

Identifying meaningful insights in research data

Fundamentals

An insight is a provocative statement of truth about human behavior.

Experience

The things and pressures on people that define and shape their interactions

Emotional Insight

Finding meaning in data by looking at it from the perspective of people

Narrative, Stories & Value

Stories of how a person can achieve their goals, and the value they get from an experience

Empathy

Fundamentals

It's the “big-rock” upon which we'll anchor new product and service capabilities.

Experience

The things and pressures on people that define and shape their interactions

Emotional Insight

Finding meaning in data by looking at it from the perspective of people

Narrative, Stories & Value

Stories of how a person can achieve their goals, and the value they get from an experience

Empathy

Applicability

Now that we've identified themes in our research, we'll begin to *interpret and assign subjective meaning* to the data.

Design isn't objective; our goal is to change the world, not simply understand or document it.

The research-to-themes-to-insights process is a move from observation to interpretation. We'll begin to add our perspective to the data, and assign meaning to the things we saw and observed.

Identifying insights in data

Our main tool for identifying insights: asking, and answering, the question “Why?”—with incomplete data.

I saw participants behave a certain way.

Why did they behave that way?

I don't know, but I can take an informed guess.

Identifying insights in data

Our main tool for identifying insights: asking, and answering, the question “Why?”—with incomplete data.

I saw participants feel a certain way.

Why did they feel that way?

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Identifying insights in data

Our main tool for identifying insights: asking, and answering, the question “Why?”—with incomplete data.

I saw participants think a certain way.

Why did they think that way?

I don't know, but I can take an informed guess.

Identifying insights in data

Start with the themes you've gathered from research.

1 - Matt (line 15)

I'm addicted to technology. I'm on it 24/7. I try not to be on it during social situations, with like family, because I think it's rude. I know that teenagers have that stereotype of being so addicted, and I am, but I don't like to be the typical "on facebook all the time."

1 - Francine (line 24)

It's sad that social life is all about technology. I like to try and communicate without it - so I don't end up like those people who cant communicate in person. I guess I learned a lot of that from my mom because she points that out to me.

Theme:
There is a stigma associated with forming digital connections, as compared to physical ones.

Identifying insights in data

Ask: why?

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Theme:
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Why?

Identifying insights in data

Be more specific in your question.

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Theme:
There is a stigma associated with forming digital connections, as compared to physical ones.

Why?
Why is there a stigma associated with forming digital connections, as compared to physical ones?

Identifying insights in data

Answer the specific *why* question.

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Theme:
There is a stigma associated with forming digital connections, as compared to physical ones.

Why?
Why is there a stigma associated with forming digital connections, as compared to physical ones?

Insight:
Digital connections are less valuable than physical ones, because they don't fulfill innate human needs like eye contact and physical touch. We should seek to minimize these relationships.

Identifying insights in data

And again...

3 - Peter (line 17)

I couldn't get into any of my required classes. It didn't seem fair; there were a few sections, but they filled up in minutes.

11 - Mary (line 24)

I don't get a lot of help in registering for classes. All of the upperclassman seem to get them first.

Theme:
Educational institutions
plan their course offerings
around logistics, rather
than student need.

Identifying insights in data

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Theme:
Educational institutions plan their course offerings around logistics, rather than student need.

Why?
Why do educational institutions plan their course offerings around logistics, rather than student needs?

Identifying insights in data

...ending with another *why* answer.

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I couldn't get into any of my required classes. It didn't seem fair; there were a few sections, but they filled up in minutes.

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I don't get a lot of help in registering for classes. All of the upperclassman seem to get them first.

Theme:
Educational institutions plan their course offerings around logistics, rather than student need.

Why?
Why do educational institutions plan their course offerings around logistics, rather than student needs?

Insight:
Educational institutions have gotten so large that they can't optimize for learning; instead, they optimize for operations. This diminishes the quality of education. We should strive for personalized attention.

Identifying insights in data

These are insight statements.

Insights are framed as universal truths, even though they are based on a small, biased data set. Insights make statements about generalized behavior.

A good insight is provocative: it should cause debate, potentially offend some readers, and make people uncomfortable.

A good insight can be traced to the group(s) used to generate it.

Insight:
Digital connections are less valuable than physical ones, because they don't fulfill innate human needs like eye contact and physical touch. We should seek to minimize these relationships.

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Educational institutions have gotten so large that they can't optimize for learning; instead, they optimize for operations. This diminishes the quality of education.

