

Making connections

Occasionally, designers and design students get the opportunity to set their own problems. Designing a new service or product for society relies on the complex interaction of many factors or requirements: focusing on a basic human need, identifying an audience, designing a compelling message (product or service) and using an appropriate medium. The message, product or service is often the most challenging factor to define, so by substituting it for a 'genre', generating new ideas can begin.

Make connections between the different factors by selecting a category from each one and then combining them to generate a new idea for a product or service. For example, education + 25–34 yrs + platform game + smartphone = 'a casual game for language learning aimed at young professionals who have to collect words and assemble sentences to progress to the next level'. Alternatively, start with fewer factors, for example, human needs + mediums (see the table below).

Connecting factors

Human need +	Target audience +	Genre +	Medium =	Ideas
Crime	<i>Age</i>	<i>Game genres</i>	<i>Media</i>	
Education	Under 10	Action	Advertising	
Entertainment	11–14	Adventure	Ambient	
Exercise	15–17	Battle Royale	Apps	
Family	18–24	Platform	AR/VR	
Food	25–34	Puzzle	Digital communities	
Friendship	35–48	Roleplaying	ebook	
Kinship	49–65	Sandbox	Experiential	
Knowledge	65+	Shooter	Interactive TV	
Law		Simulation	Messaging	
Leisure	<i>Gender</i>	Sports	Outdoor media	
Love	Woman/girl	Strategy	Podcasts	
Meaning of life	Man/boy		Social media	
Poverty	Trans	<i>Film genres</i>	Websites (other)	
Religion	Non-binary	Action		
Science	Other	Adventure	<i>Device</i>	
Security		Comedy	Game console	
Social standing	<i>Ethnicity/Origin</i>	Crime	Kiosk	
Work	African	Documentary	PC	
	Asian	Drama	Smartphone	
	Australasian	Family	Smart television	
	European	Fantasy	Smartwatch	
	North American	Film noir	Tablet	
	South American	Horror	Touchscreen	
		Music	Touch table	
	<i>Ability</i>	Musical		
	Able-bodied	Mystery	<i>Peripherals</i>	
	Disabled	Romance	AR/VR headset	
	Literate	Sci-Fi	Digital camera	
	Illiterate	Short	Games controller	
		Thriller	GPS tracker	
		War	Haptic gloves	
		Western	Microcontroller	
			Motion sensor	
			Webcam	
			Xbox Kinect	