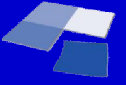


# Understanding users

Dr Max Hammond

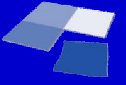
22 March 2011





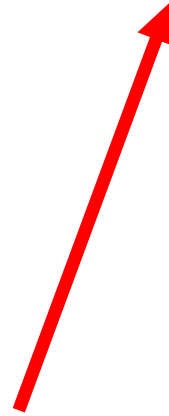
# Who am I?

- Dr Max Hammond
- Consultant at Curtis+Cartwright
- Broad experience across higher education and research
- Likes finding stuff



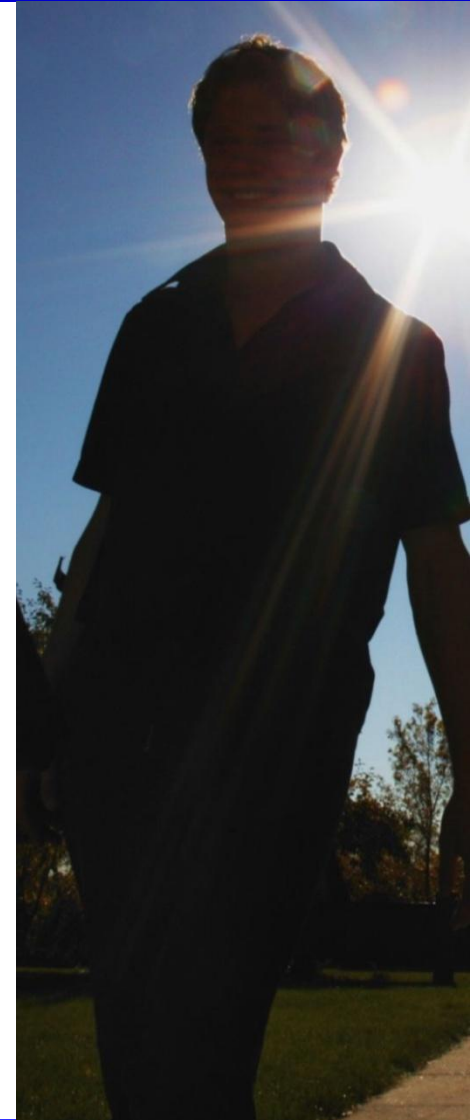
What do you need to know?  
How well?  
How will you find this out?

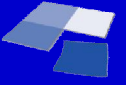
What's a user?  
What is use?  
How does this relate to "markets"?  
What do funders think a user is?



## Understanding users

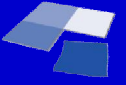
**Why do you want to do this, and what will you do with your new understanding?**





# This talk

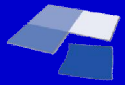
- Ground rules for information systems in the internet age
- The (Gartner) Hype Cycle
- Key ideas in user research



Understanding users

# Ground rules for information systems

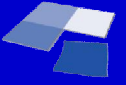




# Google is not going away

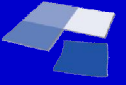


xkcd.com



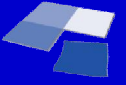
# Ground rules

- Google is not going away
- Most users will do whatever's easy
  - They're after "good enough" information



# Ground rules

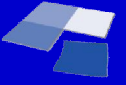
- Google is not going away
- Most users will do whatever's easy
- Everything is more connected now



# Everything is more connected now

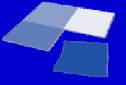
- Semantic web
- SOA
- Mobile computing
- Google Books (and others)
- eBook readers → iPad → *etc*
- Social networks
- Twitter

“The Internet”

