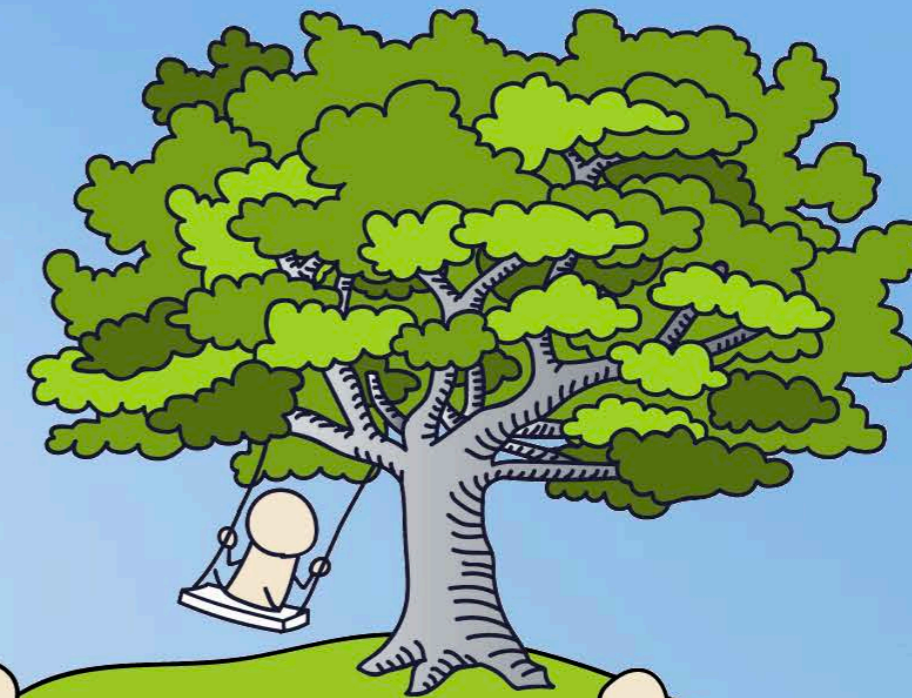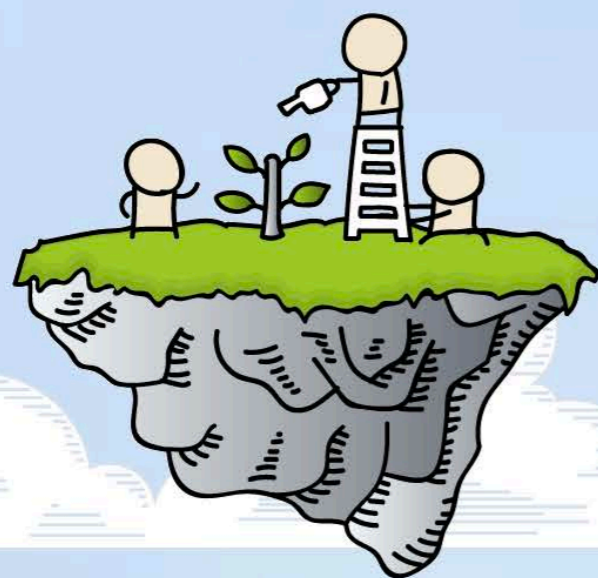
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Usability Hub, https://usabilityhub.com/

OPTIMAL WORKSHOP

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Create Meaningful Experiences

A User Research Platform that helps you and your team make design decisions with confidence.

