



STRUCTURING INFORMATION

Card-Sort Kit

Discover how users expect your content to be grouped

Use this when	Designing or validating site structure
Time needed	20–30 min per participant
Who's involved	5–8 participants, one at a time
You'll end up with	Evidence-based groupings and labels

How to use this kit

A card sort reveals how your users — not you — expect content to be grouped. You write each piece of content on a card, then ask people to sort the cards into groups that make sense to them. It's the single most useful exercise for getting information architecture right.

Open vs. closed

- **Open sort** — participants group the cards however they like and name the groups themselves. Best for discovering structure from scratch.
- **Closed sort** — you provide the group names; participants just file cards into them. Best for validating a structure you already have.

Run it in five steps

1. Write one content item per card on the sheet that follows, then print and cut them out.
2. Give the cards to a participant (5–8 people gives you reliable patterns).
3. Ask them to group cards that belong together, thinking aloud as they go.
4. For an open sort, have them name each group on a blank group card.
5. Record the groups and which cards went where on the recording sheet.

What to look for

- Cards that almost everyone groups the same way — those are your natural sections.
- Cards that land all over the place — these are ambiguous and may need clearer labels.
- The names people give groups — borrow their language for your navigation labels.

Content cards — cut these out

Write one content item in each card, then print this page and cut along the dashed lines. Add more pages if you need additional cards.

01	02	03
04	05	06
07	08	09
10	11	12
13	14	15
16	17	18
19	20	21
22	23	24

Group cards (for open sorts)

Participants write the name of each group they create on one of these.

Group 01	Group 02
Group 03	Group 04
Group 05	Group 06
Group 07	Group 08

Recording sheet

One row per group a participant made. Note the participant so you can compare across people.

Participant	Group name they used	Cards they placed in it