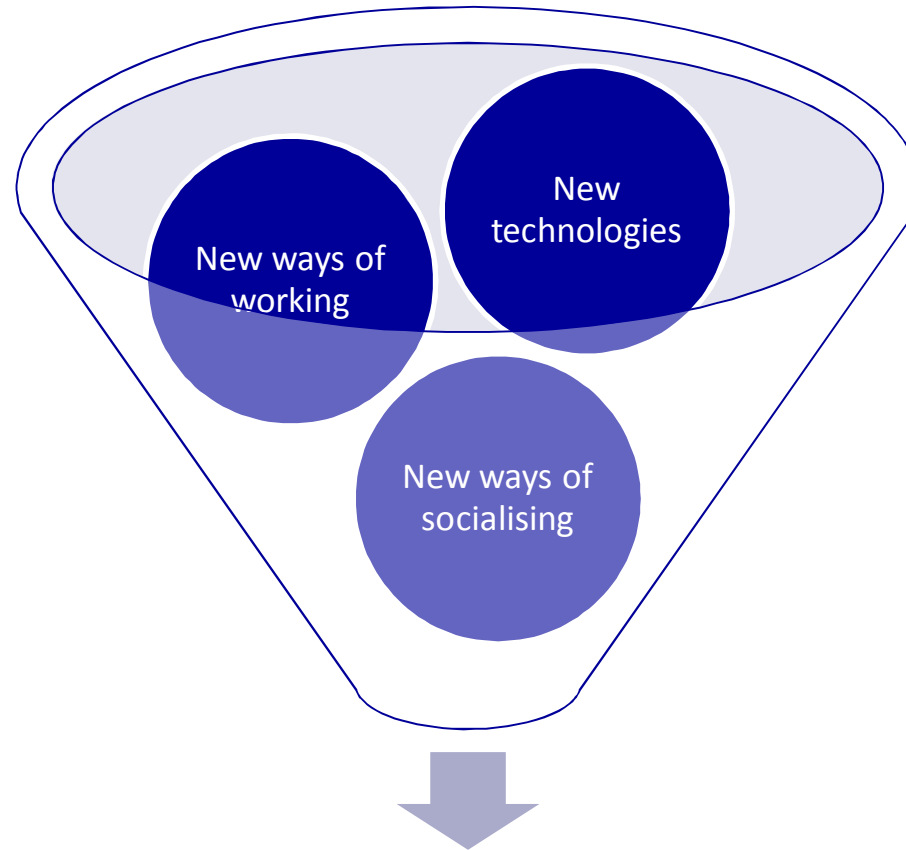


# Ground rules

- Google is not going away
- Most users will do whatever's easy
- Everything is more connected now
- The pace of change will continue
  - *The only constant is change, continuing change, inevitable change, that is