Get Started Today

Optimal Workshop

_ Tree Testing
_ First-click Testing
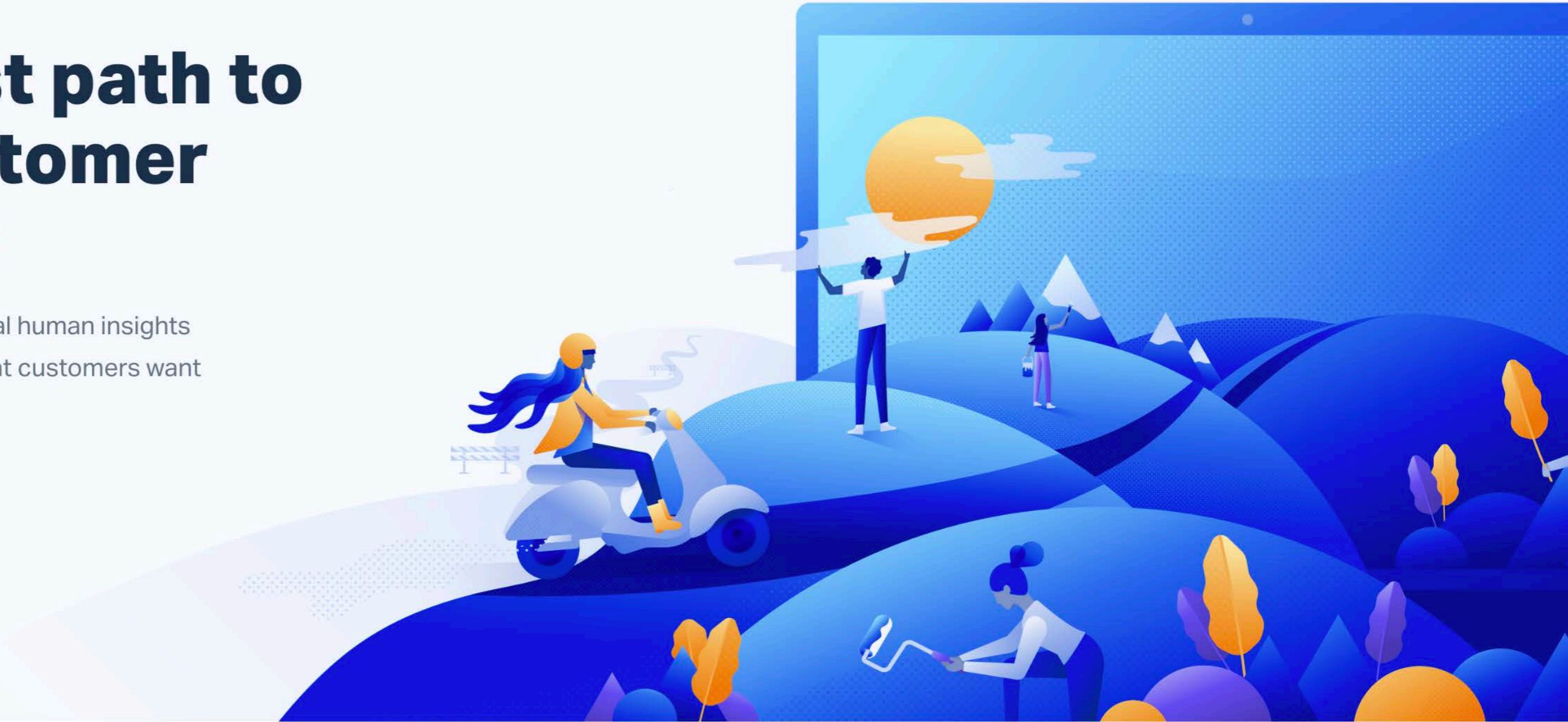_ Card Sorting
_ Questions
_ Qualitative research

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Optimal Workshop, https://www.optimalworkshop.com/

UserTesting.com

_ Usability Testing
_ Task Driven

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Usertesting.com, https://www.usertesting.com/

USER INTERVIEWS

Product ∨   Pricing   Resources ∨   **Sign up to participate**   Log In   **Sign Up**
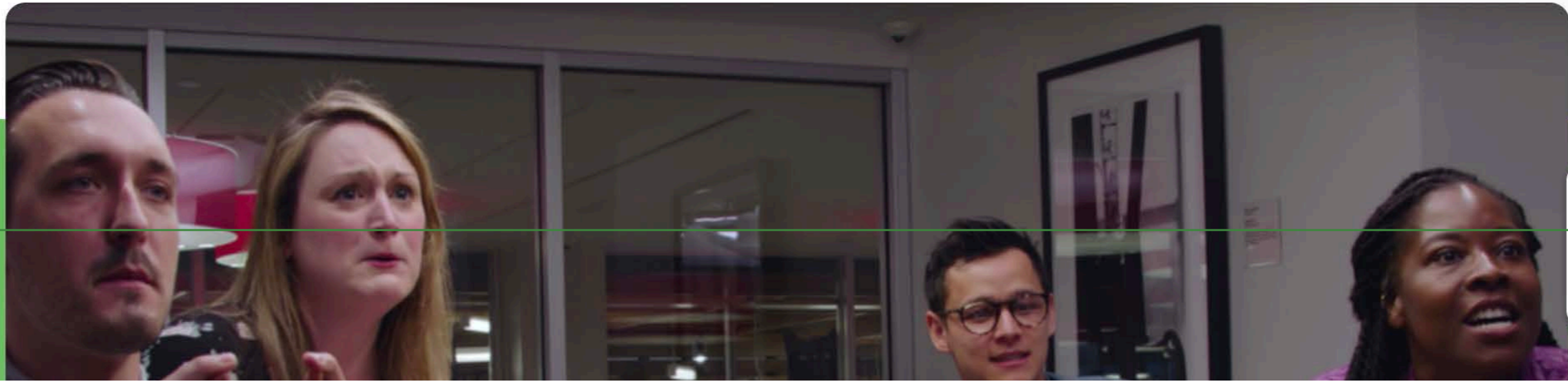
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UserInterviews.com, https://www.userinterviews.com/

