# Your user needs are crap!

*(and so were mine)*

## Ten ways to improve user needs

Patrick Sansom, Senior User Researcher

# Purpose of user research and it's outputs

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# Purpose of user research

- Relevant
- Clear purpose
- Defined scope

# Purpose of user research

> Help business and designers make decisions

# Purpose of user research artefacts

Useful

Easy to comprehend

Actionable

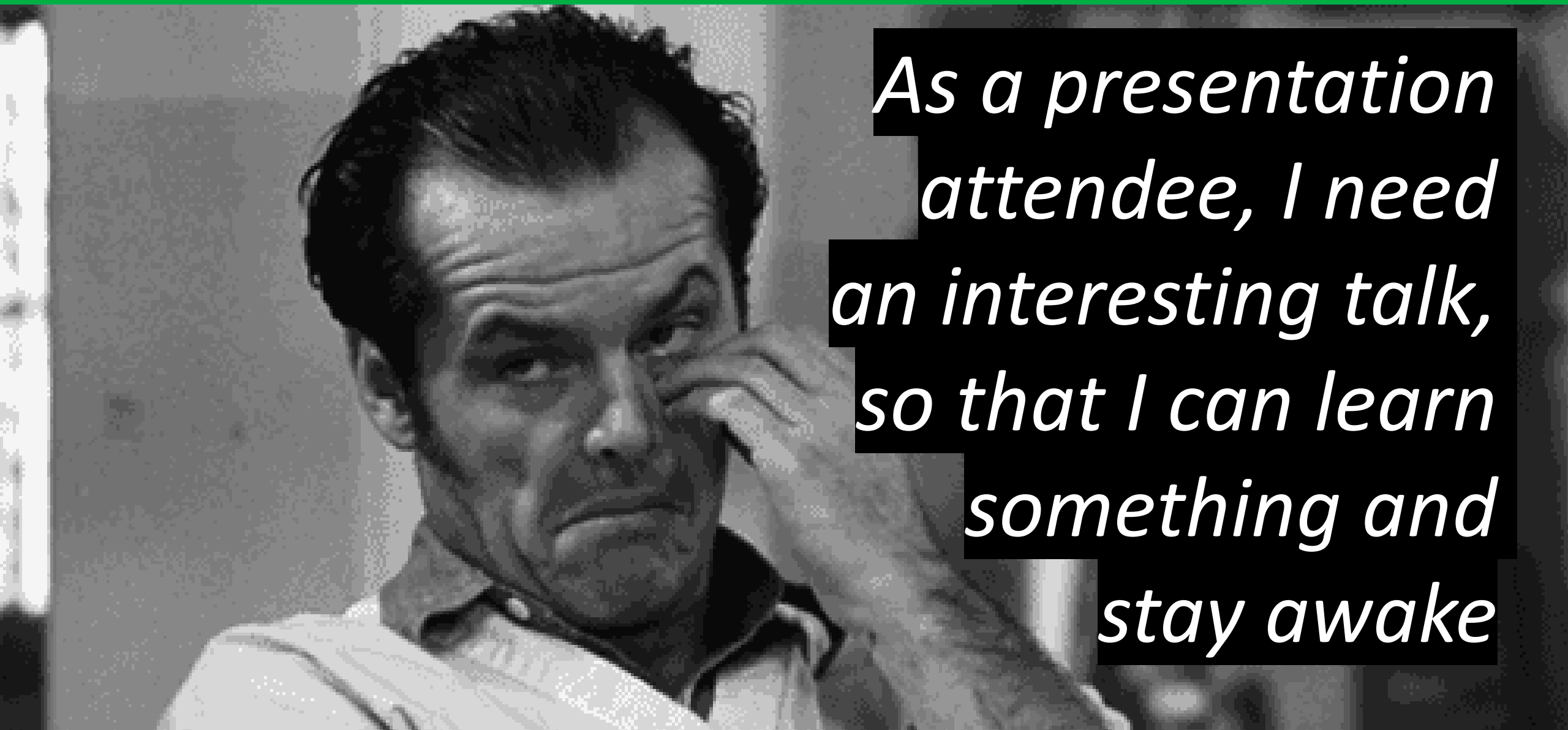
# Purpose of user research artefacts

- User needs

# Example user need

> As a [user type], I need X, so that I can Y

# Example user need



*As a presentation attendee, I need an interesting talk, so that I can learn something and stay awake*

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# Issues with user needs

# Issues with user needs

> User need ≠ user story

# Issues with user needs

> Inappropriate way to capture findings

# Issues with user needs

Badly structured

Capture information ineffectively

# Issues with user needs

## 'Bad' need

> As a parent of a child in their last year of primary school, I need to complete the admissions form so that my child has a place at secondary school.