the dominant factor in society today. No sensible decision can be made any longer without taking into account not only the world as it is, but the world as it will be.*  
— Isaac Asimov

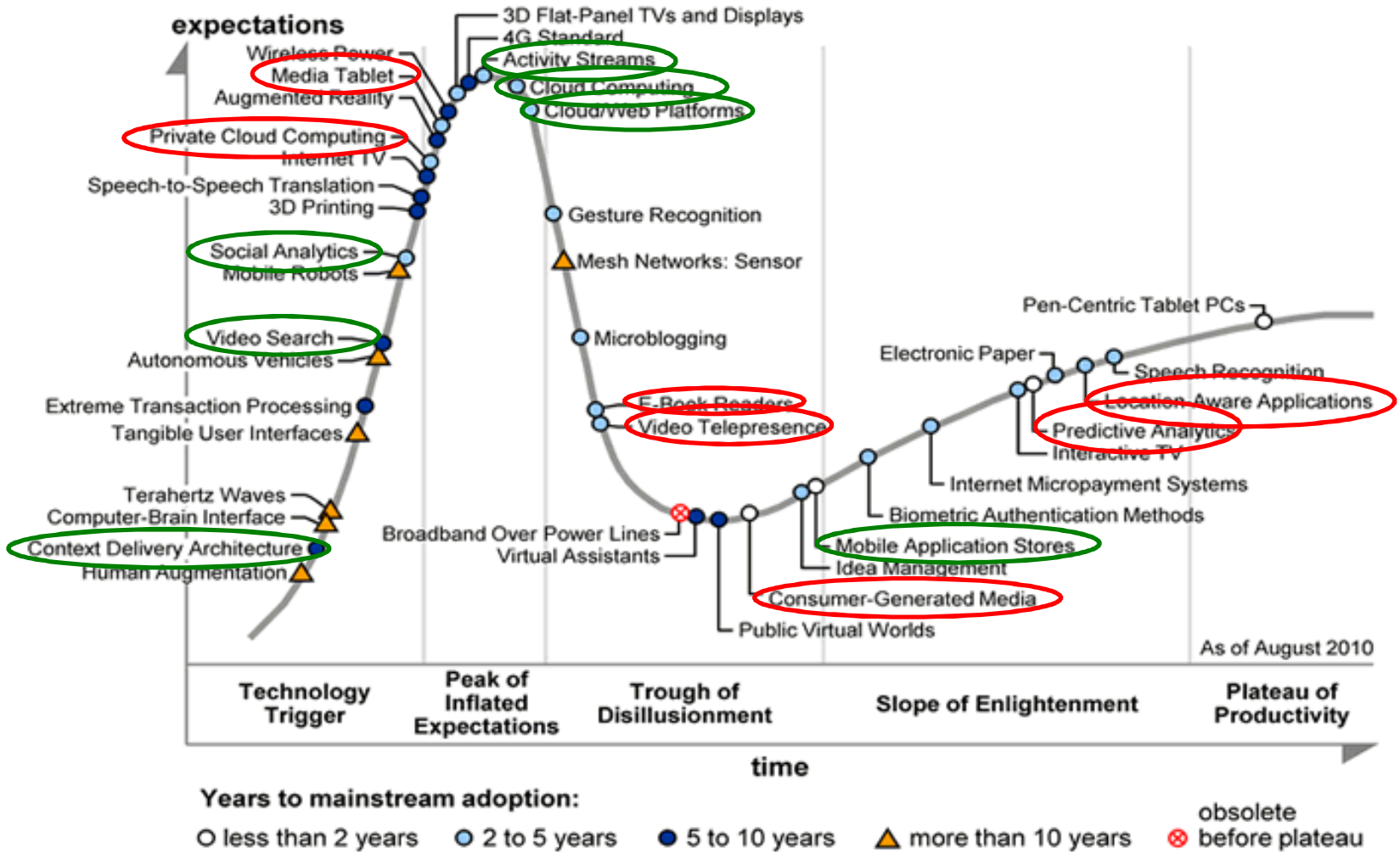
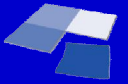


