Creativity in research

Designing your own methods when the usual ones won’t cut it

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shopify

$$\frac{dN}{dt} = \frac{I}{qV_{act}} - g_0(N-N_0)(1-\varepsilon S)S + \frac{N_e}{\tau_n} - \frac{N}{\tau_p}$$

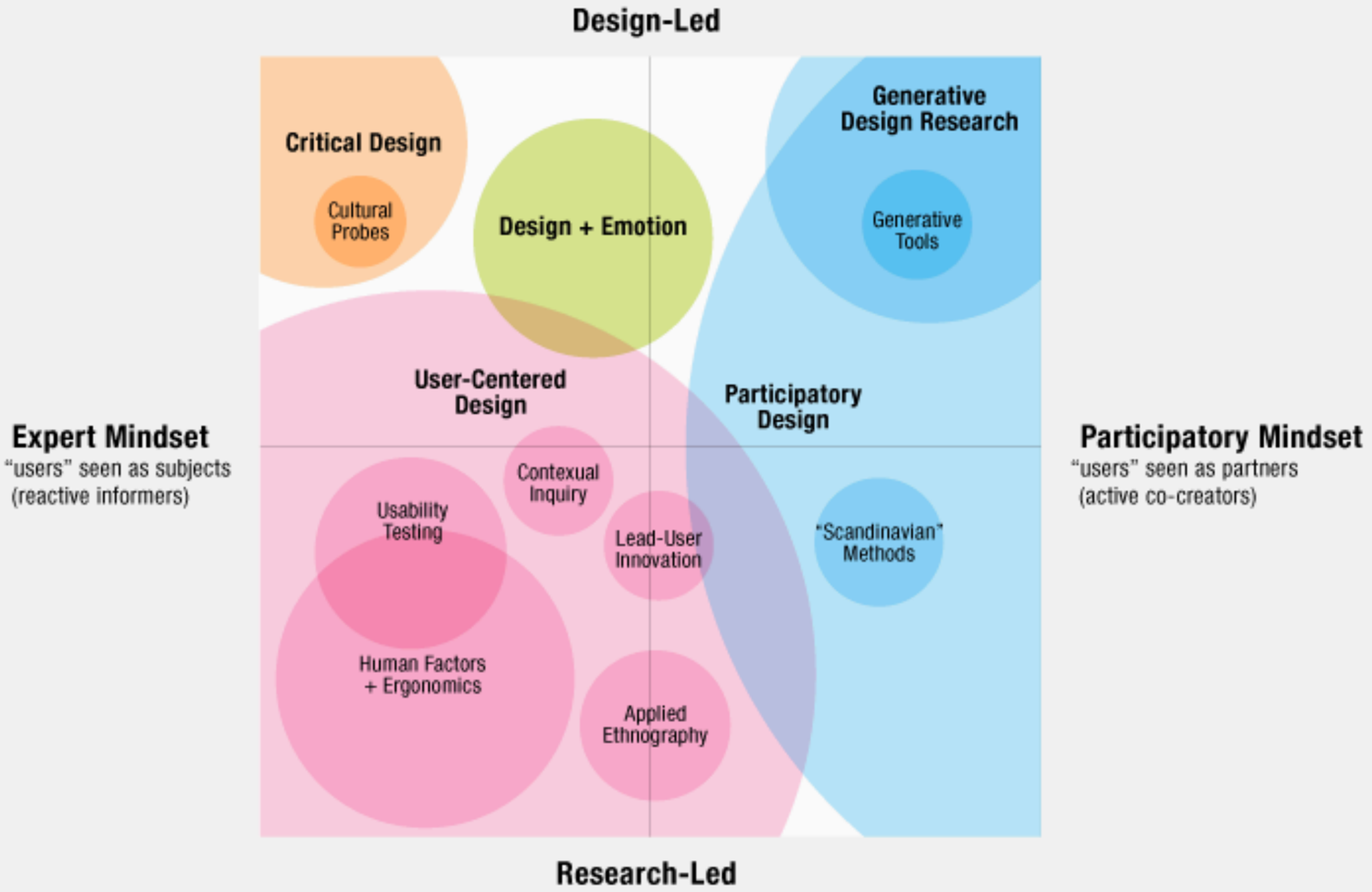
$$\frac{dS}{dt} = \Gamma_0 g_0(N-N_0)(1-\varepsilon S)S + \frac{\beta_0 N}{\tau_n} - \frac{S}{\tau_p}$$