Source: Future Learn course

# Issues with user needs

## Better need

> I need to find out everything I must do to apply for a secondary school for my child, so we able to secure a place for them.

Source: Future Learn course

# Ten ways user needs could be improved

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# Problematic user needs

**Issue 1**

> General requirement, rather than a specific user need

# Problematic user needs: example

*As a presentation attendee, I need to be able see the presentation, so that I follow along with what is being said*

# How they could be improved

**Issue 1** General requirement, rather than a specific user need

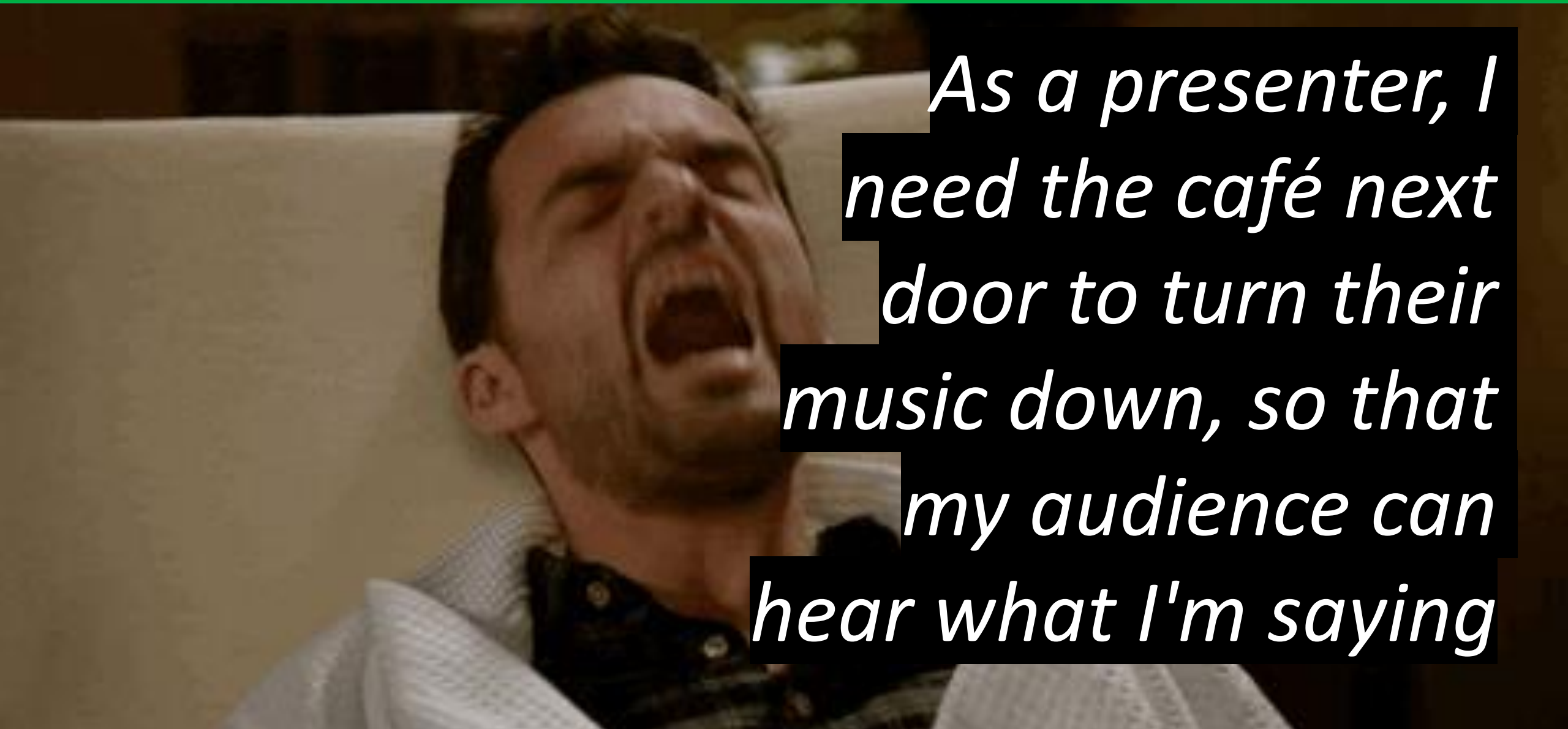
> Prioritised log of general user requirements, or principles

# Problematic user needs

**Issue 2**

> Pain point,
> not a user need

# Problematic user needs: example



# How they could be improved

**Issue 2** Pain point, not a user need

> Prioritised log of pain points

# Problematic user needs

## Issue 3

> References to tech, processes, etc.

