

Teasing Apart Instructions

Stage one of TAPT (Teasing Apart, Piecing Together) helps people understand and ‘distil’ the nature of an experience. The output of ‘teasing apart’ is a table showing how the experience breaks down. The following table describes each step. The numbers in brackets show the order in which to fill in the table.

Teasing Apart the experience of... (1) Write the name of the experience to be examined here.				
Experience (2) Brief description of the chosen functionality and the experience of using it.	Surface elements (3) These are generally items ('line', 'box', 'arrangement of photos') and descriptive words ('bold', 'simple', 'complex') relating to the design.	Experienced effects These focus on the physical, emotional and intellectual effects, and tend to concern abstract things ('excitement'), what happens ('hunger sated') and perhaps how things happen ('quickly'). There are two types:		Distilled experience (7) Consider your table of information, particularly the aspects that you identified as key in step 6. Use the table to describe the experience as a sentence. Try to keep your sentence neutral: for example, you might mention 'broadcasting' information rather than 'showing' it, because 'showing' implies a visual broadcast.
		External (4) Things you do, things that can be observed by someone else. E.g. 'a loud noise', 'broadcast information'.	Internal (5) Things you think and feel. May be emotional, intellectual, social. E.g. 'excitement', 'co-experience'. This step is important: dig deep!	
		Key effects (Step 6) Review the lists of external and internal effects: identify effects that seem especially important, unique or essential to the experience. Underline them.		

The number of elements and effects (and how many are ‘key’) will vary according to the experience. Don’t worry about generating a specific number of items: if no more items occur to you, you’re probably done. Teasing an experience apart is about identifying what it means to *you*. There is no wrong answer!

Teasing Apart Example One: photo sharing on Facebook

Teasing Apart the experience of photo sharing on Facebook (1)				
Experience (2)	Surface elements (3)	Experienced effects (4, 5, 6)		Distilled experience (7)
		External (4)	Internal (5)	
Facebook allows users to upload and caption photos, which can be commented upon by the photo's owner or other users. Viewers can 'tag' friends in photos, adding metadata which links images with people's profiles.	* a somewhat complex photo upload process * the option to annotate images with text * the option to 'tag' images, indicating who is shown * the ability to view photos	* <u>broadcasting visual information</u> (6) * sharing past experiences	* <u>presence in the community – consolidate online identity by adding more data</u> (6) * <u>openness about past experiences</u> (6) * anticipation of discussion about these experiences * <u>reminiscence</u> (6) * uncertainty about responses and (depending on privacy settings) audience	A way to share and annotate reminiscent imagery from the user's past, within an online community. The audience can view and annotate that imagery.
		Remember to underline key effects! (6)		

Teasing Apart Example Two: picnicking with friends

Teasing Apart the experience of picnicking with friends (1)				
Experience (2)	Surface elements (3)	Experienced effects (4, 5, 6)		Distilled experience (7)
		External (4)	Internal (5)	
A group of friends go outside with a basket full of cold finger-food, usually to a park or woodland. They share a meal and chat while outdoors.	• Rug • Picnic basket • Food • Drink • Plastic cutlery • Friends • Games • Music • Location	• <u>Conversation</u> (6) • Wasps • Weather / <u>outdoors</u> (6) • Litter • Music • Hunger sated • <u>Team games / activities</u> (6) • Sitting on rug	• <u>Sharing and enjoying food</u> (6) • Belonging • <u>Co-experience</u> (6) • Spur-of-the-moment • Surprise (unknown food)	A shared social and food-based experience set in a restful, natural environment. People talk and play games as they enjoy a meal together.
		Remember to underline key effects! (6)		

An Optional Creative Interlude: Card Sorting

To help move between the analytical phase of Teasing Apart and into the creative phase of Piecing Together, you may wish to use an exercise to prompt creativity.

One such exercise is that of card sorting. The aim is to pool your ideas about the experience you have analysed, and to begin thinking creatively about how those ideas fit together.

Approach

1. Use post-it notes to record the experienced effects (both external and internal), underlining the effects that you identified as key. **Write one effect on each post-it note.**
2. Look at all of the post-it notes together.
3. Start to categorise the post-it notes: put similar items together, look for patterns and themes, and position the post-it notes in whatever way seems most helpful to you for understanding the information.
4. If categorisation is difficult, consider using the following categories to help get you going:
 - Emotional aspects
 - Practical aspects
 - Logical aspects

Or:

- Formal context
- Informal context
- Context with many people
- Context with few people

Piecing Together

The second phrase of TAPT is a creative tool for generating ideas. It involves re-imagining a Teased Apart experience in a new context, whether physical or digital – for example, building a website to replicate picnicking. Piecing Together results in a scenario of the experience in its new context.

Approach

Piecing Together involved taking a distilled, Teased Apart experience, and re-providing it in a new context. There will always be many possible ways to re-provide an experience, so there are no wrong answers: choose what seems right.

The steps are:

- 1) Brainstorming, particularly using the key effects identified earlier. Feel free to use scrap paper, whiteboards etc. if this is helpful. A space is provided in the table for any sketches and flow charts, but you don't have to include these.

If you find it hard to come up with ideas, consider things you might change from the original experience. These might include:

- the modality of communication (vocal, textual, musical, graphical, symbolic)
- the technology used (pen and paper, PDA, telephone, cardboard)
- scale (are we working with one person? Tens? Hundreds? How big is the physical space? How large are the items with which people interact?)

You might also want to think about what technologies traditional occur in the original and the new environments – office might traditionally include telephones, whiteboards and desktop computers, while parks tend to traditionally have benches, maps printed on large boards and fountains. What can you use?

- 2) Scenario building. Using your ideas, build an example scenario.
- 3) Check your scenario:
 - i. Considering the distilled experience and the key elements of the original experience, have you included everything you want to? (It may be that you choose to drop some key effects from the original experience. This is fine: however, it's important you think about the key effects: how have you included each effect? If you chose to omit it, why did you make that decision?)
 - ii. Have you incorporated any new key effects that you did not intend?
 - iii. Refine the pieced together scenario accordingly.
 - iv. Repeat the above three steps until you are happy with the scenario.

Examples of Piecing Together

Piecing Together photosharing on Facebook	
Distilled experience	A way to share and annotate imagery from the user's past; their audience can view and annotate that imagery.
Context	The home.
Description	A novel tabletop that displays a sequence of photographs uploaded by the table's owner. The tabletop incorporates a touchscreen interface to allow the owner to place photos and annotations into the shared space. Any passerby can use the same interface to annotate photographs with commentary.

Piecing Together picnicking with friends	
Distilled experience	A shared social and food-based experience that happens outdoors. People talk and play games while enjoying food together.
Context	The web.
Description	Before the picnic, friends choose and order food from the website. Packages are delivered to their homes on the day. Each package contains a selection of food as ordered by the whole group, not just the items that this person ordered. Friends meet via a simple webpage with has a tartan background (the same for each person within a group): webcam portals show each person present. Mini games are included, like flash frisbee and a fly-swatting game.

An example about the 'checking' phase:

The above scenario for 'photo sharing' lacks the effect of 'uncertainty' about the audience: this might be added by positioning the table in a public space instead of the home, or perhaps altering the photo display so that it is visible from the street outside the home.