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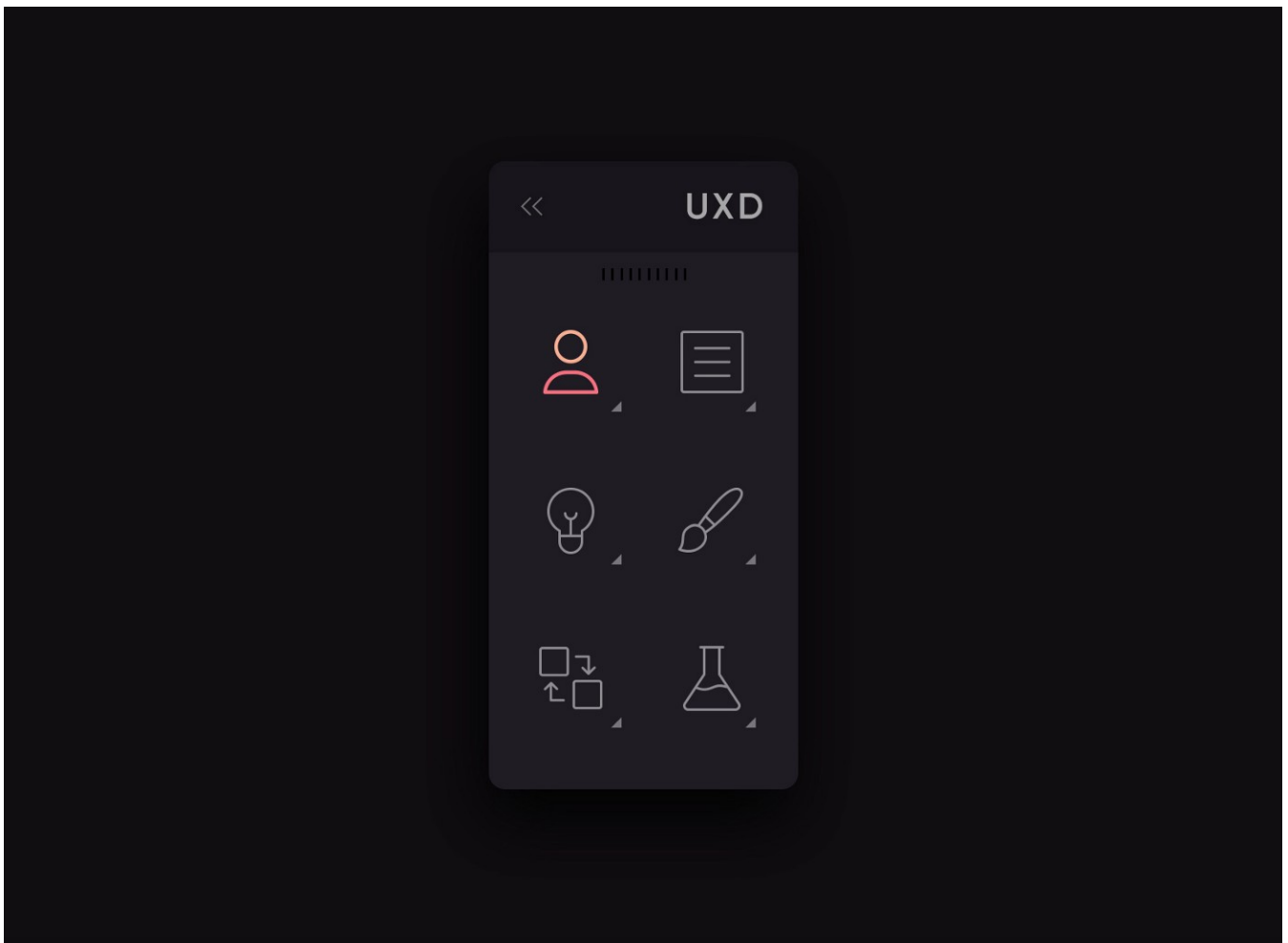
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# 65 UX methods and when to use them

Who said we don't have tools?