# Problematic user needs: example

*As a presenter,*
*I need a parallel connector and cable,*
*so that I can connect to the high-tech green screen VDU*

# How they could be improved

**Issue 3** References to tech, processes, etc.

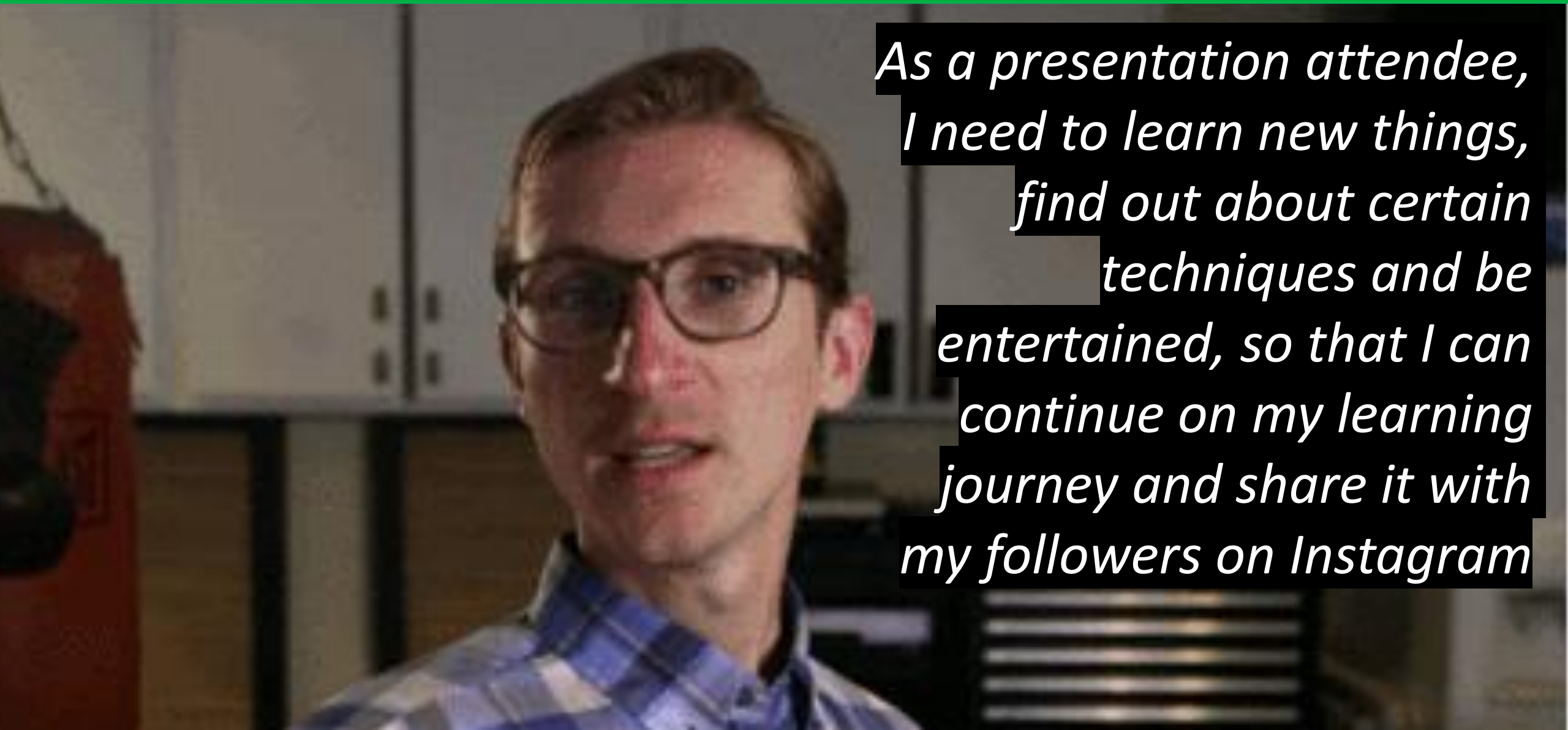
> Identify the underlying need and/or pain point