$$\frac{S}{P_f} = \frac{\Gamma \tau_p \lambda_0}{V_{act}\, \eta h c} = 0$$

$$\boxed{S < \frac{1}{\varepsilon}}$$

$N = N$

$P_f = (m$

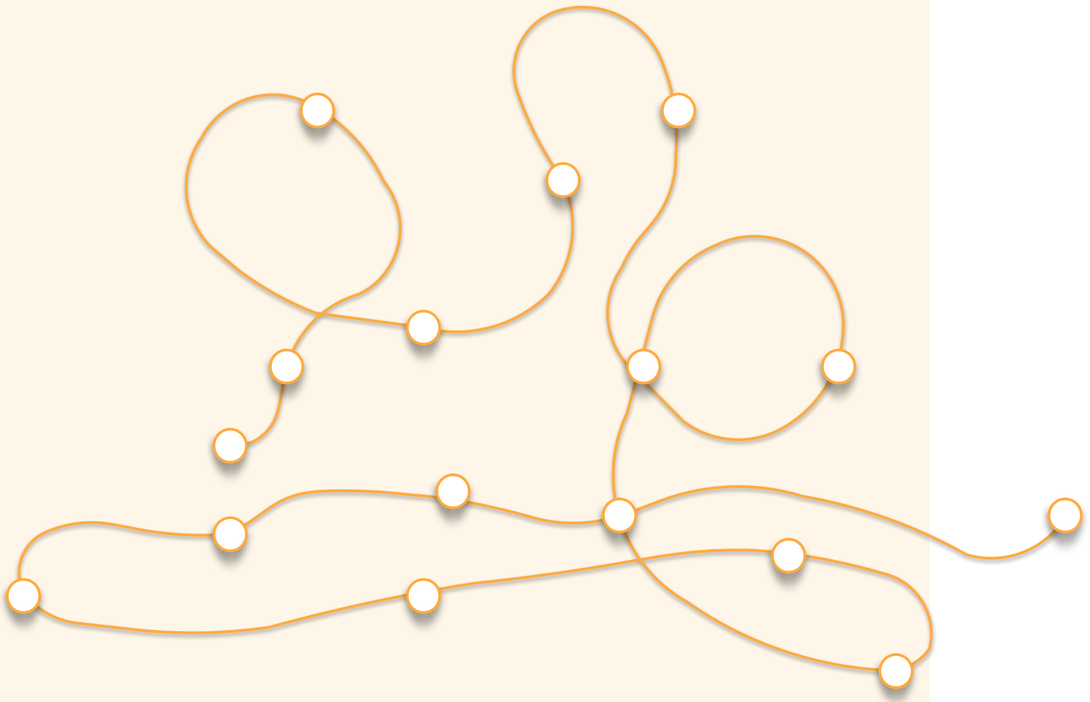


Liz Sanders. "An Evolving Map of Design Practice and Design Research"
http://www.dubberly.com/articles/an-evolving-map-of-design-practice-and-design-research.html

How come, sometimes, we can’t find a method that fits?

I’ve seen this happen when...

- You need more ecological validity than a test setting can afford
- The subject matter you’re exploring is too hypothetical to talk to participants about directly
- The user’s journey is too complex or dynamic to be explored as static or linear



This is when we think about getting creative.

But creativity in research comes at a price

- User research has roots in ethonography, ergonomics, human-computer interaction, and much more.
- We can’t just go around changing things at will:
  - **You risk compromising rigour**
  - **You risk compromising validity**

So how can we be creative when it comes to research?

First, let’s talk about what it means to be “creative”.

GOLDEN
STEVENSON
PROFESSIONAL
ACRYLIC / ACRYLIQUE
PROFESSIONNEL
150 ml
ACRYLIC
Light Ultramarine Blue
Alizarin Crimson Hue
Prussian Blue Hue
ARTIST COLOR

The creative mind

- **H-creative:** historically creative, or someone who came up with an idea, concept or product that no one has ever thought of before
- **P-creative:** psychologically creative, where someone borrows an idea from one domain and applies it to another.

– Boden (1990)

P-creativity is also everyday creativity.

(It’s the one we care about.)

A framework for P-creativity

Level	Motivation	Underlying desire	Example
Doing	Productivity	Getting something done	I look up and execute an existing plan for a usability study
Adapting	Appropriation	Making things my own	I change parts of the plan to better fit my questions
Making	Asserting ability	Making things with my own hands	I write my own usability study plan from scratch
Creating	Curiosity	Expressing my ability	I design a custom scale for my usability testing tasks

— Sanders and Stappers (2013)

It’s all about borrowing and applying.

Let’s walk through some examples...

Example 1:
Adapting

THIRDLOVE

Cart > Customer information > Shipping method > Payment method

PayPal | amazon pay

OR

Continue below to pay with a credit card

Contact information

Already have an account? Log in

Email

Keep me up to date on news and exclusive offers

Sending a gift? Leave a note

Shipping address

First name | Last name

Address

Apartment, suite, etc. (optional)