We should strive for personalized attention.

● Inferred observation

● Provocation

Identifying insights in data

These are insight statements.

Insights are written as:

Definitive

You don't have a comprehensive data sample, but don't worry—make a concrete, authoritative statements.

Provocative

A good answer to this question makes someone react (and not necessarily with a positive reaction).

Complete

The answer should stand on its own, without you there to explain it.

Insight:
Digital connections are less valuable than physical ones, because they don't fulfill innate human needs like eye contact and physical touch.

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Insight:
Educational institutions have gotten so large that they can't optimize for learning; instead, they optimize for operations. This diminishes the quality of education.

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● Inferred observation

● Provocation

Identifying insights in data

Our path to insights was methodical and rigorous.



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1 - Francine (line 24)

It's sad that social life is all about technology. I like to try and communicate without it - so I don't end up like those people who cant communicate in person. I guess I learned a lot of that from my mom because she points that out to me.

There is a stigma associated with forming digital connections, as compared to physical ones.

Why is there a stigma associated with forming digital connections, as compared to physical ones?

Digital connections are less valuable than physical ones, because they don't fulfill innate human needs like eye contact and physical touch. We should seek to minimize these relationships.

The input for this method is qualitative research: quotes from real users, gathered through ethnography, voice of the customer, surveys, etc.

The data is "exploded" into individual utterances, so they can be manipulated.

The data is grouped based on inferential connections, and the connections are named through observational theme statements.

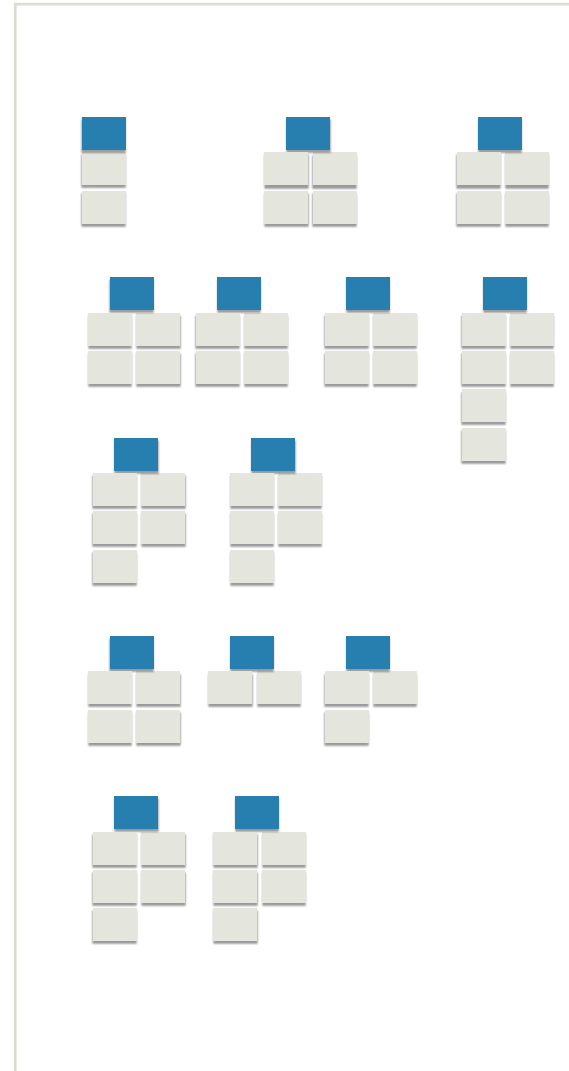
Insights are developed by asking, and answering, the question **why**.

Then, we provoke a question about the theme: why is it true?

Identifying insights in data

How to get to insights:

Start with your themes.



There is a stigma associated with forming digital connections, as compared to physical ones.

1 - Matt (line 15)
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4 - Francine (line 24)
It's sad that social life is all about technology. I like to try and communicate without it - so I don't end up like those people who cant communicate in person. I guess I learned a lot of that from my mom because she points that out to me.

Identifying insights in data

How to get to insights:

Start with your themes.

Select a single grouping for the entire team to consider.



There is a stigma associated with forming digital connections, as compared to physical ones.

1 - Matt (line 15)

I'm addicted to technology. I'm on it 24/7. I try not to be on it during social situations, with like family, because I think it's rude. I know that teenagers have that stereotype of being so addicted, and I am, but I don't like to be the typical "on facebook all the time", not being able to communicate in person.

