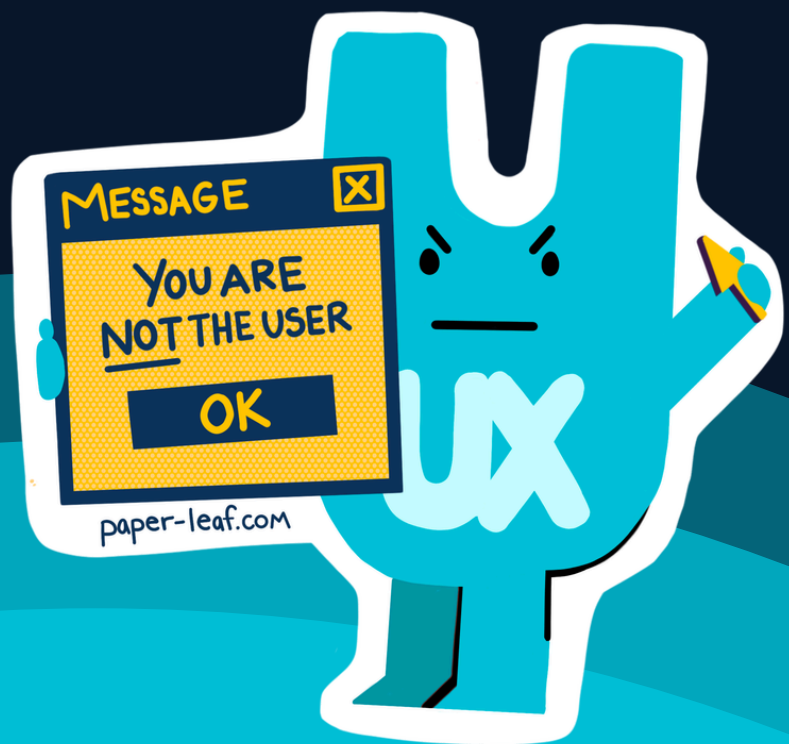


PL

The value of research



PAPER LEAF WEB & MOBILE
APP EXPERTS

Research overview



Laying the foundation for a solution that actually works

At Paper Leaf, we believe that great digital products don't start with a great design—they start with a deep understanding of the project and user needs. That's why research is the first step in our process, and why it's never treated like a task to check off a to-do-list. The research stage is where we work collaboratively with our clients to align your team's vision and knowledge, uncover the real problems that users are facing, and bring clarity to what needs to be solved—and why.

When you hire us to lead research, you're getting a team that listens deeply, works quickly, takes collaboration seriously, and uncovers what really matters. We don't just bring tools—we bring the experience and perspective to know what questions to ask, where to look, and how to turn insight into actionable results. We're committed to getting it right, because that's what drives a product that works for your users and delivers real value for your organization.

How we do it

Tailored research—qualitative and quantitative—to fit your needs

Our research process is flexible, focused, and tailored to your specific project needs. We use a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods to uncover what matters most—from invested party interviews and user surveys to audits, usability testing, and analytics reviews. Every activity is intentional, selected to answer the right questions and guide decision-making. We don't just collect data; we synthesize it into clear, actionable insights that shape the direction of your product. Our goal is to uncover the truth of what's happening, so your team can move forward with clarity and confidence.

Invested Parties Interviews

We sit down with internal individuals with an invested interest and deep understanding of the company to understand goals, challenges, constraints, and success metrics. These conversations ground the project in real-world priorities and help us uncover early misalignments that can otherwise derail progress.

Product Walkthroughs

We explore your product firsthand—as both users and experts—to understand its structure, workflows, and pain points. This gives us a baseline for how it's currently functioning and how it aligns with business and user needs.

Alignment Workshops

These collaborative workshops bring teams together to clarify objectives, surface assumptions, and ensure everyone is on the same page. They're especially valuable for complex projects or teams working across silos.

Understanding users and their priorities

This is where our approach truly stands out. At Paper Leaf, we dig deep to understand your users—their goals, challenges, behaviours, and emotions. Through interviews, surveys, top task analysis, card sorting, and persona development, we build a complete, holistic view of the user experience. These insights let us design solutions that truly resonate with real human needs.

User Interviews

We conduct one-on-one interviews with people who actually use (or would use) your product. These conversations help us uncover needs, expectations, behaviours, and emotional drivers—insights you can't get from analytics alone. Our approach is structured yet conversational, allowing real stories and pain points to surface.

Top Tasks Analysis

This method identifies what users most need to do on your site or platform. By focusing on the core tasks that matter most to your users, we can make sure your product prioritizes what's truly important.

