

# ROLE-PLAYING

## When can the method be used?

Role-playing is just like theatre acting: by acting out the tasks your intended user has to perform, you reach a better understanding of the complexity of the interaction, and can develop different ideas for the interaction.

You can use Role-playing throughout the design process in order to develop ideas about how people would interact with the product you are developing. You can also engage in Role-playing to understand the interaction qualities of an existing product or in a later stage when evaluating a concept. It can be particularly useful to put yourself in the role of your intended user when you do not belong to that user group. For example, by putting on semi-covered eyeglasses and taping up your joints, you can get a sense of how a person who cannot see and move experiences the world.

## How to use the method?

One of the major advantages of Role-playing is that you use your entire body; it is more like real interaction as compared to using storyboards or scenarios. Role-playing techniques enable you to explore the tangibility of the interaction, as well as the appearance and attractiveness of elegant movements. Also, by Role-playing you can simulate an interaction walkthrough. Role-playing is usually captured using photography or video. Role-playing starts with a first idea about the interaction between product and user.

The outcome of using Role-playing techniques is a good conceptual idea about the interaction, as well as visualisations or written descriptions of the interaction. Both visualisations and written descriptions can be used for communication and evaluation purposes.

***Role-playing is a form of simulation that helps you to develop and determine the interaction between your design and its intended users.***

## Possible procedure

### STEP 1

Determine the actors and the goal of the actors or the interaction.

### STEP 2

Determine what you want to portray through Role-playing. Determine the sequence of steps.

### STEP 3

Make sure that you record the Role-playing.

### STEP 4

Divide the roles amongst the team members.

### STEP 5

Play the interaction and improvise. Be expressive in your movements. Think aloud when enacting motivations.

### STEP 6

Repeat the Role-playing task several times until different sequences have been enacted.

### STEP 7

Analyse the recordings: pay attention to the sequences of tasks, motivations and factors that could influence the interaction.

## Tips & Concerns

- Start with a small research on how it is done, watch example videos.
- Sometimes it takes hours, days or even weeks before you really experience your role.
- Do not try to win an Oscar, the acting itself is not the goal.



*By wearing restrictive clothes like straps, extra weights, gloves and vision-blocking glasses, designers experience how it feels to live with arthritis and limited eyesight.*