

Worksheet: Make Use of External Cognition in your User Flows

Directions: Draw a user flow from your product. Analyze each step in your user flow process, and determine whether you are making proper use of external cognition by minimizing cognitive load whenever possible.

<p>Sample User Flow</p>	<p>If the site requires account sign-in, is auto-fill (username/password) enabled? Do you have the Remember Me checkbox available?</p> <p>Are you calculating and displaying the total number of trip days for your user?</p> <p>Direct to your site → Home page → Trip Details page → Select dates → Completes a purchase</p> <p>Could you allow the user to compare the different trips by showing both the previous trip of interest as well as the current one?</p> <p>Are you calculating and displaying the total cost of the trip for your user?</p>
<p>Your User Flow</p>	

When you design with external cognition in mind, you will create truly user-centered products that support your user's mental capacity throughout various user flows of your product. External cognition can be an extremely useful method of reducing the strain on users' limited memory and cognitive resources. Visualizing user's events, setting up **reminders**, storing and displaying data for ongoing **calculations**, and keeping track of user's **decisions** by allowing them to annotate are just some of practical examples that embody the use of external cognition. **Calendars, spreadsheets and calculators**, as well as **checklists and annotations** are just several of the widely used products that exhibit the benefits of utilizing external cognition.

To make use of external cognition, be sure to incorporate the following into your designs: Externalize to reduce memory load, computational offloading, and allow for annotations and cognitive tracing.