Card Sorting

We use card sorting as a research method to understand how users group and label information. Participants organize cards representing content, helping us inform new or existing information architecture.

Surveys

Surveys allow us to gather feedback from a broader audience, adding quantitative weight to what we're hearing in interviews. They're great for identifying behaviours, testing preferences, or testing demographics from a larger selection of people.

Proto Personas

We synthesize user data into clear, actionable personas that represent key user groups. These personas keep user needs front and center during decision-making, while also summarizing the user's insights and acts as a guiding light on the journey.

Understanding product performance

We rigorously assess your product's performance from both technical and user experience perspectives. Our process involves hands-on usability testing, Treejack testing to evaluate information architecture, and comprehensive expert audits. This multifaceted approach helps identify underlying user experience or technical issues, and uncover opportunities for optimization—ensuring your digital product is both efficient and intuitive.

Usability Testing

We observe real users as they attempt real tasks, identifying friction points and areas for improvement. It's one of the most direct ways to see gaps and validate (or challenge) design decisions.

Treejack Testing

This tool helps us evaluate how easily users can find information in your current or proposed site structure. It's a fast, effective way to test an information architecture.

Expert Audits

We apply our expertise and industry standards to review your product's performance across key areas:

Content audits check if your messaging is clear, consistent, and useful. We review everything—from headlines to help text—to determine what to keep, revise, or remove, ensuring your content builds trust and guides users effectively.

Analytics audits reveal how users interact with your product and where engagement drops. We analyze traffic, conversions, and user flows to identify what's working and help optimize performance.

Technical audits assess the health and performance of your digital product. We uncover issues like slow load times, broken links, buggy user flows, security risks, and poor code quality—problems that can damage user experience and credibility. Fixing them creates a stronger foundation for future growth.

Accessibility audits ensure your digital product is usable by everyone, including people with disabilities. We check for issues like poor color contrast, missing alt text, and screen reader barriers. Beyond compliance, accessible design expands your reach and reflects a commitment to equity and inclusivity.

Understanding the landscape

To design effective digital solutions, we analyze the competitive landscape to identify gaps, opportunities, and areas for differentiation. Combining this with our knowledge of digital trends, industry standards, and market expectations ensures your solution is not just functional but innovative and positioned to stand out.

Competitive Assessments

We review your competitors' products to understand how they approach similar challenges. This helps identify areas of differentiation and opportunities to leapfrog.

Comparative Analysis

Sometimes the best inspiration comes from outside your industry. We examine other tools and experiences—indirect competitors or best-in-class products—that can inform smarter design decisions.

Mapping the current state

Once we've gathered insights, we bring everything together to create a clear, comprehensive picture of where things stand today. By mapping user journeys, documenting technical architecture, and highlighting key friction points, we connect the existing state of user needs, business goals, and system realities.

Current State User Flows & Journeys

These visual maps show how users move through your product—and where things break down. They help teams see the experience from the user's point of view.

Technical Architecture Mapping

We document how your current system is structured to support the experience. This ensures we understand both the opportunities and limitations of the existing tech stack.

The result is a clear, prioritized report that highlights key issues, insights, and opportunities, providing a solid foundation for future decisions and solutions.

What you get

A clear, aligned, research-backed foundation —and a partner to help you move forward

At the end of the research phase, you'll have more than just a findings report. You'll have clarity. You'll understand the current state of your product, the priorities of your users, the challenges in your system, and the opportunities ahead. With this foundation, your organization can enhance digital cohesion, optimize technology investments, and develop solutions that genuinely meet user needs, increase efficiency, and save you money in the long run. Most importantly, you'll gain the confidence to act—whether that means moving forward into a build, realigning internal priorities, or shifting focus altogether. This process equips your team with facts, not assumptions, and ensures that key decisions are rooted in evidence, not intuition.

We don't just hand off a report and walk away. We stay with you after the research phase to help key players across your organization understand the findings, ask the right questions, and align around the insights. Then we translate that research into a clear, actionable blueprint for the next stage—execution.

With Paper Leaf, research isn't the end. It's the beginning of a smarter, more focused path forward.



The team at Paper Leaf helped us create and execute a robust user research plan, interpret the findings to pinpoint and triage areas for improvement, generate solutions, and design, develop and validate the updates with further research. The team was incredibly collaborative, communicative, and flexible throughout the process and we're delighted with the result.

Nicole Ingwersen, Manager of Digital Strategy at SAIT

We'd love to chat with you!

Contact us to learn how our tailored technology advisory services can empower your business and meet your unique needs.

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Clients we've worked with