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and pieces. After attending multiple lectures, workshops, and working in the industry, I came up with this curated list for my reference. Here are 100 tools divided into different stages of the UX design thinking process (developed by d.school). I hope this will help you as well.

*(These methods are not limited to their stage, for example, storyboarding can be used in defining the problem as well)*

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## Empathy 🧑🏻

To solve a problem, first, you need to gain empathy with the audience that is dealing with the problem. This is the most crucial stage of a user-centric design approach.

1. **One-on-one interviews** — To know what the user thinks about the topic in question. It can be a structured, semi-structured, or unstructured interview.
2. **Contextual interview/inquiry** — A semi-structured interview to capture user in their work environment to get insights which user might miss to recall in an interview.
3. **Ethnographic research** — For creating something entirely new & different. Almost like the contextual interview, but with an extended period of shadowing.
4. **AEIOU** — For structuring your ethnographic research into five elements, activity, environment, interaction, object & users.
5. **Focus groups** — To get a perspective from different demographics of society.
6. **Surveys** — To gather a lot of statistical data quickly. Google forms and survey monkey are two excellent tools.
7. **Usability testing** — To know problems in the pre-existing solution by testing it with the users.
8. **The 5 whys** — You ask a question followed by 5 ‘whys’ to get to the root cause of the user’s behavior.



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10. **Diary Study** — Contextual interviews are only good for observation of an hour or so, to capture more aspects of the user's life, we use diary/camera study.
11. **Body storming** — Roleplaying the user, to gain physical empathy instead of just theorizing about the problem. Useful in case users are difficult to get to.
12. **Ergonomic analysis** — To suggest improvements or ergonomic criteria in a redesign of a tangible product.

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## Define

For analyzing the data gathered in the previous step and describing the pain point of the user.

1. **Journey map** — To get a holistic view for a particular user in a specific scenario so that different teams can look into and improve various parts of the journey.
2. **Experience map** — To sum the entire experience related to a product to understand general human behavior.
3. **Empathy map** — To get the user's feelings, emotions, thoughts on the whole experience.
4. **Contextual models** — After conducting the contextual inquiry, you can split your findings into a physical model, sequence, cultural model & artifact model.
5. **Archetype** — A common representation for a group of people, to know their objectives, motivation, goals, and behavior.
6. **User persona** — A specific instance of the archetype with additional constraints, interest, and personality traits.
7. **Literature review** — Studying the previously done research to find what did and didn't work.
8. **Kano analysis** — To prioritize which product features are most important to the



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10. **The 5 'W's** — Who, what, where, when, and why. An elaborate version of the point of view problem statement.
11. **Affinity diagram** — To organize your chaotic data and connect the dots for deeper insights.
12. **Heuristic task analysis** — Breaking down the main task into subtask for evaluating the efficiency.

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## Ideate 💡

After establishing the problem, think of innovative ideas to solve them.

1. **Competitive analysis** — To identify what solution is working and what your competitors are not doing.
2. **Storyboard** — To visually illustrate how your idea might solve the problem.
3. **Brainstorm** — To generate as many solutions as possible by building upon each other's ideas.
4. **Braindump or parallel design** — Just like brainstorm, but happens individually to give everyone on your team a chance.
5. **Brainwrite** — A mix of individual and group activity, gives an advantage to the unfamiliar, introvert, shy or less senior. Keeps the discussion open to every possibility.
6. **Brainwalk** — A fun activity that promotes team engagement and keeps up the energy of the team.
7. **Worst possible idea** — To make the group relax and spur out even the silliest of the idea without caring about being judged.
8. **Challenge assumptions** — To take a step back and think about the constraints which are holding us back.



