

project 1: persona (10%)

People with disabilities are as varied as any users; they come from a variety of backgrounds & have varied interests, likes & dislikes, goals & skills. They have different experiences, different expectations, & different preferences. They use different interaction techniques, different adaptive strategies, & different assistive technology configurations. – Shawn Henry, *Just Ask*

The first step in designing usable and accessible content is learning about your users. Developing personas requires you to research users' abilities, aptitudes, and attitudes and combine that information into a "fictional but realistic character" (Horton & Quesenbery 14).

For your first project, you will develop a persona for a UCA student with a disability. The goal is **not** to create a stereotyped character but to do some research and to think critically about different identities and how/why people access texts differently.

First, you'll need to research the UCA student population. This may seem super easy because you're all UCA students, but a persona is not based on *you*. It's based on who could potentially use your text—and not just the "average" user. This data from Institutional Research is a useful starting point: <http://uca.edu/ir/>.

Second, you'll need to research a particular disability. Again, the goal here is **not** to stereotype a disability (e.g., "Jane uses a wheelchair and can't use stairs" or "Bob is blind and wears sunglasses and reads Braille."). Rather, the idea is to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how a particular disability impacts how someone accesses and engages with a text. You might start with the CDC, which tends to be an authority on diagnosed disabilities: <http://www.cdc.gov/>. I would also recommend finding firsthand accounts (blogs, testimonials) of someone who identifies with the disability that you're researching. Your persona should be fictional but **nuanced**.

requirements .

The first project is a low-stakes introduction to start thinking critically about accessibility and the users that we design for (or maybe, the types of users we don't often think about when we design). Your personas should include the following:

- **Name & picture**¹
- **Demographics:** age, education, ethnicity, family, hometown
- **Student status:** major/minor, academic rank, strengths and weaknesses, career goals, additional employment (if applicable)
- **Ability:** information about their ability (physical, cognitive, language) and any assistive technology (AT) they use
- **Aptitude:** their current knowledge and ability to make inferences
- **Attitude:** their motivation, emotion, risk tolerance, and persistence
- **Description:** a detailed description of who this person is
- **References:** consult a few sources and cite them appropriately (either footnote them or include references at the end)

Use the personas in the book (pp. 16-33) as a guide. I'm fine with you structuring your persona the same way if you want, but feel free to get creative. As long as you include the information in some way that is understandable and readable, you should be fine.

Your persona should be submitted as a Google Doc through Classroom.² While content is the main focus of this project, please take design into consideration (i.e., the persona should be clearly organized, easy to skim/read, and aesthetically pleasing).

Project #1 is due Friday, 1/22 by class (8am).

¹ Although they're all hipsters, this persona account may be useful for images:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/jasontravis/sets/72157603258446753/#>

² If you draft in Microsoft Word and then copy/paste to Google Docs, you'll run into some formatting issues. If you draft it in Docs from the start, though, it should be fine.