Define
CARD SORTING

Old heritage from cognitiv psychology (1946) , card sorting is used by information architects and UX to gather insights from users. It's is a participatory activity that aim to gain an understanding of how users understand and model information (Maurer et al., 2004).

Card sorting is used in ergonomics where a group of users (novices or experts) of a product accompanied the classification of terms. During a session, participants organize topics into categories that make sense to them.

To conduct a card sort, you can use actual cards, pieces of paper, or one of several online card-sorting software tools.

PEOPLE	PREP. TIME	TIME	DIFFICULTY LEVEL
15 - 20	3 Hours	60 MIN	● ○ ○

USE THIS METHOD / TECHNIQUE TO
This method is used to draw out underlying mental models (Nielsen et al., 1995; Rosenfeld et al., 2002) that will later aid in the design or validation of an information architecture or site navigation.

THIS IS WHY YOU NEED IT
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MATERIALS

- Table or Wall
- Markers
- Sticky notes or paper pieces

WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED

- Users
- UX Researchers
- Product Owners

TOOLS

- Usabilityhub
- Hotjar
- Loockback.io

Running your method template

PREP:

- Name a set of topics

- Organize those topics in groups

- Name the groups

Tips : The set should include 40–80 items that represent the main content on the site. Write each topic on an individual index card and Avoid topics that contain the same words; participants will tend to group those cards together.

STEP 1 - Introduce your card to users (10 MIN)

- Shuffle the cards and give them to the participant.

- Ask the user to look at the cards one at a time and place cards that belong together into piles. Some piles can be big, others small.

- If the participant isn't sure about a card, or doesn't know what it means, it's ok to leave it off to the side. It's better to have a set of "unknown" or "unsure" cards than to randomly group cards.

Please note:

- There is no preset number for the piles

- It's OK to change their mind

STEP 2 - Ask them to name the groups (10 MIN)

Give the users blank cards and ask them to write donw a name for each group they created. It reveals the mental model of the user. Note that you should not expect the participant to create effective labels.

Tip: It's important to do this after all the groups are created, so the user doesn't lock him/herself. You can ask users to think out loud when they perform the sorting.

STEP 3 - Debrief the model with the users

Ask users to explain the rationale behind the groups they created :

- Were any items especially easy or difficult to place?

- Did any items seem to belong in two or more groups?

- What thoughts do you have about the items left unsorted?

- Ask the user for more-practical group sizes, but only after the debrief

STEP 4 - Analyse your results

You gonna search for common groups, category names or themes, and for items that were frequently paired together. Some items were frequently left to the side? Determine it's because the labels weren't clear or the content seemed unrelated to the rest. You have to combine the patterns with the qualitative insights from the debrief. You can also check out on Interaction Design Foundation website for analyzing methods.

HOW TO USE THE TEMPLATE?

You can use that template to create cards. You just have to cut by following lines

PRO TIPS TO RUN THE TEMPLATE

You should definitely give some virgin cards, double cards, maybe colors sticks and markers to your users. Maybe the workshop will reveal some funtionality missing but also that you need to have a functionality acces in two categories.

VARIATIONS

Card sorting is used from years now and been appropriate to many purpose. You can use it in different ways like open : all your card are blanck and the users create the items during the session or reverse : you create groups and labels and you let them deconstruct your model to fits there needs. You can also do card sorting online or use automatized analyse tools.

You will find a lot of literature on that topic and its variations on the web.

RELATED METHODS OR TECHNIQUES

You can also use the card as a support to construct custommer journey map with idées. It will help you to understand them better. Put some task on it to be more complete than just fonctionnalities. Keep sparring cards just in case.