



EXTRA

AESEO – THE ERGONOMICS OF NEED

Several years ago, I realized there was no simple model for mapping the state of mind of users. I wanted to document why the same users often responded to the same service offering very differently depending on their specific situation.

The result was AESEO – Attitude, Expectation, Schedule, Environment, Origin. I mapped these considerations on a simple slider:

- **Attitude:** Is the user in a positive or negative state of mind when confronted with a task? For example, booking a vacation for yourself is different than booking a vacation for your nasty boss.
- **Expectation:** Does the user think she will achieve a positive or negative outcome upon completion? For example, I expect a vacation website to be friendly and help me complete my task, but I rarely feel this way when approaching an online government service.

- **Schedule:** Does the user have a pressing deadline or not?
- **Environment:** Is the user relaxed or stressed? For example, is this something I might do on my day off or do I need to squeeze it in on my lunch break?
- **Origin:** Quite simply, is the user doing this for herself or for someone else?

How and when to use AESEO

Although this is a highly subjective tool, AESEO helps service designers see how various personas react to specific services and link personas, use cases, scenarios, and journey maps in a unique and understandable way. For example, if you find on your journey map that several of your personas intersect at a particular touchpoint, AESEO can help you avoid “over-designing” your service at this juncture. While some users may enjoy helpful personalization, others may just want to get their task accomplished quickly without unnecessary frills. ▶



This means you need to evaluate your service very carefully so you don't annoy a particular user segment.

AESEO also helps you produce a quick overview of the user's state of mind during a particular scenario for documentation purposes. For example, if you drive a car, sometimes you will just want to go for a ride and enjoy yourself. Hence, comfort plays a key role, and most of your sliders will be set to the left of center. But if you need to pop down to the store to pick up something for dinner, comfort takes a back seat to convenience, and more sliders will be set toward the right.

Inevitably, there will be points of friction when the service design concept gets in the way of the users' needs. For example, if a user has very little time and just wants to log in to her account quickly, you probably do not want to force her to watch a 10-second advertisement first. It is your job to identify and reduce these points of friction.

These differences are important to understand when evaluating the viability of a new or improved service. At any rate, play with AESEO – I trust you'll find the tool as useful as we have.

Step-by-step guide

- 1** Choose one of your personas and subjectively set the AESEO sliders based on your understanding of their needs in relation to their perceived state of mind.
- 2** Repeat this for your other personas, or if one persona appears in several different user scenarios, set the sliders for the different scenarios.
- 3** Look at the sliders to identify potential points of friction in relation to your customer journey map and target opportunities for service improvements.
- 4** Continue to improve your concept and readjust the AESEO sliders until you arrive at a service concept that eliminates as many points of friction as possible. ◀