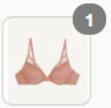
City

Country: United States | State: Illinois | ZIP code

Phone

< Return to cart

Continue to shipping method



24/7™ Classic Contour Plunge Bra
mocha-mousse / 32A
$68.00

Gift card or discount code | Apply

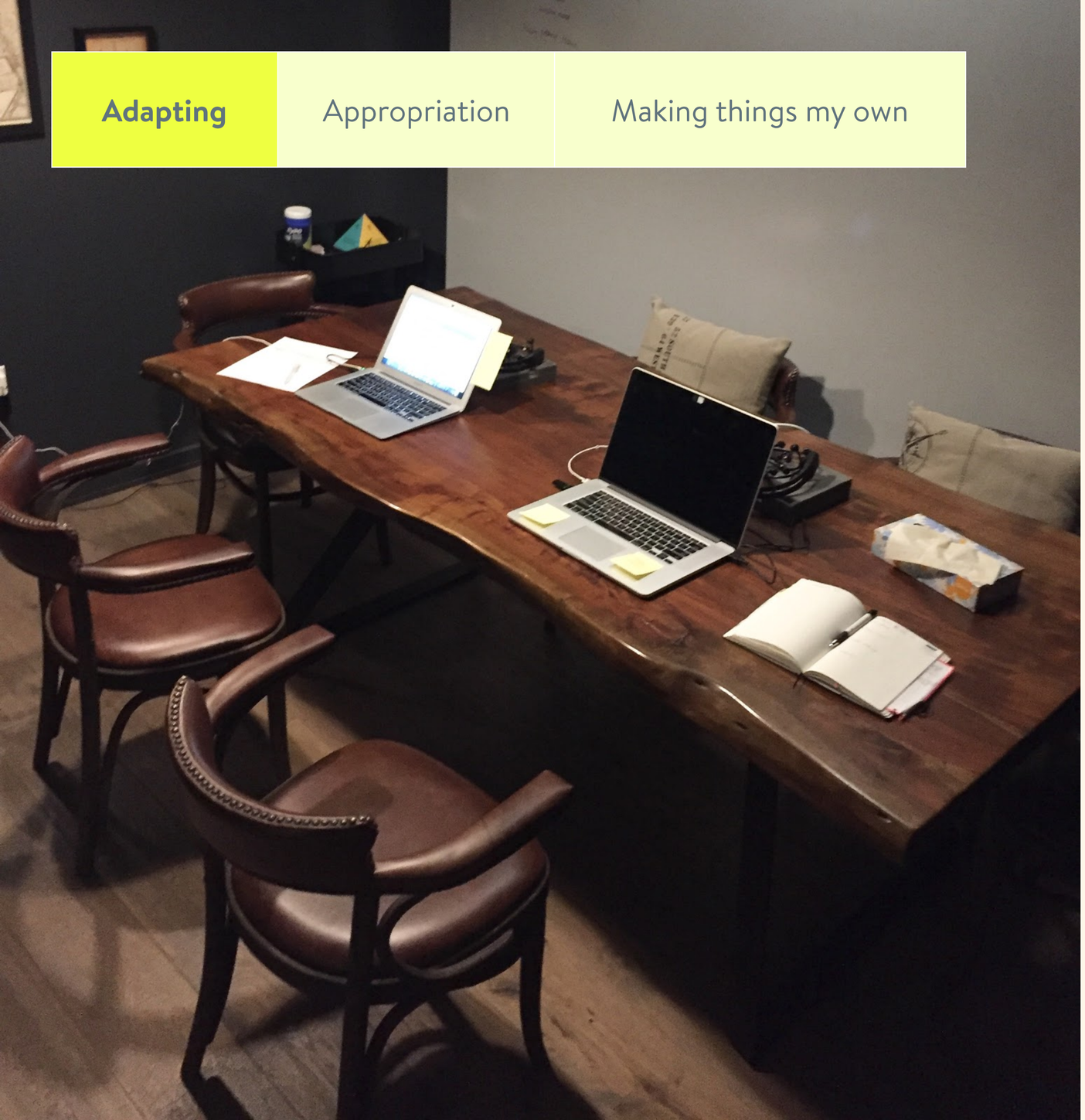
Subtotal	$68.00
Shipping	—
Total	USD $68.00