GO TO DASHBOARD

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Analytics for prototypes

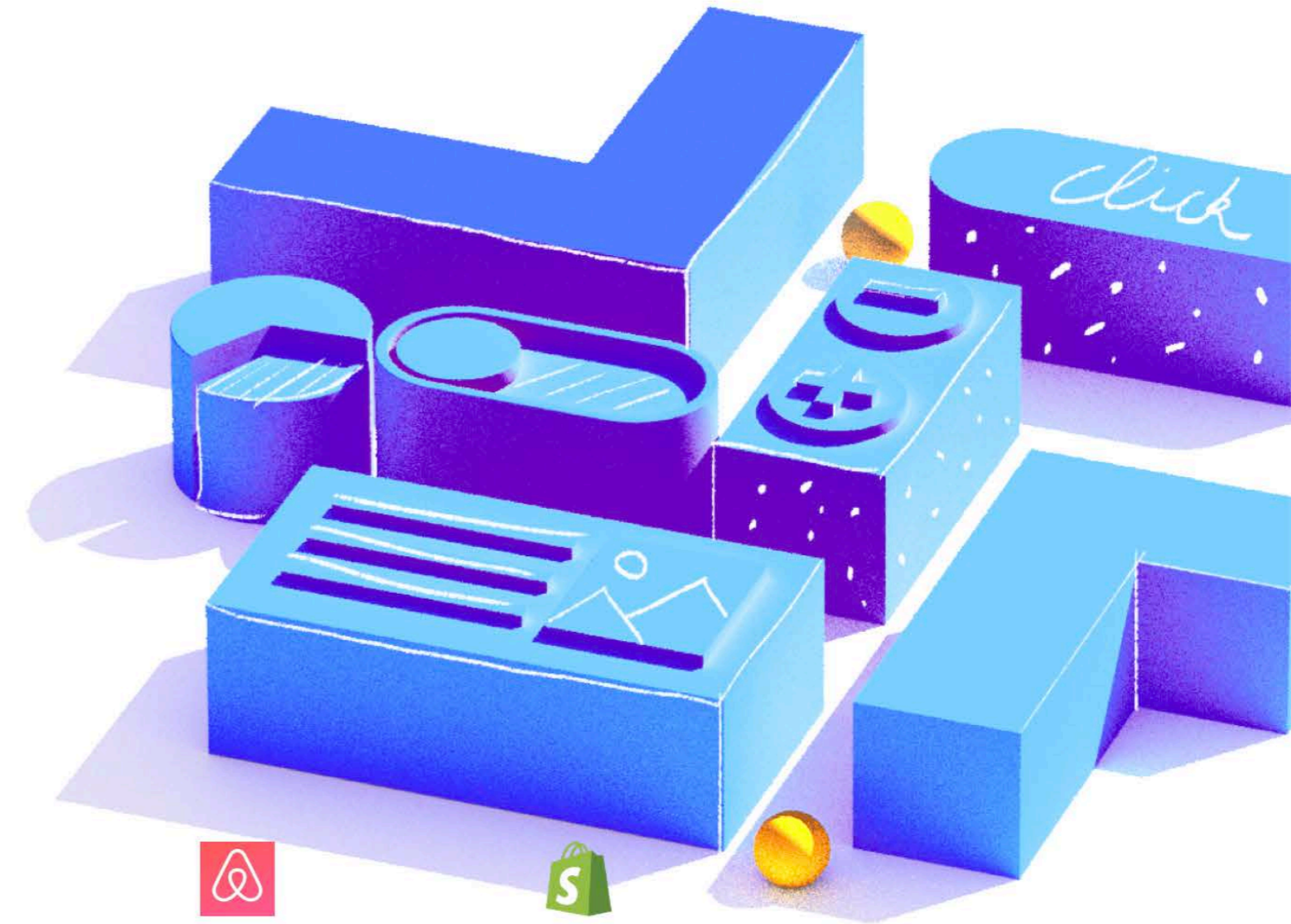PROTOTYPING TOOLS SUPPORTED   invision   Marvel   ◆ Sketch

Discover how real users interact with your prototype:

define missions, collect actionable insights and analyze

how your design performed, with 0 lines of code.

Welcome back **Philippe!**   **GO TO DASHBOARD**

Maze

_ Usability Testing
_ Task Driven

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Maze, https://maze.design/

dovetail

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FA/YSDN 4003

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Dovetail, https://dovetailapp.com/