# Remember...

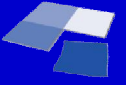


Users' expectations change

# The hype cycle

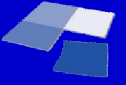


Gartner (2010)



# On hype

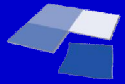
- Do you want to be technology-led?
- Are new technologies beneficial?
- Disaggregate “noise” about new technologies from real user demand
- Technical development must compete with user research, marketing, networking, thinking...
- Technologies that work for someone else might not work for you (personalisation, recommender functions, mobile apps, Twitter)



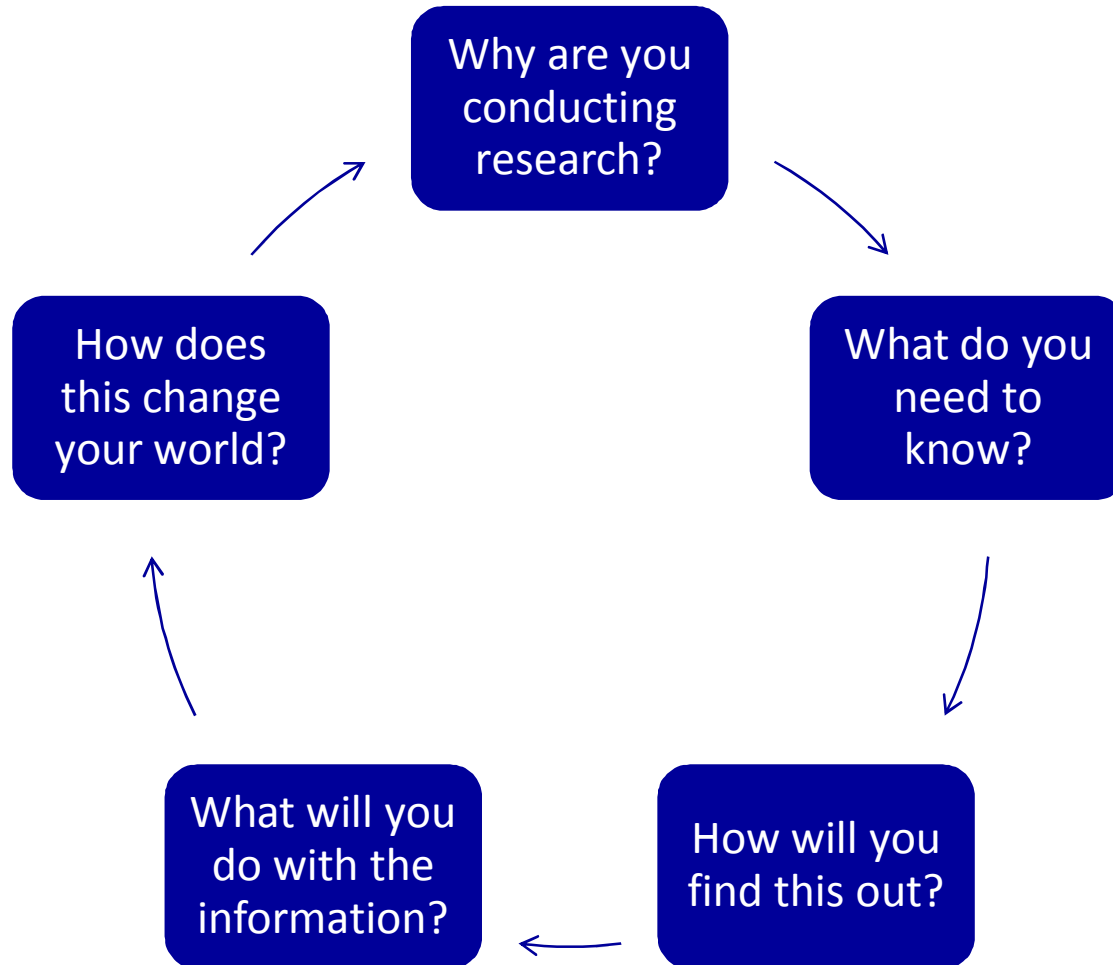
Understanding users

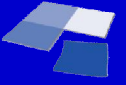
# An approach to research





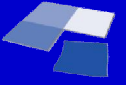
# Approach to research



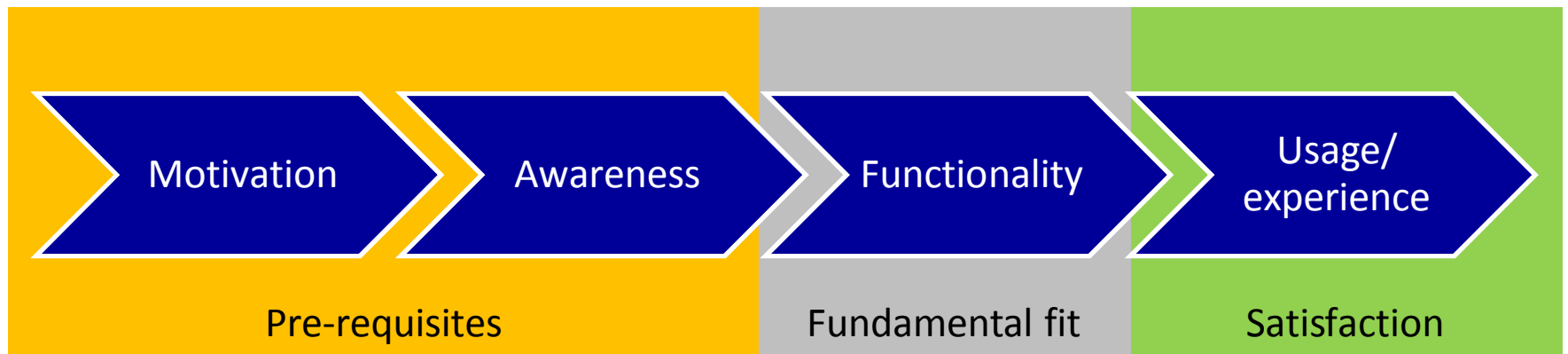


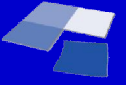
# Why conduct research?

- Develop new services
- Improve existing services
- Improve impact of services (*ie* increase usage of service)
- Meet reporting requirements
- Manage service portfolio



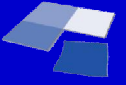
# What do you need to know?





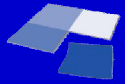
# How will you find this out?

- Desk research
- Focus groups
- Interviews
- Surveys
- Analytics
- User observation



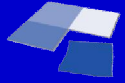
# What will you do with the information?

- Be clear at the outset about your intentions:
- Monitor performance/meet targets
- Market segmentation/Develop user personas
  - Product development
  - Marketing
  - Product design
- Develop business case