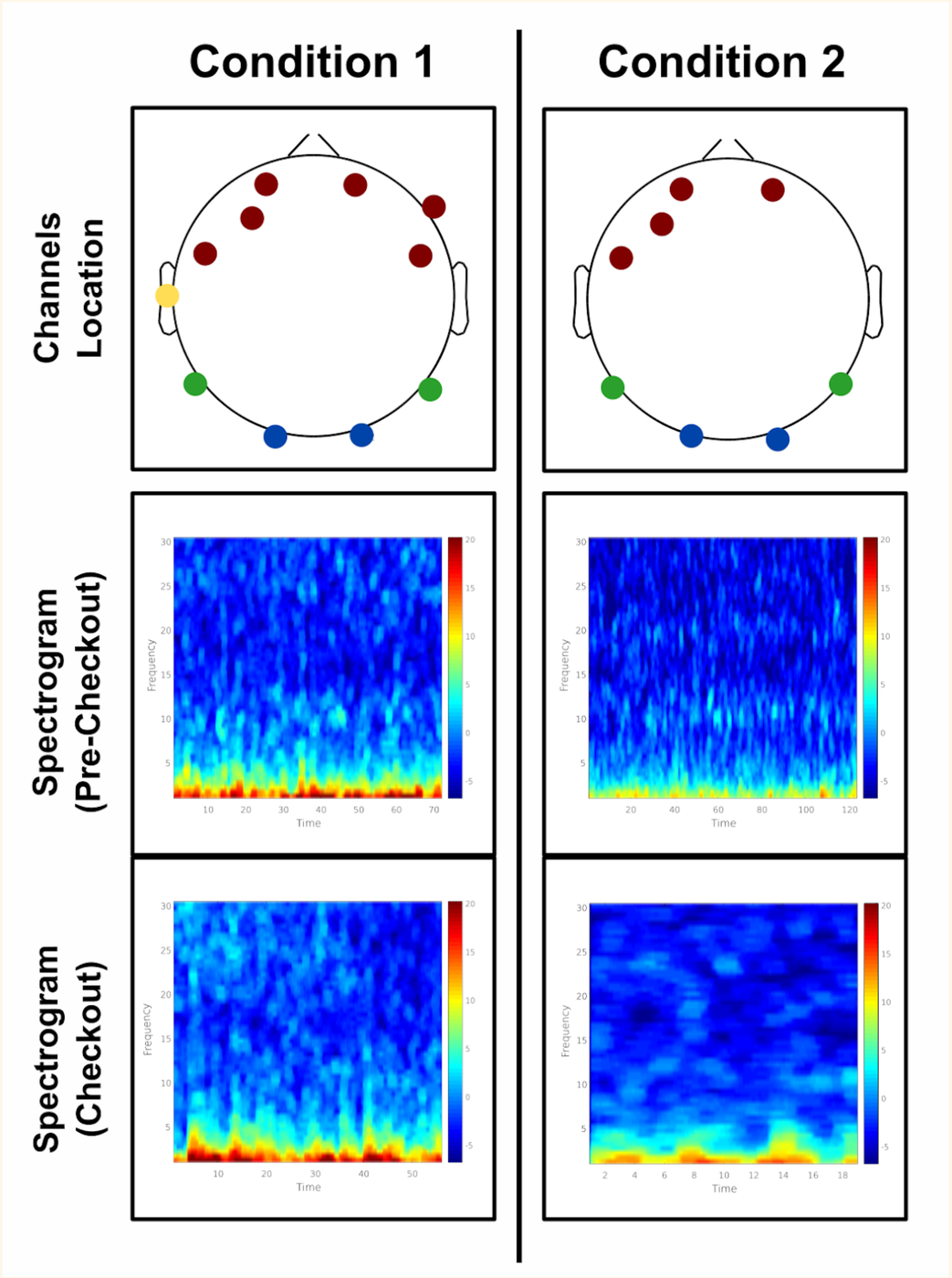
The problem:

We wanted to test purchasing flows...

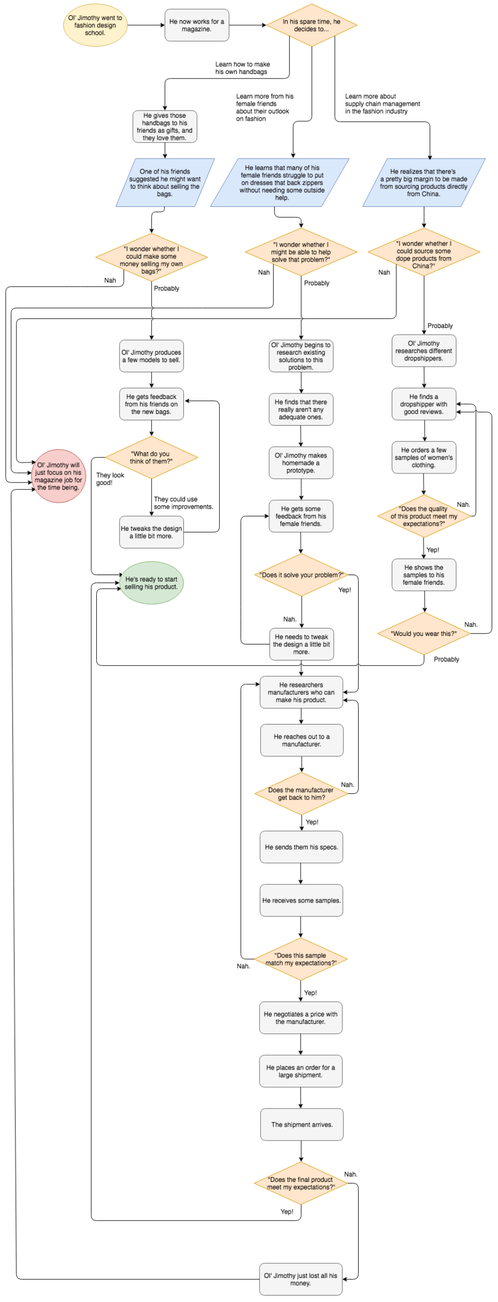
... but traditonal methods don’t account for purchase intent.