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Identifying insights in data

How to get to insights:

Start with your themes.

Select a single grouping for the entire team to consider.

Ask "Why?" about the grouping.

The image shows a grid of data points on a dark grey background. Each data point is represented by a small square icon above a larger, light grey grid icon. A white callout box with a purple header and a white body is positioned over one of the data points. The header contains the text "Why is there a stigma associated with forming digital connections, as compared to physical ones?". The body contains two text snippets: "1 - Matt" followed by "I'm addicted to technology. I'm on it 24/7. I try not to be on it during social situations, with like family, because I think it's rude. I know that teenagers have that stereotype of being so addicted, and I am, but I don't like to be the typical 'on facebook all the time', not being able to communicate in person." and "4 - Francine (line 24)" followed by "It's sad that social life is all about technology. I like to try and communicate without it - so I don't end up like those people who cant communicate in person. I guess I learned a lot of that from my mom because she points that out to me."

There is a stigma associated with forming digital connections, as compared to physical ones?

1 - Matt

I'm addicted to technology. I'm on it 24/7. I try not to be on it during social situations, with like family, because I think it's rude. I know that teenagers have that stereotype of being so addicted, and I am, but I don't like to be the typical "on facebook all the time", not being able to communicate in person.

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Identifying insights in data

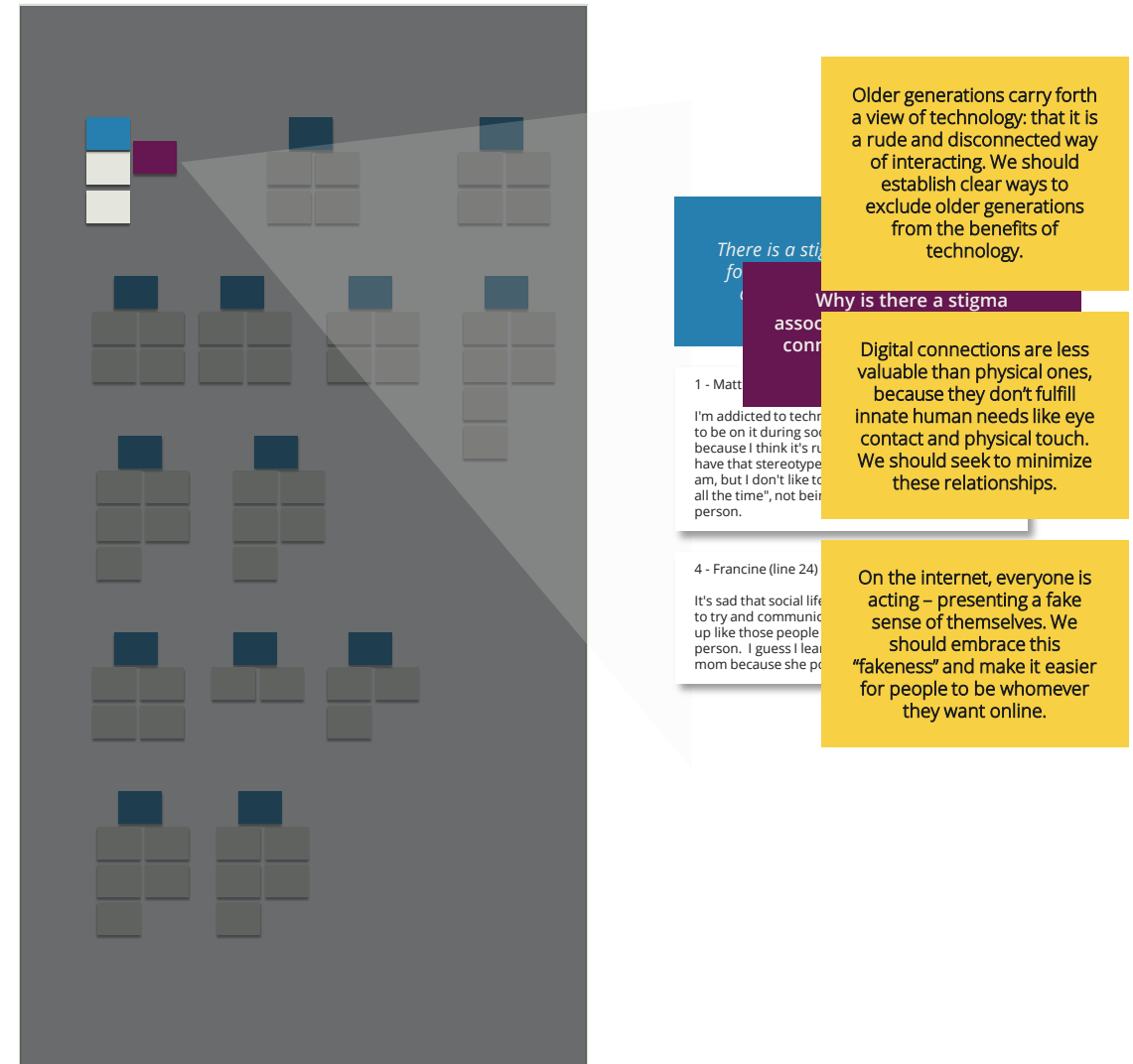
How to get to insights:

