Appendix B: Personas

The Abby Persona

Abby (Abigail) Jones[1]

- **28 years old**
- **Employed as an Accountant**
- **Lives in Cardiff, Wales**

When Abby drives to work in the mornings, she listens to her favorite music. She likes a variety of music, and adds to her music collection often. When she arrives at work, she scans all her emails first to get an overall picture before answering any of them. (This extra pass takes time but seems worth it.) Some nights she goes to yoga classes and plays computer puzzle games.

Background knowledge and skills

- Abby works as an accountant in a consulting firm. She just moved to this employer 1 week ago, and their software systems are new to her. She describes herself as a "numbers person". She is not a professional programmer but she writes and edits spreadsheet formulas in her work.
- Abby has a degree in accounting, so she knows plenty of Math and knows how to think in terms of numbers. She's never taken any computer programming or IT systems classes.
- Even though she's an accountant and deals with numbers all day at work, she enjoys working with numbers and logic in her free time, too. She especially likes working puzzles, either on paper or on the computer, such as Sudoku and other puzzle games.

Motivations and Strategies

- *Motivations*: Abby is proficient with the technologies she uses. She learns new technologies when she needs to, but she doesn't spend her free time exploring technology or exploring obscure functionality of programs and devices that she uses. When Abby uses computers to problem-solve, she has little desire to learn new functions, or to search for information on them. She tries to use methods she is already familiar and comfortable with to achieve her goals.
- *Information Processing Style:* Abby leans towards a *comprehensive information processing style* when she needs to gather information to problem-solve. That is, before following any option that seems promising, she first gathers information comprehensively to try to form a complete understanding of the problem before trying to solve it. Thus, her style is "burst-y"; first she reads a lot, then she acts on it in a batch of activity.

Attitude to Technology

Abby is generally comfortable using familiar technology, but she does not get a big kick out of obtaining the latest gadgets or learning how to use them. She prefers to stay with the technologies for which she has already mastered the peculiarities.

- *Computer Self-Efficacy*: Abby has low computer self-efficacy, meaning that she has low self-confidence in performing computing tasks other than the ones she is familiar with. This has a variety of impacts on how she uses software. For example, she is not confident that she can learn to use new features and, as self-efficacy theory explains, she often gives up if she runs into challenges. Software with usability problems poses more challenges to her than it does to more confident users, and she often blames herself for problems that she encounters.
- *Attitude toward Risk:* Abby is risk averse when she uses computers to perform tasks. When confronted with new software features, Abby worries that she will spend time on them and not get any benefits from doing so. She tries to perform tasks "the safe" (ie, familiar) way, even if the less familiar features might promise a more direct solution.
- *Willingness to Explore and Tinker*: Abby doesn't particularly like tinkering with software (ie, just trying out new features or commands to see what they do) when she uses software in her work tasks. Instead, she prefers following step-by-step tutorials and wizards. (However, when she does tinker, it has positive effects on her understanding of the software.) When software features/commands cause problems for her, she tends to blame herself and, if she can, she then just avoids those troublesome features/commands. She then uses work-arounds that involve using only features/commands she is familiar with already.

[1] Abby represents users with facet values similar to hers. For data on females (and males) similar to and different from Abby, see http://eusesconsortium.org/gender/gender.php