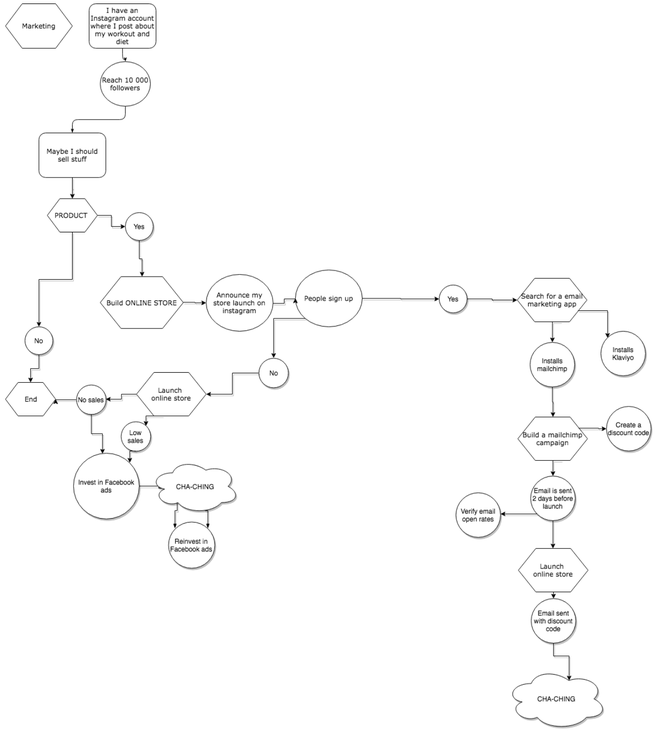
Adapting | Appropriation | Making things my own

