

UX Professionals' Trust in AI for UX Research

*Examining Trust in AI Across UX Research Activities and the
Need for Human Oversight*

Research Plan



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Background

Generative AI is increasingly used in UX research workflows to draft research materials, summarize findings, and support analysis. However, questions remain about which activities UX professionals trust AI to assist with, where that trust decreases, and how much human review AI-generated work requires.

Recent research reviewed by Nielsen (2026) found that approximately 25% of AI-supported fact-finding answers misreported or fabricated numerical information even though the correct values were available in the underlying database. Nielsen also emphasized the importance of reporting counts and distributions for quantitative findings rather than relying on averages alone.

These findings reinforce the need to understand not simply whether UX professionals use AI, but **which research activities they trust AI to assist with, where that trust decreases, and how much human oversight they believe is necessary.**

Study Objectives

The objective of this study is to understand how UX professionals use and trust generative AI for UX research activities.

Specifically, the study will examine:

- Which UX research activities professionals trust AI to help with.
- Which UX research activities professionals trust AI with the least.
- Whether trust differs across different types of research activities.
- Whether trust varies based on professional role or years of UX/research experience.
- How much human review professionals believe AI-generated UX research work requires.
- How comfortable professionals are presenting AI-generated research findings after reviewing the work themselves.
- Whether professionals have encountered errors or unsupported conclusions in AI-generated UX research work.

Research Question

Which UX research activities do practitioners trust AI to perform, and where does that trust break down?

Study Design

An online survey will be conducted with UX professionals and others who conduct UX research.

The survey contains 10 questions combining multiple-choice, rating-scale, multiple-selection, and open-ended questions.

Participants will provide information about their professional background and AI usage and rate their trust in AI across different UX research activities.

Study Prompt

Analyze the attached spreadsheet exactly as provided. Do not change, clean, standardize, recode, or reinterpret any responses.

For each survey question, calculate the count and percentage for every response. For questions allowing multiple selections, calculate how many respondents selected each option and the percentage of respondents selecting it. For rating questions, report the count and percentage for each rating and calculate appropriate descriptive statistics.

Show all calculations clearly enough to verify. If any value or label is unclear or inconsistent, identify it and ask for clarification. Do not guess, correct it, or exclude it. Do not make assumptions beyond the data.

Participants

The survey is intended for UX professionals and others who conduct UX research.

Participant characteristics collected will include:

- Primary role
- Years of professional UX/research experience
- Frequency of generative AI use for UX research-related work
- AI tools used for UX research work

Survey Measures

Participants will rate how much they trust AI to help with nine UX research activities using a 5-point scale from Not at all to Completely:

- Developing research questions
- Creating participant screeners
- Developing usability test tasks
- Analyzing qualitative research data
- Analyzing quantitative research data
- Identifying patterns across research findings
- Drawing conclusions from research
- Developing recommendations
- Creating stakeholder summaries/reports

The survey will measure:

- Perceived amount of human review required for AI-generated UX research work
- Comfort presenting AI-generated research findings to stakeholders after personally reviewing the work
- Whether participants have encountered errors or unsupported conclusions in AI-generated UX research work

- Which UX research activity participants trust AI with the most and why
- Which UX research activity participants trust AI with the least and why

Data Collection

The survey will be conducted using Google Forms.

Participants will be recruited through LinkedIn and professional contacts.

Participation is voluntary, and no paid recruiting platform or participant incentives will be used.

Data Analysis

Quantitative survey responses will be analyzed using:

- Counts and percentages for each closed-ended question
- Trust-rating distributions for each UX research activity
- Means and medians, reported with counts and distributions rather than used alone
- Rankings of UX research activities from most trusted to least trusted
- Open-ended responses will be analyzed to identify common reasons participants give for trusting or distrusting AI for particular UX research activities.

Descriptive Analysis

Include counts, percentages, trust-rating summaries, rankings, and open-ended coding.

Planned Inferential Analysis

- Friedman
- Wilcoxon
- Kruskal–Wallis
- Spearman
- Fisher's exact/chi-square, effect sizes, and adjusted p-values

Consistent with Nielsen's recommendation, quantitative findings will be reported with **counts and distributions rather than averages alone**.

Limitations

The study will use a convenience sample recruited primarily through LinkedIn and professional contacts.

Results will represent the experiences and perceptions of survey respondents and will not be generalized to all UX professionals.

The study will measure participants' **self-reported trust and experiences with AI** rather than directly evaluating the accuracy of AI-generated research work.

Study Extension: Dovetail and Perplexity

The study was extended to evaluate Dovetail and Perplexity using the same survey dataset and prompt used for the original four AI tools. Both tools' outputs were compared with the researcher's verified analysis to assess counting accuracy and the grouping and counting of ideas in written responses. Results are presented in a separate deck. Additional statistical analyses generated by these tools were not evaluated.

References

Nielsen, J. (2026, August 14). UX Roundup: Hedonic Adaptation | Knowledge Worker AI. UX Tigers.
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