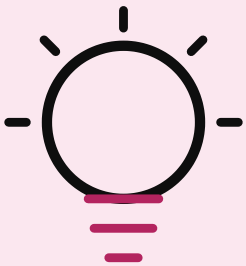
Concept

Insight

A new, well-grounded interpretation about people and their context that explains why they do what they do and opens design opportunities.



Origin

Human-centered design practice (IDEO.org, 2015; Kolko, 2010)

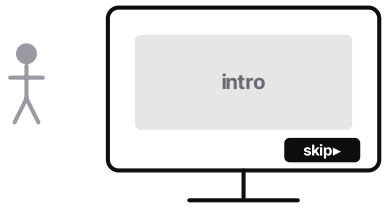
What problem it addresses

Helps distinguish the data from what it means, which is what really guides design.

An example

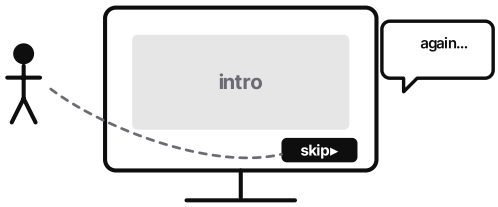
What the team learns about how people watch series.

A finding



Many people skip the intro when they watch several episodes in a row. **It is a fact.**

An insight



People who watch several episodes in a row want to follow the story without interruptions, but have to skip the intro by hand every time. **It opens an opportunity.**

The finding describes what happens; the insight explains why it matters and where the friction is.

Why it happens

1 

Start from observed facts, never from assumptions.

2 

Connect several findings until a common motive emerges.

3 

Phrase it as desire and friction: what the person wants and what stops them.

Applications in design

✓ Use it like this

Write each insight in one sentence: what the person wants and what stops them.

✗ Avoid

Calling a piece of data or a team opinion an insight.

Don't fall for it

If an insight is only a hypothesis, validate it before designing from it.

Finding ≠ insight

What the research says

Data, percentages and trends aren't insights: an insight interprets the facts and moves from specific stories to ideas that hold for many people (IDEO.org, 2015).

●●○ **Debated evidence.** There is no single formula for writing insights; desire and friction is one of the most widely used in practice.

Connections

Used in

- How might we...?
- Design thinking
- Affinity diagram
- Five whys
- Design principles

Related to

- Say vs. do
- Design synthesis

Authors and works

2015	**IDEO.org**	Described how to move from people's stories to insights in The Field Guide to Human-Centered Design.
2010	**Jon Kolko**	Placed insights within design synthesis.

Sources

Original sources

- Kolko, J. (2010). Abductive thinking and sensemaking: The drivers of design synthesis. Design Issues, 26(1), 15–28. View source (https://doi.org/10.1162/desi.2010.26.1.15)

Secondary sources

- IDEO.org (2015). The field guide to human-centered design. IDEO.org.

Last reviewed: October 25, 2026

Atlas público de diseño, de Adriana Ojeda. Texto e ilustraciones bajo licencia CC BY 4.0.