Using AI in UX Research

A general guide for what existing generative AI tools (like ChatGPT) can and cannot do well when assisting with UX Research tasks.

Research Tasks	AI Can...	AI Cannot...
Scoping a Research Project		
Generating research questions	Generate additional possible research questions	Turn research questions into testable hypotheses
Prioritizing research questions	Get ideas for existing prioritization frameworks	Accurately estimate risk or importance
Experiment Design & Planning		
Matching methods to research questions	Generate a list of possible research methods	Select the right method for the research question and context
Determining adequate sample size	Calculate sample size for common statistical tests when parameters are provided by the researcher	Reliably use the correct equations or make meaningful recommendations without calculations
Creating a research plan	Supply a template for the main sections and subsections of a plan	Create a research plan for a specific research project
Creating a recruiting plan and materials	Generate possibilities for screener questions and recruiting channels; supply first-draft copy for emails, ads, instructions, etc.	Create meaningful screener questions or final copy for recruiting efforts
Developing a qualitative guide	Generate a list of common, high-level questions ("breadth"); rephrase close-ended questions to open-ended	Anticipate possible probes or create specific questions ("depth"); prioritize or sequence questions; fix double-barreled or leading questions
Developing a qualitative survey	Generate additional related questions; provide ideas for rewording survey items	Produce simple, clear survey items; ensure each item addresses only one topic; estimate the time it takes to complete the survey

Research Tasks	AI Can...	AI Cannot...
Experiment Design & Planning, (cont'd)		
Developing a quantitative survey	Explore standardized questions and scales	Create custom quantitative survey items; produce survey questions in different writing styles for different populations; determine meaningful benchmarks
Designing a concept test	Review a list of standard steps in a concept test; generate high-level qualitative questions or survey question topics	Create a test that will focus on the value proposition without assessing specific implementation choices
Designing a usability test	Review a list of standard steps in a usability test; explore standardized questions and frameworks	Determine meaningful success criteria based on industry or user base; select or prioritize different usability measures; determine flows to test; estimate length of a test
Creating an observational protocol	Generate a first-draft observational protocol for common settings	Determine the best approach (participatory, structured, etc.) given the research questions; create hypotheses
Secondary Research		
Creating an expert/heuristic evaluation protocol	Generate a first-draft protocol; view templates for common heuristic evaluation frameworks	Determine the tasks or scope of the evaluation; create custom evaluation criteria based on user needs and business goals
Conducting desk research and literature reviews	Summarize long documents; aggregate publicly available sources	Pull only from credible sources or access proprietary sources; include recent sources; weigh sources in other languages equally
Conducting a competitive analysis	Start a list of well-established direct and indirect competitors; start a list of potential replacement competitors	Summarize up-to-date information on competitors; determine the most threatening competitor(s)
Analysis & Findings		
Creating a user persona or profile	Create a generic proto-persona; generate ideas for factors to include in a persona	Select meaningful factors to include in a persona; create an accurate, up-to-date persona

Research Tasks

AI Can...

AI Cannot...

Analysis & Findings, (cont'd)

Analyzing quantitative data	Suggest types of analyses; generate a first draft or template of R/Python scripts for a specified analysis; help decipher or debug an existing script; look up Excel functions; list the possible corrections or alternative analyses when statistical assumptions are violated	Identify when to make statistical corrections based on data sample size and distribution; compute statistics; avoid common mistakes in the data cleaning and analysis process; comply with data privacy standards
Analyzing qualitative data	Generate word frequency counts; create a list of possible themes to explore in the data; group similar responses for faster manual tagging or auditing of first-draft tags; generate a first draft script for NLP; search a dataset for a particular theme	Accurately categorize data if multiple contexts or points in time are referenced; accurately categorize sentiment when responses are nuanced; determine priority or impact of each theme; correctly interpret jargon, such as product names or feature names; avoid stereotyping when classifying data; comply with data privacy standards
Interpreting or reporting on findings	Generate ideas for how to visualize or explain findings	Determine the priority or sequence of information; communicate context-based implications or significance of results
Presenting findings	Condense information for slides or briefs; generate options for presentation outlines	Select meaningful visualizations to highlight the most important information; determine appropriate sequence of information beyond a high-level outline
Determining next steps	Supply generic ideas for taking action on findings	Determine reasonable next steps accounting for business context and impact