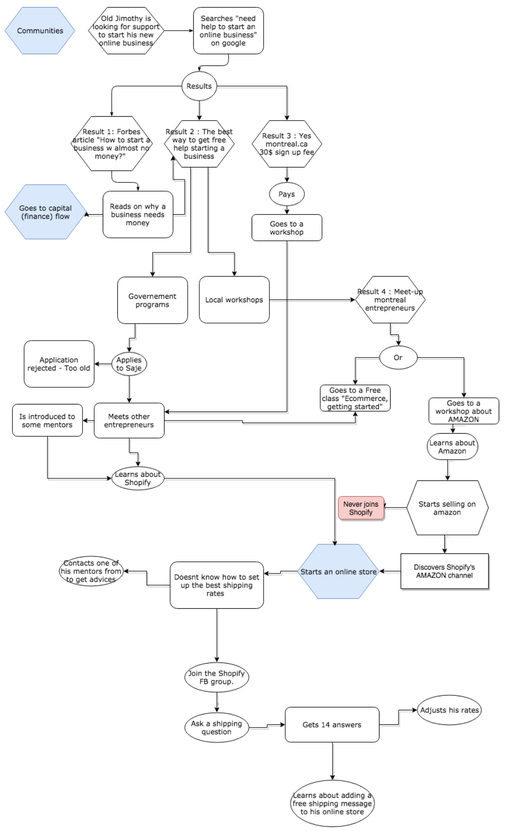


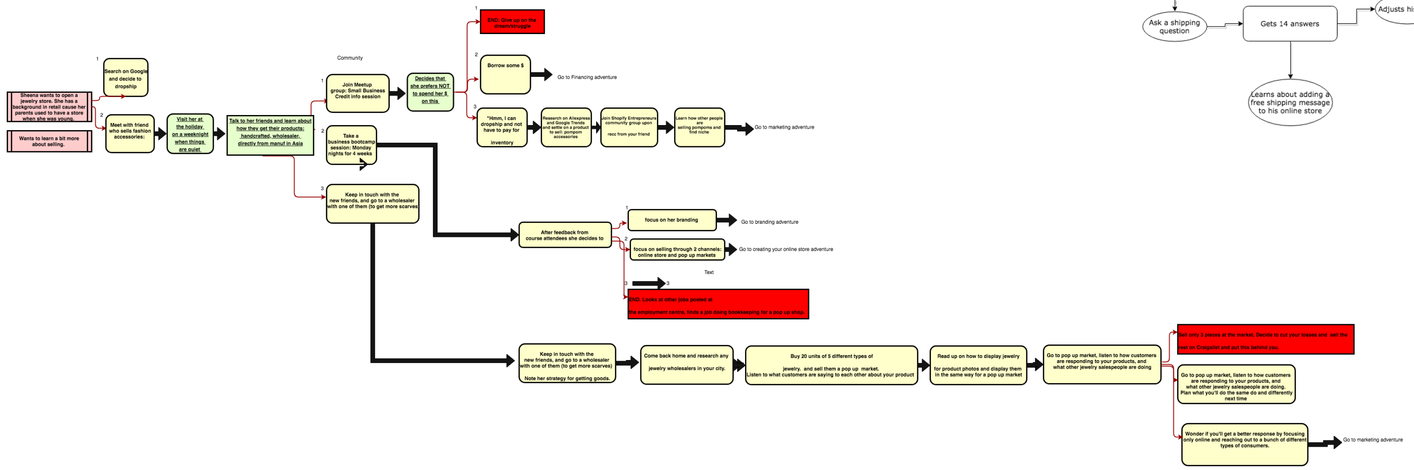


Example 2:
Making


Ol' Jimothy went to fashion design school.
He now works for a magazine.
In his spare time, he decides to...
Learn how to make his own handbags
Learn more from his female friends about their outlook on fashion
Learn more about supply chain management in the fashion industry
He gives those handbags to his friends as gifts, and they love them.
One of his friends suggested he might want to think about selling the bags.
He learns that many of his female friends struggle to put on dresses that back zippers without needing some outside help.
He realizes that there's a pretty big margin to be made from sourcing products directly from China.
"I wonder whether I could make some money selling my own bags?"
"I wonder whether I might be able to help solve that problem?"
"I wonder whether I could source some dope products from China?"
Nah
Probably
Ol' Jimothy produces a few models to sell.
Ol' Jimothy begins to research existing solutions to this problem.
Ol' Jimothy researches different dropshippers.
He gets feedback from his friends on the new bags.
He finds that there really aren't any adequate ones.
He finds a dropshipper with good reviews.
"What do you think of them?"
They look good!
They could use some improvements.
He tweaks the design a little bit more.
Ol' Jimothy makes homemade a prototype.
He orders a few samples of women's clothing.
He gets some feedback from his female friends.
"Does the quality of this product meet my expectations?"
Yep!
He shows the samples to his female friends.
"Does it solve your problem?"
He needs to tweak the design a little bit more.
"Would you wear this?"
Ol' Jimothy will just focus on his magazine job for the time being.
He's ready to start selling his product.
He researchers manufacturers who can make his product.
He reaches out to a manufacturer.
Does the manufacturer get back to him?
He sends them his specs.
He receives some samples.
"Does this sample match my expectations?"
He negotiates a price with the manufacturer.
He places an order for a large shipment.
The shipment arrives.
"Does the final product meet my expectations?"
Ol' Jimothy just lost all his money.


Marketing
I have an Instagram account where I post about my workout and diet
Reach 10 000 followers
Maybe I should sell stuff
PRODUCT
Yes
No
Build ONLINE STORE
Announce my store launch on instagram
People sign up
Yes
No
Search for a email marketing app
Installs Klaviyo
Installs mailchimp
Create a discount code
Build a mailchimp campaign
Email is sent 2 days before launch
Verify email open rates
Launch online store
Email sent with discount code
CHA-CHING
Launch online store
No sales
Low sales
Invest in Facebook ads
CHA-CHING
Reinvest in Facebook ads


Communities
Old Jimothy is looking for support to start his new online business
Searches "need help to start an online business" on google
Results
Result 1: Forbes article "How to start a business w almost no money?"
Result 2 : The best way to get free help starting a business
Result 3 : Yes montreal.ca 30$ sign up fee
Goes to capital (finance) flow
Reads on why a business needs money
Pays
Goes to a workshop
Governement programs
Local workshops
Result 4 : Meet-up montreal entrepreneurs
Application rejected - Too old
Applies to Saje
Or
Goes to a Free class "Ecommerce, getting started"
Goes to a workshop about AMAZON
Is introduced to some mentors
Meets other entrepreneurs
Learns about Amazon
Learns about Shopify
Never joins Shopify
Starts selling on amazon
Contacts one of his mentors from to get advices
Doesnt know how to set up the best shipping rates
Starts an online store
Discovers Shopify's AMAZON channel
Join the Shopify FB group.
Ask a shipping question
Gets 14 answers
Adjusts his rates
Learns about adding a free shipping message to his online store


Sheena wants to open a jewelry store. She has a background in retail cause her parents used to have a store when she was young.
Wants to learn a bit more about selling.
Search on Google and decide to dropship
Meet with friend who sells fashion accessories.
Visit her at the holiday, on a weeknight when things are quiet.
Talk to her friends and learn about how they get their products: handcrafted, wholesaler, directly from manuf in Asia
Community
Join Meetup group: Small Business Credit info session
Decides that she prefers NOT to spend her $ on this.
Take a business bootcamp session: Monday nights for 4 weeks
Keep in touch with the new friends, and go to a wholesaler with one of them (to get more scarves)
END: Give up on the dream/struggle
Borrow some $
Go to Financing adventure
"Hmm, I can dropship and not have to pay for inventory
Research on Aliexpress and Google Trends and settle on a product to sell: pompom accessories
Join Shopify Entrepreneurs community group upon rest from your friend
Learn how other people are selling pompoms and find niche
Go to marketing adventure
After feedback from course attendees she decides to
focus on her branding
Go to branding adventure
focus on selling through 2 channels: online store and pop up markets
Go to creating your online store adventure
Text
END: Looks at other jobs posted at the employment centre, finds a job doing bookkeeping for a pop up shop.
Keep in touch with the new friends, and go to a wholesaler with one of them (to get more scarves)
Note her strategy for getting goods.
Come back home and research any jewelry wholesalers in your city.
Buy 20 units of 5 different types of jewelry, and sell them a pop up market. Listen to what customers are saying to each other about your product
Read up on how to display jewelry for product photos and display them in the same way for a pop up market
Go to pop up market, listen to how customers are responding to your products, and what other jewelry salespeople are doing
Sell only 3 pieces at the market. Decide to cut your losses and sell the rest on Craigslist and put this behind you.
Go to pop up market, listen to how customers are responding to your products, and what other jewelry salespeople are doing. Plan what you'll do the same do and differently next time
Wonder if you'll get a better response by focusing only online and reaching out to a bunch of different types of consumers.
Go to marketing adventure

The problem:

We wanted to build a journey...