# Problematic user needs

## Issue 4

> Overly verbose

# Problematic user needs: example



*As a presentation attendee, I need to learn new things, find out about certain techniques and be entertained, so that I can continue on my learning journey and share it with my followers on Instagram*

# How they could be improved

**Issue 4** Overly verbose

> Refine verbose needs so they are concise

# Problematic user needs

## Issue 5

> Too specific

# Problematic user needs: example

*As a presenter, I need to be able to advance slides by using the enter key, so that I can move through a presentation in my own way*

# How they could be improved

**Issue 5** Too specific

> Capture the essential need

# Problematic user needs

## Issue 6

> Too ambiguous

# Problematic user needs: example

*As a presenter,*
*I need to be able*
*to present, so that I*
*can do it*

# How they could be improved

**Issue 6** Too ambiguous

> Refine wording until it is clear

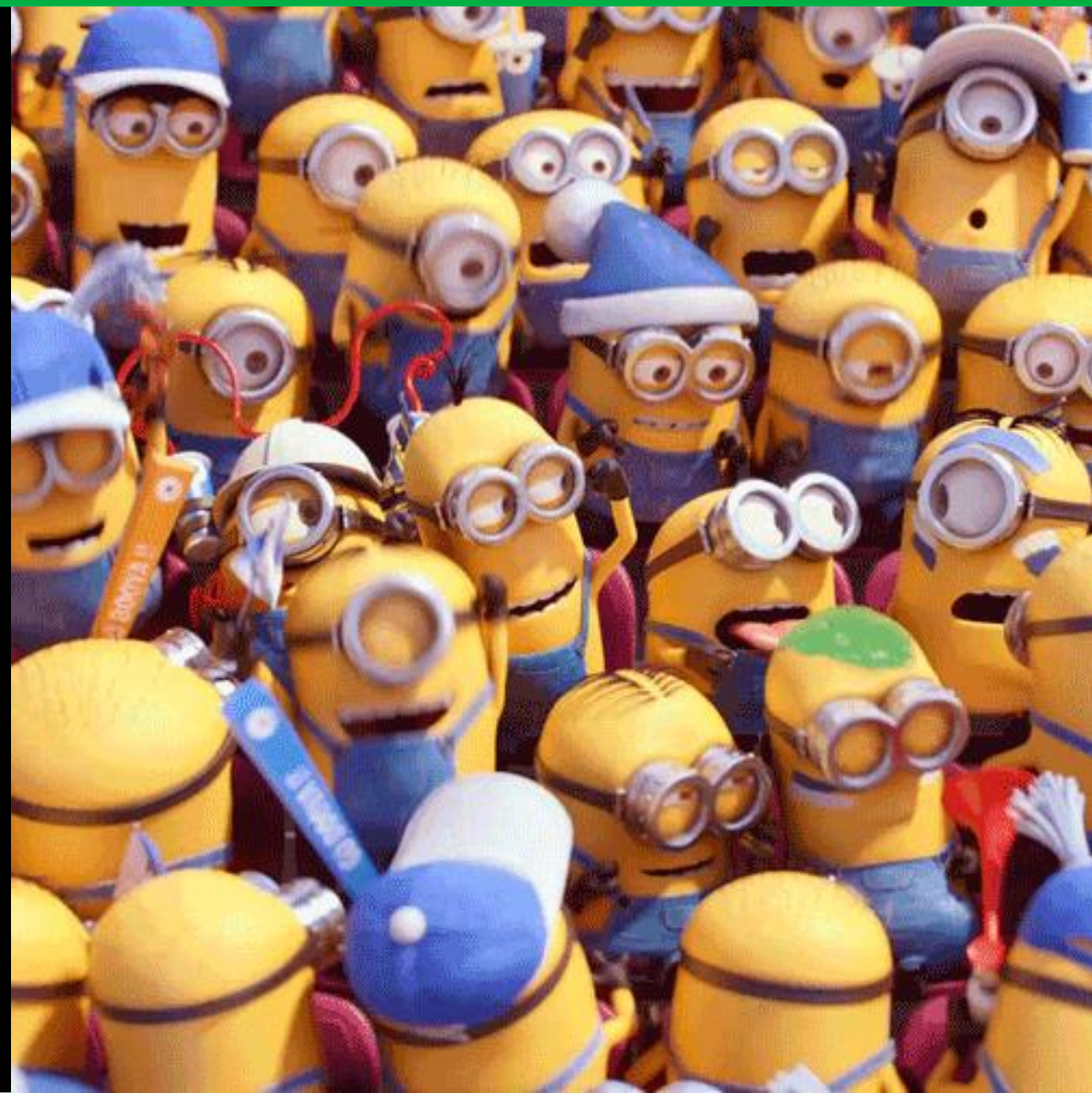
# Problematic user needs

**Issue 7**

> Multiple user types on one need

# Problematic user needs: example

*As a presenter, presentation attendee, event organiser or venue owner, I need a clear agenda for the session, so that I can plan my time accordingly*



