



CHOOSING YOUR RESEARCH METHODS

DESCRIPTION

This job aid contains a list of different types of methods for performing design research, the characteristics and purpose of each type, as well as a chart describing what research method to adopt during the design process.

WHEN TO USE

Use this job aid at the planning stage of your design research.



PAIRS WELL WITH

- Planning your research – checklist

PURPOSE

To identify the types of research methods and choose the appropriate research methods during the entire research process.

DESIRED OUTCOME

Selection of specific research methods for the design research, which leads to the effective and high-quality research.

HOW TO USE

1. Using the following comparative tables and image [1], identify the types of research methods appropriate for your research goal and questions.
2. Using the following chart [2], identify the appropriate research methods for your research based on the research stage you are at.

[1] Comparative Tables and Images

Primary

Research that you conduct yourself by going directly to users.

Resource-consuming

Tailored to your specific needs

Examples:

- Interviews
- Surveys
- Focus groups

Secondary

Research previously gathered by and published by others.

Easier and quicker to obtain

Not as insightful

Examples:

- Statistics published by government, non-government agencies, and trade bodies
- Company reports
- Textbooks and scholarly journals
- Online articles and research sites

[1] Comparative Tables and Images

Qualitative

Answer questions about why or how to fix a problem

Collect users' statements

Based on direct observation

Semi-structured

Data are analyzed by categorization and interpretation

Might depend on the researcher's interpretation

Qualitative

Answer questions about how many and how much

Collect measurable data

Collect data indirectly

Semi-structured

Data are analyzed by categorization and interpretation

Might depend on the researcher's interpretation

[1] Comparative Tables and Images

Best practice: use a mix of both.

Attitudinal

Measure attitudes and beliefs (what people think they do)

Focus on how people think about a product

Rely on self-reported data

Behavioural

Measure behaviours (what people actually do)

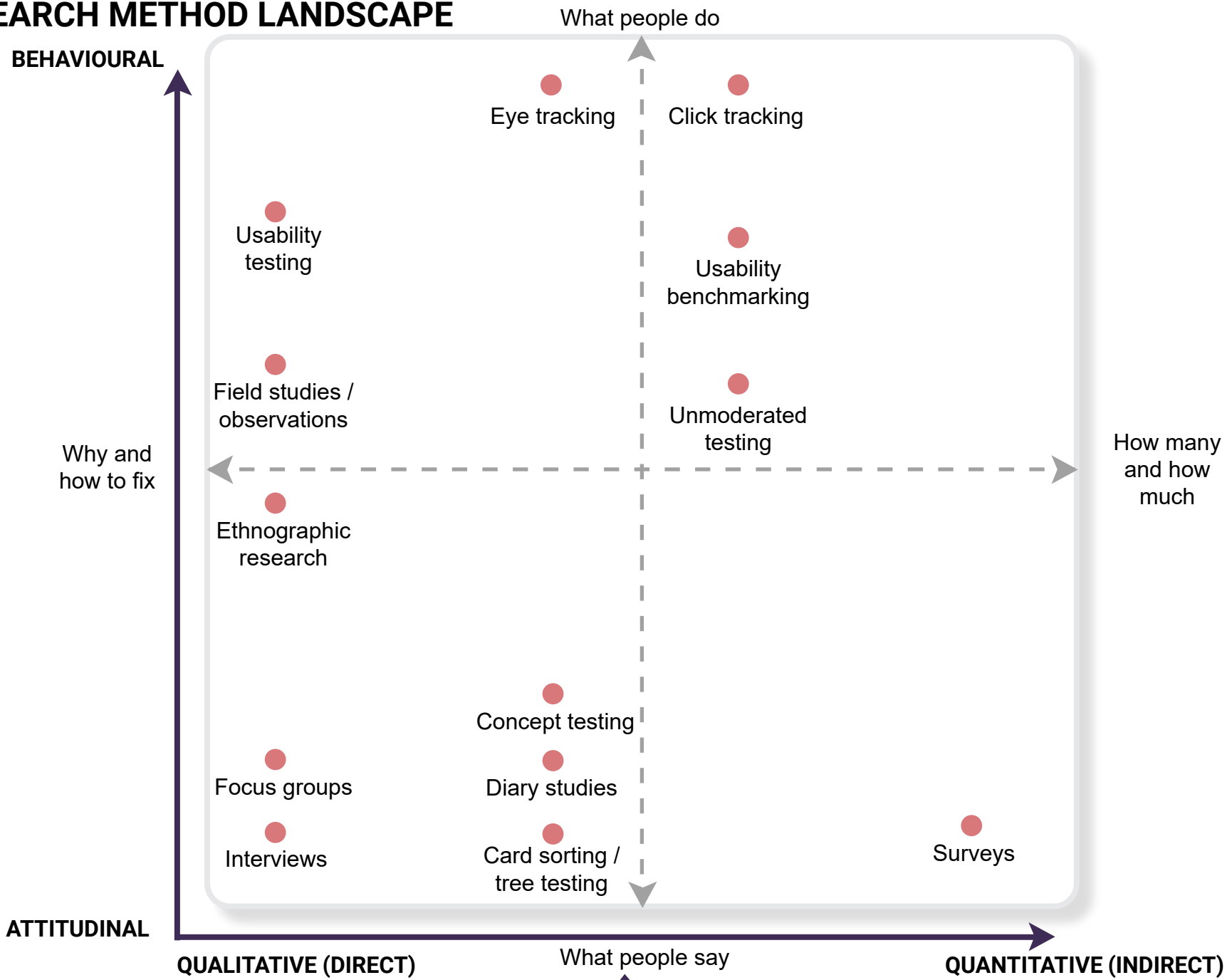
Focus on action and performance

Rely on observable data

Best practice: use a mix of both (for example, [task analysis](#)).

[1] Comparative Tables and Images

RESEARCH METHOD LANDSCAPE



[2] CHOOSING RESEARCH METHODS AT DIFFERENT STAGES OF THE DE- SIGN PROCESS

You are starting out

Goal

To understand your users and the underlying problem

Methods

Mixture of both qualitative and quantitative methods, such as field studies, diary studies, surveys, and data mining

You have finalized your design and developed a working product

Goal

To investigate how well the product performs in the real world

Methods

Mainly quantitative research methods, such as usability benchmarking, surveys, and A/B testing

You have established a direction for your design

Goal

To evaluate your designs and make sure that they adequately address your users' needs

Methods

Research methods that help you to optimize your designs and improve usability, such as card sorting and usability testing