... but linear maps are limited at convey breadth and complexity.

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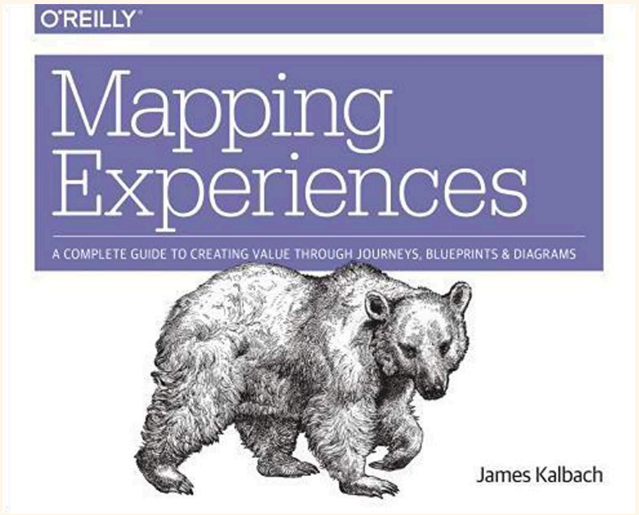
O'REILLY
Mapping Experiences
A COMPLETE GUIDE TO CREATING VALUE THROUGH JOURNEYS, BLUEPRINTS & DIAGRAMS
James Kalbach

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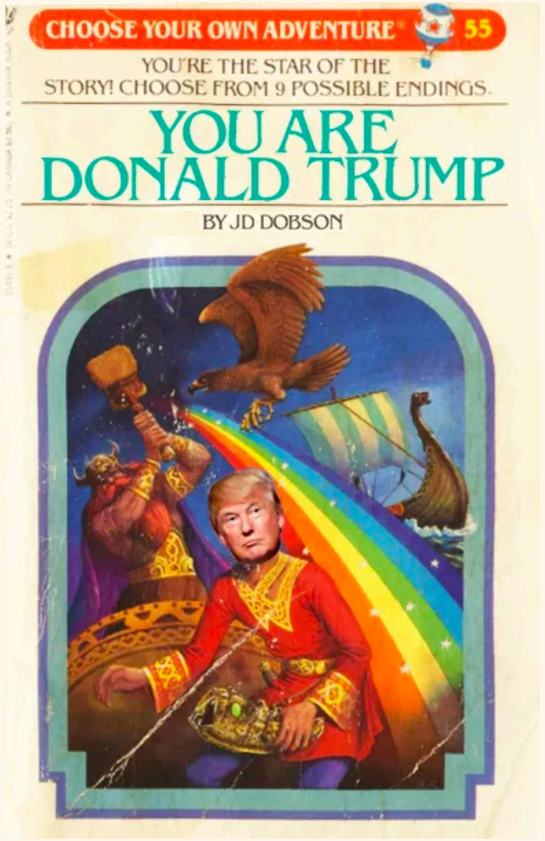
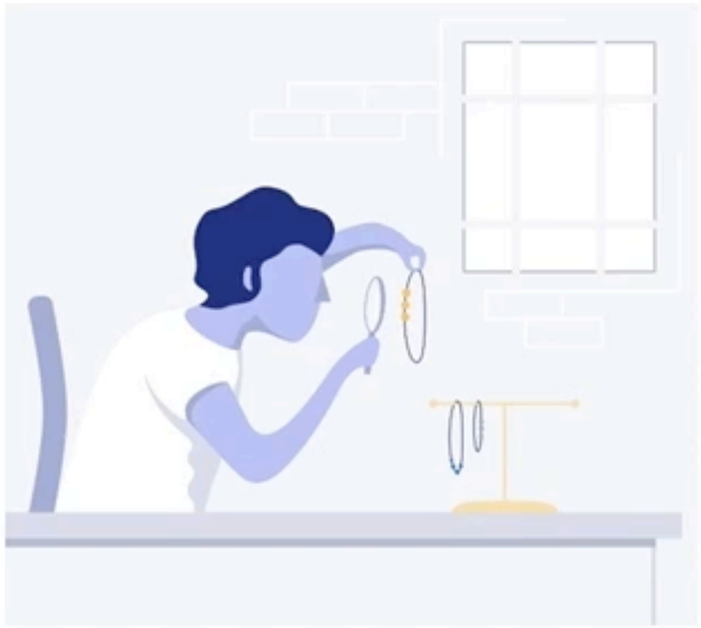

CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE 55
YOU'RE THE STAR OF THE STORY! CHOOSE FROM 9 POSSIBLE ENDINGS.
YOU ARE DONALD TRUMP
BY JD DOBSON

Making	Asserting ability	Making things with my own hand



One of Zel's friends thinks the charms are so unique, they might want to consider selling them.

