

# Design Research with Users - Techniques and Activities

## Intended audience

Researchers, product managers, product developers, business developers, sales and marketing.

## Tutorial description

This tutorial presents the current state of the art of engaging users in creative processes by pulling on advanced idea generation techniques and activities. Tutorial participants will learn how to plan cautiously an innovation process involving users, how to facilitate actively a single workshop, and how to draw on the right type of technique and activity in user involvement.

## Topics will include

- The iterative approach to user participation in product innovation
- Techniques and activities for user/customer feedback
- Examples from real life UCD practices at Danfoss
- Practical issues in user workshop design
- Participants experience with user/customer information gathering

## Objectives

In this tutorial, you will become familiar with:

- The basics of user centred design methodology
- How to prepare a one-day workshop for a given case
- How to apply techniques and activities right away in own project work

Tutorial participants learn how to prepare a one-day workshop as part of an innovation project involving users. The particular case to be worked with is chosen from a participants' work-in-progress innovation project (group work). This hands-on exercise includes applying activities and techniques just learned.

## Outcome

Participants will learn about approx. 20 tools and activities available to any project group interested in incorporating user perspectives during an innovation process. This tutorial will teach how to apply successfully such tools and activities as they are represented on Activity Cards. Activity Cards are very useful for sorting out how to include user perspectives into a product design.

*Tutorial material: Activity Cards, a description on "How to plan user involvement" with video examples*



## Activity Cards

Activity Cards display a variety of powerful tools and techniques for successful user involvement. Activity Cards are easy-to-use-tools for any workshop facilitator. A user workshop is a cost efficient tool to check both users and stakeholders understanding of a product, its customers, and its market. To make that work one needs to find appropriate ways of communicating with users. Activity Cards help tutorial participants facilitating this process.

## Tutorial schedule

09:00	Introduction and presentation
09:15	Lecture: <b>User participation in product innovation</b> With Danfoss User Centred Design cases
10:00	Hands-on exercise: <b>Participants experience</b> with getting information on customer needs and expectations
10:45	Lecture: <b>Techniques and activities for customer feedback.</b> Presentation of Activity Cards and video examples

## Organizers

Werner Sperschneider, Design Anthropologist (Ph.D)  
User Centred Design, Danfoss A/S  
wsperschneider@danfoss.com

Werner has been employed in the Danfoss User Centred Design group since 1999 (with a 2-years intermediate leave for the Center for New Ways of Working, Aarhus University), and has participated in a number of design projects. He primarily does research in work practices and user profiles, including the visual documentation of user practices.

## Participant's reflection:

### NordiCHI tutorial participants (2004):

- *Good way of organizing many activities using the cards, very visual way.*
- *I really liked the notion of conducting a user workshop as an all day event.*
- *Lots of ideas that will be of great practical value.*
- *Plenty of ideas supporting the production and evaluation of design solutions.*

### Danish Industry workshop participants (DEVI, 2004):

- *This was rocking our know-all attitude.*
- *Confidential context for conceptual design.*
- *Clearly, the risk of involving users is smaller than the effect of not doing it.*

## Relevance to the field

Activity Cards for user participation are deeply rooted in the Scandinavian tradition of a participatory approach to design. The Danfoss User Centred Design Group has a longstanding and much appreciated experience in providing usability assistance for both internal and external businesses. Since 1992 we work systematically with the user centred design approach in order to involve and engage the experts of the product – end-users and customers – throughout the innovation process.

12:00	Lunch
02:00	Lecture: <b>User workshop design</b>
02:30	Hands on exercise: <b>Prepare a workshop</b> (group work). Participants discuss activities in order to get customer information
04:00	<b>Presentation and discussion</b> of the results from the exercises
05:00	Close

Kirsten Bagger, Interaction Designer  
User Centred Design, Danfoss A/S  
kbagger@danfoss.com

Kirsten has been part of the Danfoss User Centred Design group since 1995 and has 10 years of experience with interface design and facilitation of design processes for Danfoss and external companies. She has a practical approach to collaborative design by involving end-users and customers in product development.

### Nokia Mobile Phones workshop participants (2004):

- *Workshop most relevant if you also design hardware or several components.*
- *An excellent tool for preparing my next usability study (the workbook).*
- *"Light", "easy" to use techniques for user involvement.*
- *Activity Cards are a very good inspiration.*

### Project Manager from Danfoss Trata, Slovenia (2003):

- *Good overview on a number of tools available.*
- *Examples from the real world revealed how important it is to get hold of "hidden" customers needs.*
- *You learn how to prepare a 1-2 day workshop for your own case.*
- *Especially the activity cards were a big help.*
- *Indispensable for any development process*