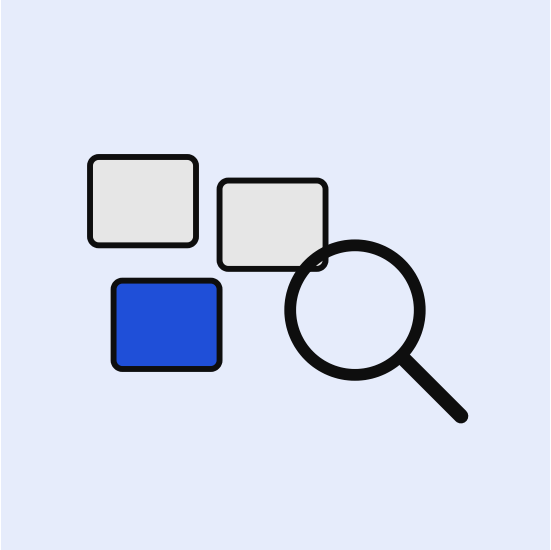
Discipline

Design research

Researches with people and in their context to understand their reality, question assumptions and inspire solutions, and then makes sense of what was found.



In Spanish

Investigación en diseño

Origin

Several antecedents: the design methods movement (London conference, 1962; Design Research Society, 1966), Frayling (1993), and participatory research (Sanders, 2002)

What it deals with

Designing from what the team believes, rather than from what people experience, leads to solutions no one needs. Researching early, when changing course is still cheap, reduces that risk.

Principles

Understand before proposing

People's reality first, ideas after.

Look at what they do, not just what they say

Observing in context reveals what goes unsaid.

Combine sources

Cross-check methods, people and data so you don't depend on just one.

Make sense

Data doesn't decide on its own: it has to be interpreted and turned into findings that are useful for design.

Applications in design

✓ Use it like this

Start every project with clear research questions and talk to real people as soon as possible.

✗ Avoid

Using research to confirm what you had already decided.

👁 Don't fall for it

Share what you learn with the whole team throughout the project, not only in a report at the end.

Especialidades



Specialty

UX research

Studies the people who use a digital product to decide what to design and check whether it works.

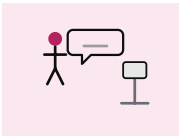


Specialty

ResearchOps

Organizes what research at scale needs: participants, tools, permissions and what was learned.

Concepts



Concept

Say vs. do

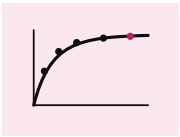
What people say about their behavior does not always match what they do.



Concept

Qualitative and quantitative research

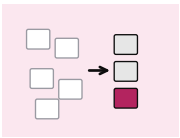
One explains why things happen; the other, how much and to how many. They complement each other.



Concept

Data saturation

The point where new interviews barely add new themes.



Concept

Design synthesis

Organizing, grouping, and interpreting research until patterns and opportunities emerge.

Methods and tools



Process

Contextual Design

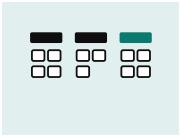
A complete process that goes from observing people at work to designing and testing the product.



Approach

Design thinking

Tackling open problems the way design does: understanding people, reframing the problem and prototyping.



Method

Affinity diagram

Grouping research notes by affinity so that themes emerge.



Approach

Human-centered design

Designing from the needs, context and participation of the people who will use something.

Connections

Builds on

- Anthropology
- Design anthropology
- Design studies

Related to

- Information design
- Service design
- Inclusive design
- UX design

Authors and works

1993	**Christopher Frayling**	In academia, distinguished research into design, through design and for design.
2002	**Elizabeth Sanders**	Proposed studying what people say, do and make, and moving research toward participation.
2010	**Jon Kolko**	Explained synthesis as the step in which research is made sense of.

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