# How they could be improved

**Issue 7** Multiple user types on one need

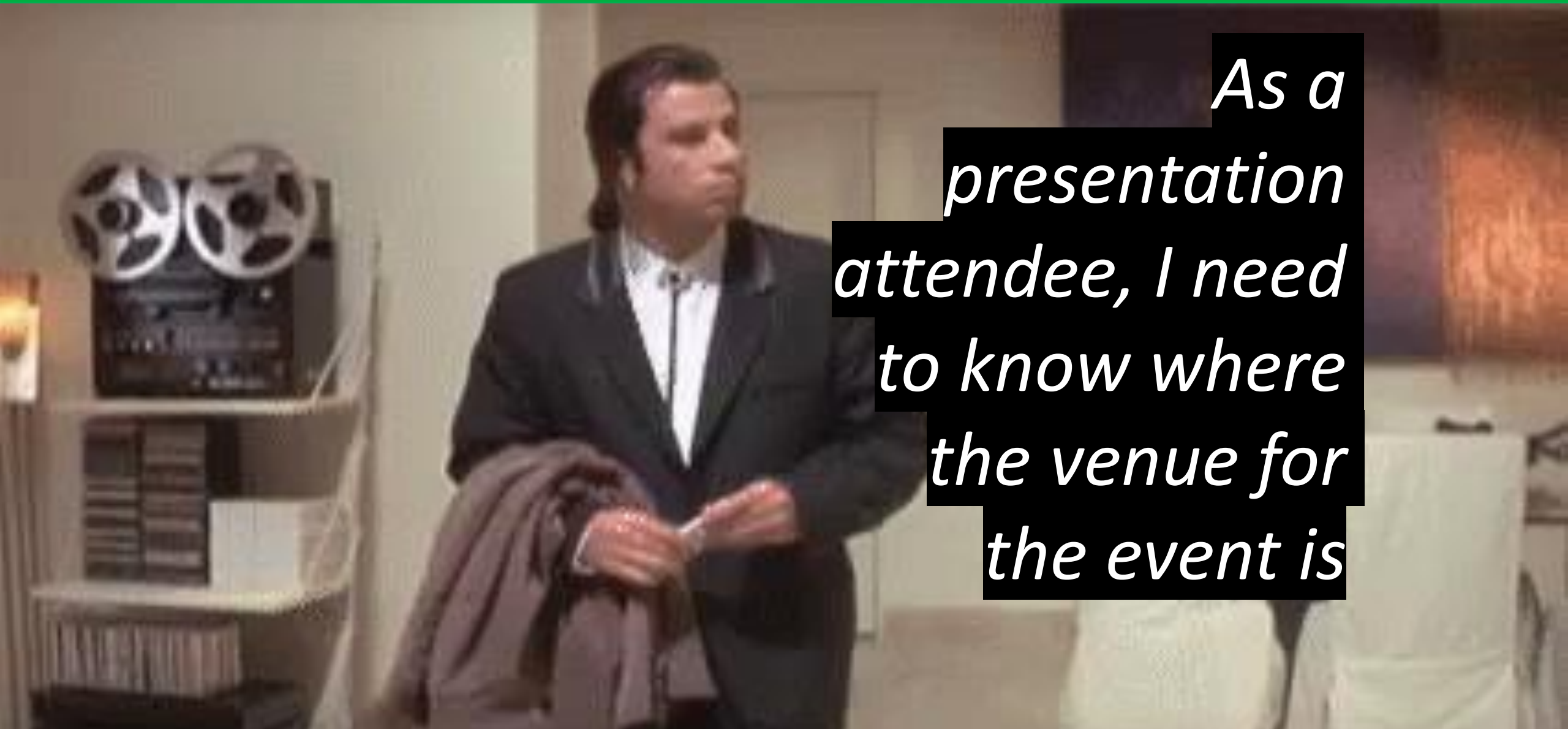
> Review your set of needs and user segmentation

# Problematic user needs

## Issue 8

> Missing 'so that' statement

# Problematic user needs: example



# How they could be improved

**Issue 8** Missing 'so that' part

> There is always a reason why a user has a need

# Problematic user needs

## Issue 9

> No links to sources

# Problematic user needs: example

*As a presenter,*
*I need an adoring audience, so that I can feel the love*

*Source: Discovery research summary*

# How they could be improved

**Issue 9** No link to sources

> Provide details on the needs' provenance

# Problematic user needs

## Issue 10

> No supporting information or context

I'm gonna need more context.