Start with your themes.

Select a single grouping for the entire team to consider.

Ask "Why?" about the grouping.

Individually (quietly), write a provocative, definitive, and complete answer to this "Why?" question (set a timer for 2 minutes).



Identifying insights in data

How to get to insights:

Start with your themes.

Select a single grouping for the entire team to consider.

Ask "Why?" about the grouping.

Individually (quietly), write a provocative, definitive, and complete answer to this "Why?" question (set a timer for 2 minutes).

As a group, review each answer. Try and combine these answers into a single, definitive, and complete answer to the question. Dial-up the provocation: will someone react with passion to your insight?

The diagram illustrates the process of identifying insights in data. It shows a grid of small cards on a dark background. A spotlight effect highlights a specific card, which is then expanded into a larger view showing a question and several answers.

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Identifying insights in data

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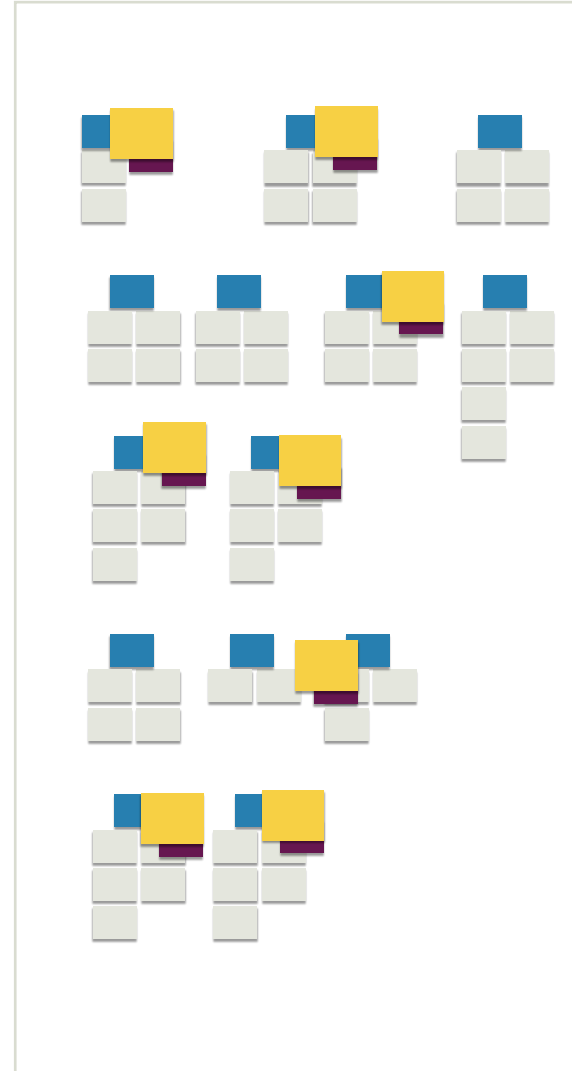
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Ask “Why?” about the grouping.

Individually (quietly), write a provocative, definitive, and complete answer to this “Why?” question (set a timer for 2 minutes).

As a group, review each answer. Try and combine these answers into a single, definitive, and complete answer to the question. Dial-up the provocation: will someone react with passion to your insight?

Repeat until your team has written insight statements for the top 10 groupings.



Summary

Our insights frame the problem space, so we can start to design solutions.

Experience

The things and pressures on people that define and shape their interactions

Emotional Insight

Finding meaning in data by looking at it from the perspective of people

Narrative, Stories & Value

Stories of how a person can achieve their goals, and the value they get from an experience

Empathy

Thank you!

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