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11. **Mind map** — To create a structured web of ideas around a problem.
12. **SCAMPER** — A card game to give us direction for ideas in case nothing comes to mind.
13. **Analogous study** — To take inspiration from other unrelated subjects. Mostly used when you can't find any competitors.
14. **Gamestorming** — Gamifying the process to increase engagement, collaboration, and energy. **Cover story** and **fishbowl** are two such methods. Find more on [gamestorming.com](https://gamestorming.com).
15. **“How might we” questions** — Next step for your point of view problem statement method. It sets a direction for your ideation session.

Once you are done coming up with all sort of ideas, here are few methods to narrow them down:

1. **Voting** — The team members vote for the best idea, so everyone has a say.
2. **Four category methods** (most rational, most delightful, darling, long shot) — Place ideas into these 4 categories and then select the best of them.
3. **Bingo selection** — Split the ideas according to their form (tangible prototype, digital prototype, experience prototype)
4. **Now wow how matrix** — Divide the ideas on the basis of how common they are, how innovative they are and how easily they can be implemented.
5. **Six thinking hats** — 6 different hats (White, red, black, yellow, green and blue) to make your decision from 6 different perspectives. Choose which suits your requirement the most.

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## Branding

Though this step is not mandatory but it ensures that your proposed concept is visually






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2. **Style guide** — For maintaining consistency in the visual design. Some tools that I frequently use: Flaticon, Google fonts, Colorhunt, Adobe creative suite.

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## Prototype

Creating a cheap, semi-functional replica of the final product to test the feasibility of your idea with the users.

1. **User flow** — Shows the movement of the user from point A to point B in your product.
2. **Sitemap** — A bird's-eye view showing the hierarchy of different pages in your app.
3. **Information architecture** — Science of organizing the data on each page according to the user's expectations. You can combine sitemap and information architecture into a single diagram.
4. **Low fidelity prototype** — For immediate testing with the user using a minimum of resources. Example: **wireframes, paper prototype**. Some software for app design: **Balsamiq, Adobe comp, invision freehand**  2.2K |  7
5. **High fidelity prototype** — A look-alike of the final product to have a realistic feel while testing. Some software for app design: **Figma, Adobe XD, Webflow, Sketch, UX Pin, Invision studio**. Some of these software also support basic interaction prototyping.
6. **Interactive prototype** — High fidelity prototype + most of the animations that will happen when the user interacts with the app. Some software: **Protopie, Principle**.

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## Test

This step can be used for testing your prototype as well as the final developed product.



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1. **Think aloud protocol** — To record for users are thinking/expecting/looking for while going through the product.
2. **Hallway testing** — A cheaper way to test your product with a wide variety of participants.
3. **Eyetracking** — To create a map showing what is grabbing the user's attention on the screen.
4. **Click tracking** — To track user engagement, website errors, and optimization.
5. **A/B Testing** — To test the performance of two different versions of a prototype with the users.
6. **Web analytics** — To investigate how many users are coming on your site, where your users are coming from, how long they are staying, etc.
7. **System usability scale** — A simple set of 10 questions to test the satisfaction level of the users
8. **Usability Metrics** — To quantify the data you gathered from usability testing. [Learn more.](#)
9. **Heuristic evaluation** — Set of 10 rules to ensure that the user has control over the product. [Learn more.](#)

Even if you can't perform any of these methods, look for a few participants, and ask for their feedback.

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## Other design thinking frameworks

The framework I used above is from d.school, Stanford, with branding as an addition to it. Some other useful frameworks are:

### 1. Double diamond



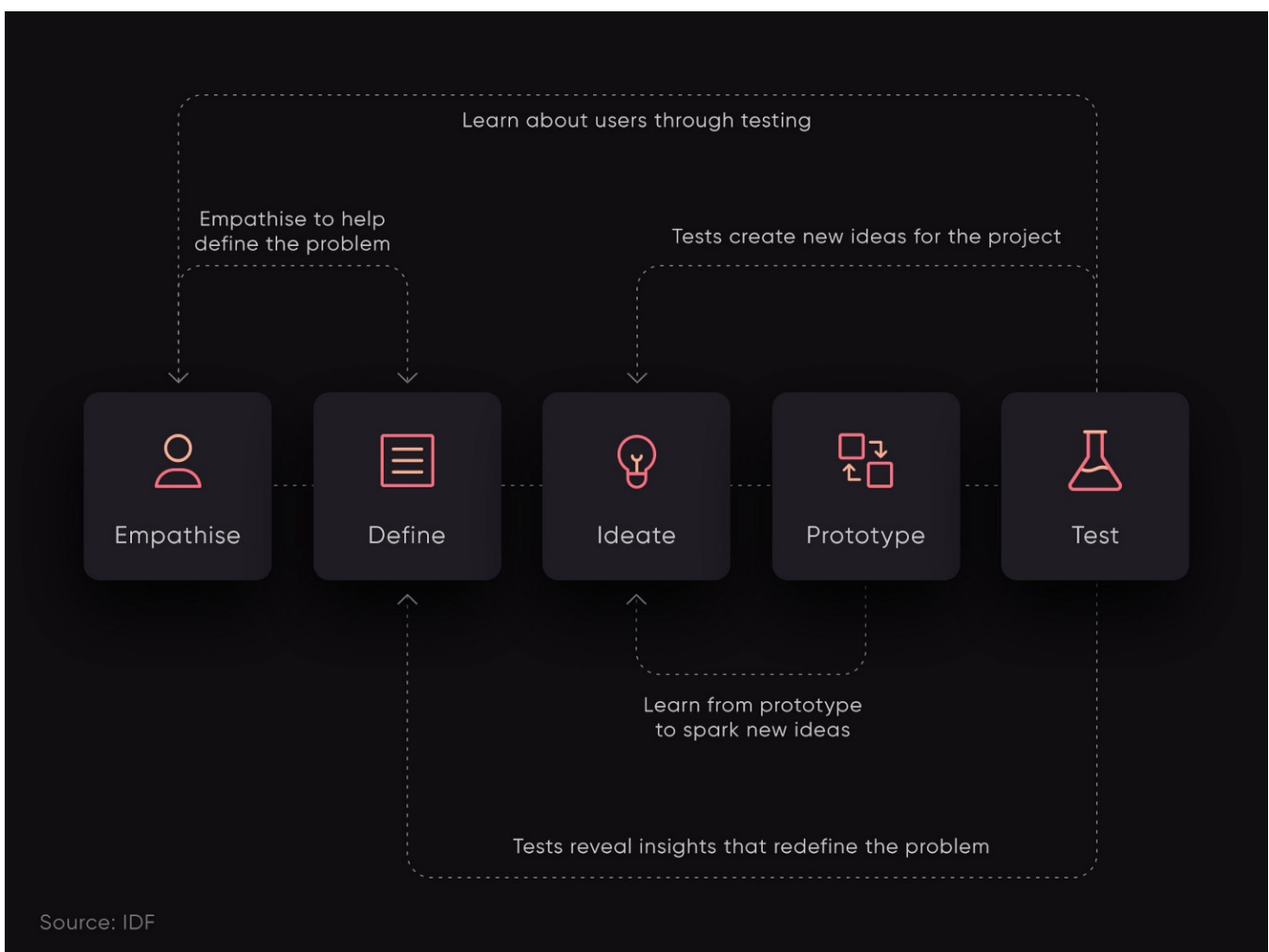
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#### 4. HCD (Human Centered Design)

#### 5. LUMA system

#### 6. Co-creation workshops

You can learn more about them from [IDF](#). All of them mostly cover the same grounds and that is learning more and more about the user. And an important point is that it's a non-linear process, meaning you can go back to the previous stage at any point for refinement.



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So it is less about knowing every other tool, but more about practising and learning when to use the right one. Before starting on a project, you need to do a quick pilot study to figure out which method will be best in your case. If you want to know more about these tools, I would recommend [Interaction Design](#) and [Nielsen Norman Group](#).

Let me know if there is something important that I left out :)

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