Next

Example 3:
Creating

Home
Orders 55
Products
Customers
Analytics
Marketing
Discounts
Codes
Automatic
Apps

SALES CHANNELS
Online Store
Buy Button
Facebook
Point of Sale
View all channels

Settings

Discounts

Create discount code

Discount code

Generate code

e.g. SPRINGSALE

Customers will enter this discount code at checkout.

Options

Discount type

Percentage

Discount value

%

Applies to

- (•) Entire order
- ( ) Specific collections
- ( ) Specific products

Summary

No information entered yet.

PERFORMANCE

Discount is not active yet.

CAN'T COMBINE WITH OTHER AUTOMATIC DISCOUNTS

Customers won't be able to enter a code if an automatic discount is already applied at checkout.

The problem:

We wanted to build a mental model...

... but couldn't interview people about something they'd never thought about.

Creating	Curiosity	Expressing my ability

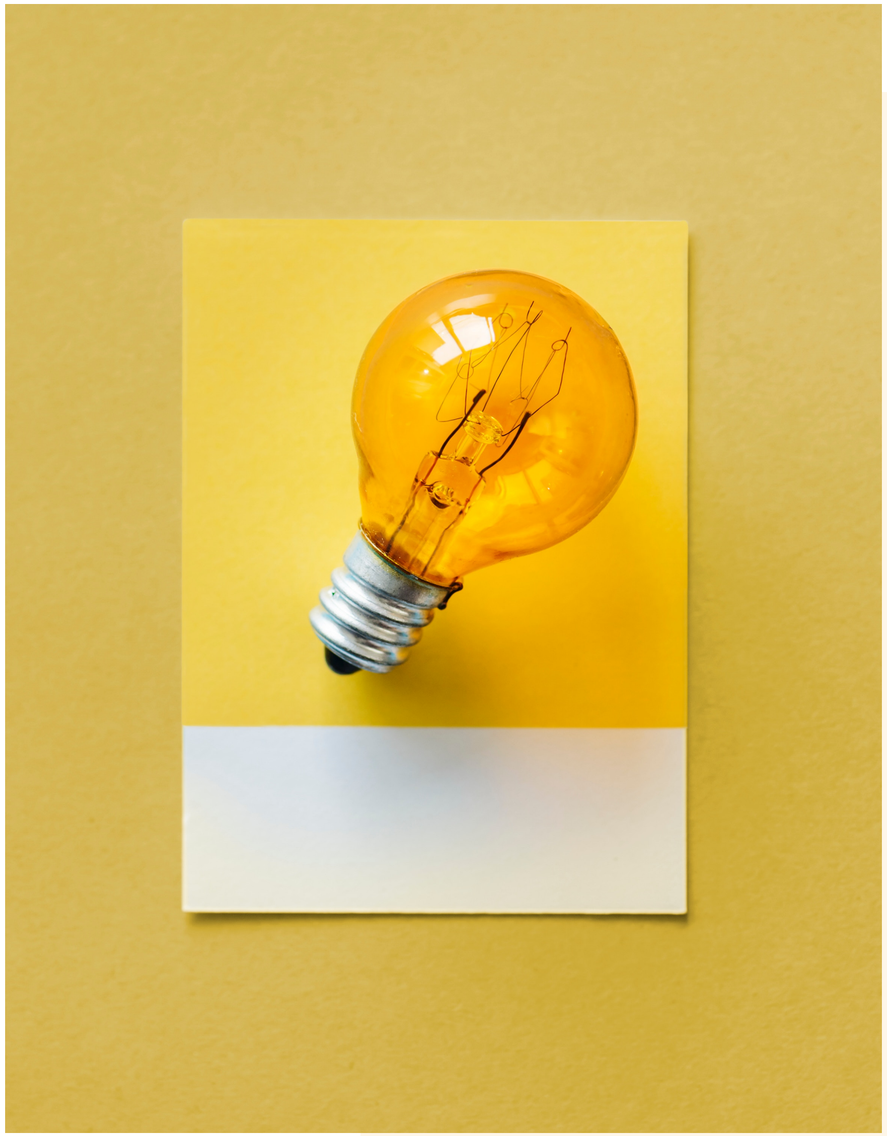
We’re not “inventing” new research methods.

We’re adapting, connecting, and combining.

We maintain rigour by building on top of what’s already established.

All people are creative.

People pass through the levels of creativity through experience.



Help them as they go along

- **Lead** people as they **do**
  - **Guide** people as they **adapt**
    - **Provide support** as they **make**
      - **Offer a clean slate** as they **create**

— Sanders and Stappers (2013)

Thank you!

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