


Information sheet: What is a Persona?

Anthony: First-Time Online Shopper



"I have never shopped online but I really need to find a car within my budget."

Goals:

- Purchase a pre-owned car within budget online.

Personality Traits:

Frequency of Internet Use:
★
★
★
★
★
□
□
□
□
□
□
 (High)

Online Skills Awareness:
★
★
★
□
□
□
□
□
□
□
□
 (High)

Digital Literacy:
★
★
★
□
□
□
□
□
□
□
□
 (High)

Age: 20
Work: Student
Family: Single

Thoughts:

"My friend warned me about buying online because her money was stolen from her account the first time."
"I need to be very careful. But how can I tell if there's a scam or not?"

Scenarios in the Library:

- **Time 1:** Anthony was not sure where and how to buy a car online, so he posted to a Facebook group asking for help. Several people provided links to external sites.
- **Seeking Librarian Help:** How can Anthony tell if a seller is trustworthy? How to spot a scam?
- **Time 2:** Anthony just spotted a car within his budget on Facebook Marketplace. But the seller asked Anthony to pay a security deposit before the car delivery.
- **Seeking Librarian Help:** What should Anthony do?

Motivations:

- Online shopping

Technology Use:

- Smartphone
- Social Media
- Library Computer

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Above: An example of a persona.

Personas are fictional characters, created based upon research in order to represent the different user types that might use your service product in a similar way. Using a persona can help you to understand your users' needs, experiences, behaviors, and goals. Using a persona can help you step out of yourself and help you to recognize the different needs and expectations of different people. It can also help you to identify and empathize with your users. Personas can help you to achieve the goal of creating a good user experience for your community.

Personas can help library staff ensure that they are not relying on their own knowledge and experiences when designing services and solutions. Using personas during staff training activities will help you ask the right questions and answer those questions in line with the patrons you are serving. For example, “How would Anthony, Josué, or Julia experience, react, and behave in relation to service X or suggestion Y within the given context?” and “What do Anthony, Josué, or Julia think, feel, do and say?” and “What are their underlying needs we are trying to meet?”

How did we create these personas?

Personas are used in several design disciplines and are often used in the design of services and programs. Our research team conducted interviews with 52 families from high-poverty communities in the mid-Atlantic region of the U.S. We also conducted 11 focus groups with 36 public librarians from across the U.S. to collect information on typical privacy issues that library staff are faced with, as well as the types of patrons they serve. We used the findings from these interviews to personify certain trends and patterns in this data, and developed six personas: Anthony, the first-time online shopper; Julia, job seeker & emerging internet user; David & Linda, technology-challenged older adults; Lisa, concerned parent; Josué, immigrant and LGBTQ+ activist; and Simone, teen social media user and frequent internet user. Personas do not describe real people, but they are based on data collected from a variety of real individuals. Personas add a human touch to planning library services. When you create persona profiles of typical or atypical (not the norm) patrons, it will help you to understand patterns in your research, which synthesizes the types of people you seek to design programs and services for.

Source: Dam, R. F. & Siang, T.Y. (2020). Personas – A Simple Introduction. Interaction Design Foundation. Retrieved from: <https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/personas-why-and-how-you-should-use-them>