

EXTRA

CO-CREATIVE WORKSHOPS

The outcomes of co-creative workshops are mostly assumption-based personas, journey maps, or system maps. These outcomes should be understood as tools in development and can be very valuable for a team as a common starting point to design their research process, or to evaluate and enhance their collected data.

Assumption-based journey maps help you to design an efficient research process by giving you a better idea of who to ask, when, and where, as well as what to ask or observe. However, the risk is that during your research, you only look for data that confirms your assumptions: the confirmation bias. To avoid this, triangulate researchers, methods, and data to level out potential biases. Also, inviting external people for “crit sessions”⁰¹ or project supervision (sometimes called “devil’s

advocates”) might help you uncover such biases. **If you start with assumption-based journey maps, constantly challenge your assumptions with solid research. Over time, assumption-based personas, journey maps, and system maps should develop into research-based tools with improved rigor and significance.**

It is important to consider who you invite to such co-creative workshops, as the outcome will depend solely on the participants’ knowledge of the subject matter. With your decision on who to invite and who to leave out, you also determine which perspectives might be interesting enough to include. This is of particular relevance when your project includes marginalized groups in society. If the workshop does not have enough concrete results, invitees might feel that the co-design was just a sham. They may feel disrespected: consulted, but not empowered to have a genuine impact on the project. When you invite people to co-creative workshops, make sure that you follow basic ethical standards by hearing their opinions and considering their perspectives. ◀

⁰¹ A critique session, or simply “crit session,” is often used in design and art schools, where the term describes a session in which either peers or faculty critically evaluate a student’s work. In service design, crit sessions refer to inviting people who are not familiar with your project to critically reflect on your work. This often includes asking the really stupid questions no one within the design team dares to ask anymore – similar to the approach of “rubber duck debugging” in software development. See, for example, Hunt, A., & Thomas, D. (2000).

The Pragmatic Programmer: From Journeyman to Master. Addison-Wesley Professional.