

Preliminary Results of Modified-Delphi Interviews to Discover Plasma User Types

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Celeste Lyn Paul (celeste@kde.org)

The following information are the resulting user groups and types generated from the Modified-Delphi interviews of possible Plasma users. This does not represent a comprehensive list of possible Plasma users, nor the final set of target users. It is a representation of who would (or would not) use Plasma based on the knowledge of contributors in the Plasma project. The priority of certain user groups and types needs to be discussed and compared to Plasma and KDE4 goals and hierarchy of priority created along with sample user profiles and use scenarios and cases.

There were several groups which many of the participants focused on throughout the study. (These are denoted by an asterisk (*) before the name.) Interestingly, three of these groups (Office Worker / Advanced User, Free Time User, Straight To the Point) were classified in the **Moderately Experienced but Not Curious** meta user group. If these users are decidedly a primary focus group, their characteristics might conflict with goals for users in the **Experienced and Curious** user group.

A more in-depth analysis of the study conditions, research methodology, and analysis of results will follow in the following week.

Definitions

User

The primary actor who is interacting with the computer. An actual user may be a combination of multiple User Groups or User Types, depending on their role, environment, or activity.

User Group

A generalization of types of users based on one or two dimensions. A User Group may have many User Types.

User Type

A more specific description of a user, which includes more specific details of the user's skill, interest, and environment than the one or two dimensions defined in the user group. A User Type may have sub-types defined to further break out significant differences between users.

Experience

Experienced users have certain range and extent of experience with computers, and probably have a strong ability to problem solve when presented with an issue. (Inexperienced would have a lack of these things)

Curiosity

Curious users enjoy computers, particularly customizing and learning new things. They do not

have to be experienced users to be interested in computers. More curious users tend to be more forgiving to interface issues, and have higher problem solving and learning skills. Less curious users are satisfied with what they have because it works, and are wary of trying or learning anything new.

Activity

These are the types of things users are doing on their computer and the scenario which leads them to completing tasks. For example: printing a report at work, watching family videos on YouTube from home, checking email on vacation. Activities are often influenced by the environment they are conducted in.

Environment

These are the conditions under which a user is using the computer, the type of computer or computing device they are using, environmental distractions, available technical support, type of Internet connection, etc.

User Groups and Types

Experienced and Curious

These are users who want obsessive control over every aspect of their computer. Their activities may vary, but they are skilled in general computer usage and probably specialize in an area they are more familiar with (e.g. office workers are probably experts at Microsoft Word, Linux users probably have more administration skills than Windows users). Customization and flexibility of the desktop environment are top priorities.

** General Power User*

- Technophile and views the computer as a toy as well as a tool
- Able to figure out problems on their own
- Like to customize their environment
- Would probably use many Plasma widgets

Linux Power User

- Experience with the Linux desktop
- Technophile and views the computer as a toy as well as a tool
- Takes advantage of customization functionality, especially if they are a KDE user (but they could also appreciate good defaults)
- Probably uses multiple desktops, or could learn and get used to multiple desktops

New Linux User (former Windows Power User)

- Very accustomed to how Windows works
- Likes learning more complicated skills such as using a CLI (uncommon in Windows, but common in Linux)
- May prefer familiar user interfaces such as TastyMenu to Kickoff or Konqueror to

Dolphin

- Probably doesn't have experience with multiple desktops, but could learn and get used to multiple desktops

Experienced, but Not Curious

These are users who have extensive computer experience, but don't like to try new things. They might not care about the new and different features Plasma provides and might not even be using KDE. If they are using KDE, they are probably still using KDE 3.5.9 and resisting change.

No user types were generated for this group. It is possible that users types from this group would have a lower priority than the other defined user groups.

Moderately Experienced and Curious

These are users who are tired of the desktop-files metaphor and want to try something new. Although they might not have the experience that other users might have, their curiosity plays an important factor in how much they try and fail before they learn something new.

Socialite

- Interested in making and maintaining connections with others
- Want to keep up-to-date on others and have a heavy use of Instant Messenger, Twitter, RSS, Facebook, and other social web services

** Information Users / Office Worker / Advanced User*

- Have many application running at once
- User the computer regularly as part of their job function, but also enjoys computing as a hobby
- Not afraid of the computer and are interested in learning, but experience and skill is not at the level as a power user
- Want to keep up to date on RSS feeds, news, jokes, etc.

Moderately Inexperienced, but Not Curious

These users view the computer as a tool and do minimal entertainment activities. They lack the curiosity that other user groups have which effects their interest in learning and ability to problem solve.

** Office Worker / Advanced User*

- Have many application running at once
- User the computer regularly as part of their job function, but probably doesn't use it as frequently at home or on the weekends
- Uses the computer as a tool and not a toy
- Not afraid of the computer, but they need a compelling reason to take the time and learn something new
- Might keep up to date on news jokes, etc., but probably aren't familiar with services such as

RSS. Most likely they visit websites to get their content.

** Straight To The Point*

- Wants to quickly access to files through his Desktop
- Used to Desktop shortcuts
- The computer is a tool to get work done

** Free Time User*

- Only uses one or two application at a time from only a few applications total
- Only does a few of activities such as Internet browsing, using Instant Messenger, or email
- Thing need to just work for them
- Typically home users keeping up with friends and family
- They don't want to invest time learning new things

Inexperienced and Curious

These users are new to computing but excited to learn more. Good defaults are very important for this group.

Young Children

- They do not have extensive computer experience but might find it an interesting toy
- Have limited reading and comprehension skills
- Parents would be interested in educational tools

** Customizers*

- Do not have extensive computer experience but like technology and want to learn more
- Would be interested in cute and fun widgets

Inexperienced, but Not Curious

These are users who are used to the Windows Desktop and like how it acts as an application launcher and file manager. Would not be likely to learn something unfamiliar for little perceived benefit.

Current Windows User

- Moderate computer experience
- Keeps a lot of icons on the Desktop and likes using it as a file manager
- Uses a lot of office productivity applications
- Might not have many documents open at once

New Linux User

- Low computer experience with the Linux Desktop, probably low or moderate Windows experience
- Likes using Desktop icons to start applications
- Does not use multiple desktops and would have trouble understanding the concept

- Only has 2-3 application windows open at a time
- Uses the computer mostly for Internet and email
- Very similar to the Free Time User type

New Windows User

- Low computer experience with Windows, probably no experience with the Linux Desktop
- Possibly a very young or older user
- Views the computer as a communication tool to keep in touch with friends and family
- Very similar to the Free Time User type

Other Types of Users

These are users who are not using typical computing environments or conducting common tasks in a Desktop environment.

Casual Kiosk/Media Center Users

- Interact with media/kiosk functionality

These user types were not mentioned in the study, but have been discussed in the Plasma project

- Ultra-portable Internet-enabled computer users
- Mobile device users
- Tablet PC (pen-based and touch-based) users