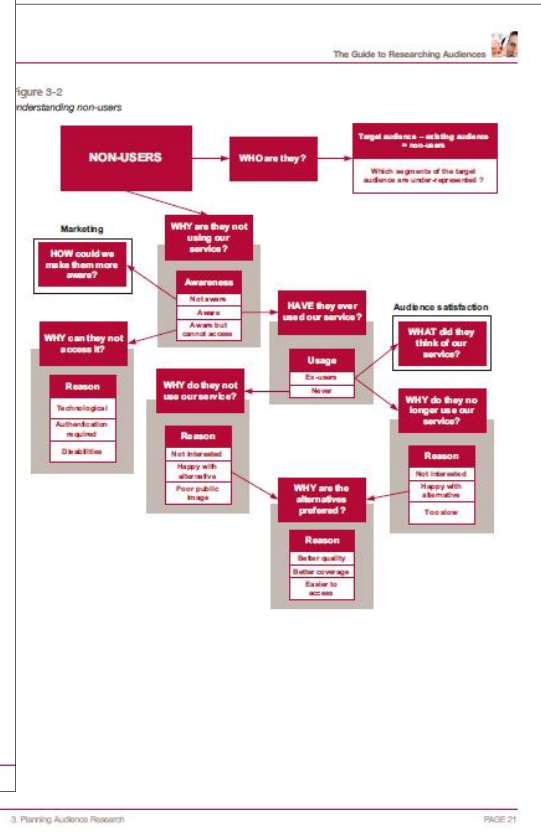
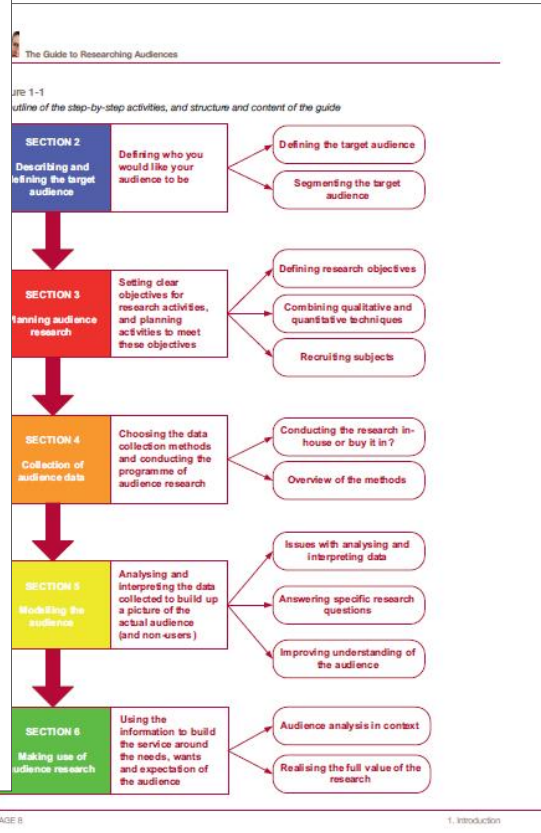
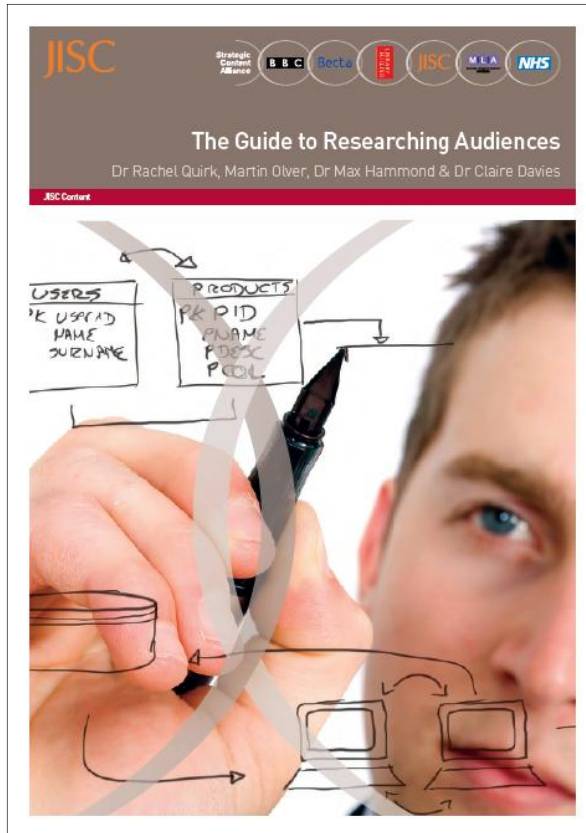


# Key points about user research

- At least consider what you *should* do, as well as what you *can*
  - Eg surveys of users are easy, but only tell you what current users think
- Research does not have to be perfect to be useful
  - It's for your benefit, not for academic publication
- No single method will give you the full picture
- Beware unsupported web analytics/“deep log analysis”
  - Without financial value of transactions, understanding success is hard

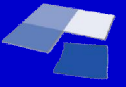


# What's next?

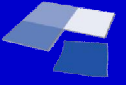


<http://sca.jiscinvolve.org/wp/audience-publications/>

# What's next?



Marketing research: 658.801



# Contact details

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+44 (0)77 8011 0671

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