# How they could be improved

**Issue 10** No supporting information or context

> Collate supporting information

# How they could be improved

**Issue 10** No supporting information or context

> Plot needs against the as-is user journey map

# How they could be improved

**Issue 10** No supporting information or context

> Create user insight themes

# User needs checklist: issues and solutions

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | General requirement, not a user need | *Prioritised log of general user requirements* |
| 2 | Pain point, not a user need | *Prioritised log of pain points* |
| 3 | References to tech, processes, etc. | *Identify the underlying need and/or pain point* |
| 4 | Overly verbose | *Refine verbose needs so they are concise* |
| 5 | Too specific | *Capture the essential need* |
| 6 | Too ambiguous | *Refine wording until it is clear* |
| 7 | Multiple user types on one need | *Review your set of needs and user segmentation* |
| 8 | Missing 'so that' statement | *There is always a reason why a user has a need* |
| 9 | No links to sources | *Provide details on the needs' provenance* |
| 10 | No supporting information or context | *Collate supporting information* |
| | | *Plot needs against the as-is user journey map* |
| | | *Create user insight themes* |

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# Bad User Needs Bingo!

# Bad user needs bingo card

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Too ambiguous** | **Overly verbose** | **Multiple user types on one need** | **Pain point, not a user need** |
| **References to tech, processes, etc.** | **Missing 'so that' statement** | **Too specific** | **General requirement, not a specific user need** |

# User needs bingo!

> As a scrapyard manager, I need to be certified as scrap metal dealer

# User needs bingo!

> As an arable farmer, I need regular updates on my DEFRA applications, so that I can plan my planting schedule

# User needs bingo!

> As a guitarist in a live band, I need the PA not to regularly cause feedback, so that I can play the songs as intended

# User needs bingo!

> As a traffic warden, I need to know the specific parking restrictions on a road, so that can enforce the parking regulations if required

# User needs bingo!

> As an ice cream van driver, I need to know where I am allowed to play my jingles, so that can encourage customers to buy my ice cream

# User needs bingo!

> As a call centre adviser, I need our computer systems to be usable, so that I can carry-out my work effectively

# User needs bingo!

> As an on-call GP, I need the online booking system to have the data, so that appointments are right

# User needs bingo!

> As an impulsive shoe buyer, I need the shoe website to show me relevant recommendations, so that I can quickly make a purchase

# User needs bingo!

> As a court clerk, usher, legal adviser or listing officer, I need access to the daily court hearings, so that I can carry-out my tasks

# User needs bingo!

> As a sales representative for a pharmaceutical company, I need lots of data and graphs and information that I can share with my healthcare professional customers, so that I can convince them that the drug we're selling is better, more efficacious and has less side-affects than our competitors in the same market vertical

# User needs bingo!

> As an accountant for multiple Limited Companies, I need access to their corporation tax data, so I can manage their tax affairs correctly

# User needs bingo!

> As a BBC online journalist,
> I need to be able to add information about chickens,
> so that this information is included

# User needs bingo!

> As an HGV driver crossing borders, I need the HFNS system to connect with the YMKJ database, so I have the correct data to present to officials

That's a bingo!

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# Answers

# User needs bingo!

## Missing ‘so that’ statement

> As a scrapyard manager, I need to be certified as scrap metal dealer

# User needs bingo!

## ‘Good’ need

> As an arable farmer, I need regular updates on my DEFRA applications, so that I can plan my planting schedule

# User needs bingo!

## Pain point, not a need

> As a guitarist in a live band, I need the PA not to regularly cause feedback, so that I can play the songs as intended

# User needs bingo!

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## Multiple user types on one need

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# User needs bingo!

## ‘Good’ need

> As an accountant for multiple Limited Companies, I need access to their corporation tax data, so I can manage their tax affairs correctly

# User needs bingo!

## Too specific

> As a BBC online journalist,
> I need to be able to add information about chickens,
> so that this information is included

# User needs bingo!

**References to tech, processes, etc.**

> As an HGV driver crossing borders, I need the HFNS system to connect with the YMKJ database, so I have the correct data to present to officials

Questions or observations ?

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