

The `user-persona` Package

Structured User Persona Sheets for UX and HCI Documentation

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Abstract

The `user-persona` package provides a structured environment and command set for typesetting professional user persona sheets in \LaTeX . It is designed for User Experience (UX) researchers, Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) practitioners, and product designers who maintain documentation within a \LaTeX workflow. The package offers a flexible two-column layout with customizable content cards, semantic color coding, and inline labeling tools, all built on the `tcolorbox` framework.

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1 Introduction

1.1 What Is a User Persona?

A **user persona** is a fictitious but research-grounded representation of a target user group, synthesizing observed behaviors, goals, and frustrations into a named, humanized archetype [1]. Personas serve as design artifacts that keep real user needs visible throughout the product development lifecycle—from initial requirements gathering through to final evaluation [2].

Unlike demographic segments or use cases, personas are narrative constructs that provide designers and stakeholders with a shared vocabulary anchored in empirical user research [3]. They answer questions like: *Who is this for? What do they care about? What frustrates them?*

2 Quick Start

```
\documentclass{article}
\usepackage{user-persona}

\begin{document}

\begin{persona}{Alex Chen}
  \personaphoto{alex.jpg}
  \personaquote{‘‘I need tools that respect my time and my cognition
. ’’}

  \personafact{Age}{28}
  \personafact{Location}{Toronto, Canada}
  \personafact{Role}{Senior Software Engineer}

  \personasection{Goals}{PersonaGreen}{
    \item Ship features without burning out
    \item Maintain work-life boundaries
  }

  \personasection[right]{Pain Points}{PersonaRed}{
    \item Meeting fatigue
    \item Context-switching costs
  }
\end{persona}

\end{document}
```

This produces a two-column persona sheet with a portrait, quote, identity table, and color-coded goal/pain point cards.

3 Command Reference

3.1 The persona Environment

The main structural element:

```
\begin{persona}{Name}
  % commands go here
\end{persona}
```

Arguments:

- **Name:** The persona's name (appears in the header)

3.2 Identity Commands

3.2.1 `\personaphoto`

```
\personaphoto{path/to/image.jpg}
```

Sets the portrait image. If the file is not found, a placeholder box is rendered.

3.2.2 `\personaquote`

```
\personaquote{'Quote text here.'}
```

Sets a highlighted pull-quote in a yellow box at the top of the right column.

3.2.3 `\personafact`

```
\personafact{Key}{Value}
```

Adds a row to the identity table below the portrait.

Example:

```
\personafact{Age}{32}  
\personafact{Location}{Berlin, Germany}  
\personafact{Occupation}{UX Researcher}
```

3.3 Content Card Commands

3.3.1 `\personasection`

```
\personasection[position]{Title}{Color}{Items}
```

Creates a titled card with a bulleted list.

Arguments:

- **position** (optional): `left`, `right` (default), or `span`
- **Title:** Section heading (automatically uppercased)
- **Color:** Frame color (e.g., `PersonaGreen`, `PersonaRed`)
- **Items:** `\item` list content

Example:

```
\personasection{Motivations}{PersonaBlue}{  
  \item Solve real user problems  
  \item Work with talented teams  
  \item Continuous learning  
}
```

3.3.2 `\personacard`

```
\personacard[position]{Title}{Color}{Content}
```

Creates a titled card with arbitrary content (not just lists).

Example:

```
\personacard[left]{Bio}{PersonaGrey}{  
  Joined the company in 2023 after completing  
  a PhD in Human-Computer Interaction.  
}
```

3.3.3 `\personacontext`

```
\personacontext[position]{Title}{Content}
```

Shorthand for `\personacard` with `PersonaGrey` color (for contextual/supplementary information).

3.4 Inline Elements

3.4.1 `\personapill`

```
\personapill{Label Text}
```

Renders a rounded pill-shaped label (useful for tagging skills, tools, or attributes).

Example:

```
\personacard{Tools}{PersonaDark}{  
  \personapill{Figma}  
  \personapill{Notion}  
  \personapill{Miro}  
}
```

3.4.2 `\personabrand`

```
\personabrand[type]{content}
```

Renders an icon badge. Two modes:

- `[img]`: Display an image file
- `[fa]`: Display a FontAwesome icon

Examples:

```
\personabrand[img]{logos/slack.png}  
\personabrand[fa]{\faApple}  
\personabrand[fa]{\faLinux}
```

4 Color Scheme

The package defines five semantic colors:

Color Name	Hex	Suggested Use
PersonaDark	#354254	Header, dark cards
PersonaGreen	#5CA662	Goals, Core Needs
PersonaBlue	#5D86D6	Behaviors, Patterns
PersonaRed	#E26556	Pain Points, Frustrations
PersonaGrey	#8E94A0	Context, Supplementary Info

You can define custom colors using `xcolor`:

```
\definecolor{MyPurple}{HTML}{7D88B3}
\personasection{Custom Section}{MyPurple}{...}
```

5 Layout and Positioning

The `persona` environment produces a two-column layout:

- **Left column (35% width):** Portrait photo, identity table, and cards with `[left]` position
- **Right column (61% width):** Pull-quote and cards with `[right]` position (default)
- **Span cards:** Full-width cards below both columns using `[span]` position

Best practices:

- Use `[left]` for contextual/biographical info
- Use `[right]` for primary behavioral/motivational content
- Use `[span]` for accessibility requirements or extended narratives

6 Complete Example

See `user-persona-example.tex` (minimal) and `user-persona-detailed.tex` (comprehensive) in the package distribution for full working examples.

7 Troubleshooting

7.1 Missing Portrait Image

If `\personaphoto{path}` points to a nonexistent file, a gray placeholder box with an error message is rendered. Check your image path and ensure the file is in the correct location relative to your `.tex` file.

7.2 Font Warnings

If you see warnings about missing FontAwesome glyphs, ensure `fontawesome5` is installed:

```
tlmgr install fontawesome5
```

7.3 Color Not Defined

If you reference a color that doesn't exist, \LaTeX will throw an error. Either use one of the predefined colors (`PersonaDark`, `PersonaGreen`, etc.) or define your own with `\definecolor`.

8 Acknowledgments

Thanks to the `tcolorbox` maintainers for providing the layout framework, and to the broader \LaTeX community for feedback during development.

References

- [1] A. Cooper, *The Inmates Are Running the Asylum: Why High-Tech Products Drive Us Crazy and How to Restore the Sanity*. Sams Publishing, 1999.
- [2] J. Pruitt and T. Adlin, *The Persona Lifecycle: Keeping People in Mind Throughout Product Design*. Morgan Kaufmann, 2006. ISBN: 978-0-12-566251-2.
- [3] L. Nielsen, *Personas - User Focused Design*. Springer, 2019. [doi:10.1007/978-1-4471-7427-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4471-7427-1)
- [4] A. Holzinger, M. Kargl, B. Kipperer, P. Regitnig, M. Plass, and H. Müller, "Personas for Artificial Intelligence (AI): an Open Source Toolbox," *IEEE Access*, vol. 10, pp. 23732–23747, 2022. [doi:10.1109/ACCESS.2022.3154776](https://doi.org/10.1109/ACCESS.2022.3154776)