Discover
Diary Studies

Diary studies helps you to collect data from the user in a long-time perspective. You give them a template they will complete during a period that you instruct them to.

PEOPLE	PREP. TIME	TIME	DIFFICULTY LEVEL
5 - 10	15 min	Depend of your need from a week to a year	● ● ●

USE THIS METHOD / TECHNIQUE TO
If your subject concerns a sporadic use or needs long term observation you cannot afford.

THIS IS WHY YOU NEED IT
Diary studies is a flexible methodology to gather users information about their activities.

MATERIALS

- A notes book that you prepare for your users (paper or on-line)

WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED

- UX Researcher
- The maximum is 5 users per persona

TOOLS

- Yammer
- Evernote
- JRNL

RUNNING YOUR METHOD

PREPARATIONS

Focus on the data you need to gather for your studies you gonna create a template on a notebook or a application format that users will fill when they can to give you insight.

UX mastery recommends the user takes photos to explain their activities and highlight things that stood out to them across the course of their day.

According to Carine Lallemand, there are three categories by which entries can be collected:

- Interval-contingent protocol, in which participants have to report their experience at regular predetermined intervals (for example, every two hours or every day).

- Signal-contingent protocol, which uses a signalling device to prompt the participants to make an entry.

- Event-contingent protocol, which requires participants to report each time a specific event occurs.

The rate and timing of how people 'self-report' should be set up according to research needs. Lallemand suggests not being too demanding or the diary will become a "burden to your participants" – a maximum of two to three entries per day should be enough.

The structure of the diary can be open (the tester records entries in their own words) or highly structured (where closed-ended questions are predetermined). It's up to you how precise you want the information to be.

STEP 1 - Create Your Study Material

Define a timeline, select tools for participants to report data, recruit participants, and prepare instructions and support materials.

STEP 2 - Brief Users

Explain your study's goals to users. It's better to schedule a face-to-face meeting or phone call with each one to discuss the details of the study and how they will report you their data. Walkthrough the schedule or calendar for the reporting period and discuss expectations. Discuss the tools they will be using and be sure each participant has familiarized themselves with the technology; answer any questions they may have before beginning.

STEP 3 - Let The Users Play

Follow your users. Respect appointements you fixed together and send some reminders without being to much intrusive.

STEP 4 - Collect and Analyse

It's time for you now to collect all the data and analyze it. You can create a customer journey, get quantitative data, whatever your plan is there. You just have to focus on analyzing it from the user's point of view.

Related methods or techniques

It's hard to keep the users on track. You can also decide instead of ask them to write to plan several interviews with the same users.

Sources

- Sources
- Userzoom
- NN/g articles
- UX Mastery