

# The 2023 UXR Software Landscape

## A Traveler's Guide





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Welcome, traveler! So glad you've decided to join us on this guided tour of the Realm of User Research.

Be aware—this trip is not for the faint of heart! It involves 5 months of travel (about 25 minutes in real-world time) across thunderous peaks, sand swept dunes, humid swamplands, and serpent-infested waters. Occasional pub and coffee stops will be made along the way.

For each region of the map (there are five, corresponding to broad category buckets), you'll find a narrative guide to the landscape and its landmarks. You will also find a summary of changes to categories and definitions since last year's edition.

If you're ready, put on your best walking boots and let's get started!

 [Return to the map](#)

# UXR Software Categories and Where to Find Them



## Insight Management

- A** Research Repository | Archivale
- B** AI Meeting Assistant | Little Scribewick
- C** Combined Analytics | Toil & Trouble Turnpike
- D** Note Taking | Notetaking Knoll
- E** Quantitative Analysis | Merlin's Mines
- F** Transcription | Transcriptionshire
- G** AI Text Analysis | New Kenning
- H** Conversational AI | The Crow & Query
- I** Qualitative Analysis | The Great Understanding



## Recruiting & Panel Management

- J** Research CRM | Wisewood
- K** Document Signing | Old Grafo's Grove
- L** Scheduling | Chronos Cove
- M** Incentives | Elysian Fields
- N** Participant Panel | The Grotto



## Visual Thinking & Design

- O** Whiteboards & Flowcharts | Storms Head
- P** Prototyping & Design | Prototyping Prefecture
- Q** Data Visualization | Garden of the Hanging Moon



## Ongoing Insight Collection

- R** Feedback Inbox | The Granary
- S** Automated Feedback | The Floodlands
- T** A/B Testing | Twin Marshes
- U** Behavioral Analytics | Pearl Isle
- V** Predictive Insights | The Foretold Path



## Active Research

- W** Specialized Studies | Autonomous Emirates
- W<sub>1</sub>** Biometric Studies | House of the Albasar
- W<sub>2</sub>** Diary Studies & Ethnography | The Travelers
- W<sub>3</sub>** Playtesting | Falcon Ridge
- X** Usability Testing | Ancient and Unwavering River of Everflowing Insights (AUREI)
- X<sub>1</sub>** Beta Testing | settlement
- X<sub>2</sub>** Click-to-Comment Feedback | settlement
- Y** Interviews & Discussions | Great Chisme
- Z** Surveys | Surveylands





## The Pastoral Grand Duchy of Insight Management

Let us start our journey in the southern end of the Grand Duchy of Insight Management, in the hallowed halls of **ARCHIVALE (🎓 RESEARCH REPOSITORY, A)**. This prestigious center of learning houses scholars from around the realm, who come to consult its artifacts and records.

From here, we travel east through a woodland-bounded valley, to **LITTLE SCRIBEWICK (🔥 AI MEETING ASSISTANT, B)**, where some upstart scribal monks from the Order of Notetakers have recently established themselves. A small abbey is currently under construction and the stonemasons' work has left a fine layer of dust about the place; the dust clings to our cloaks as we pass.

The rest of the Order of Notetakers reside just a little further on. But first, we must pay our toll. Two friendly witches—Meg and Peg—guard the onramp to the **TOIL & TROUBLE TURNPIKE (🧙 COMBINED ANALYTICS, C)**.



From every traveler the pair demands a user insight, which is then added to their bubbling cauldron.



Dues paid, we can continue on past rolling pastures filled with grazing sheep, to the monastery at **NOTETAKING KNOLL** (🏰 **NOTE TAKING, D**).

This is the home of the Notetakers, an order of monks long famed for their wool production and their excellent penmanship.



When asked about the breakaway abbey at Little Scribewick, the abbot is gracious—"there's more than one way to illuminate a manuscript," she says.

Back on the road, we head north, passing **MERLIN'S MINES** (🏔️ **QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS, E**) as we go. For centuries, these tunnels have supplied the people of the Grand Duchy with precious gems and the pale stone slabs used in construction around the region. It is believed that the mines' seemingly endless productivity is owed to a magician's spell—thus the fanciful name for a place of heavy industry.

On our left, we see field after field of fresh-tilled earth, signaling our arrival in **TRANSCRIPTIONSHIRE** (🌳 **TRANSCRIPTION, F**). This hamlet is presided over by an ancient oak tree, its bark engraved with the initials of hundreds of disrespectful youths and careless lovers. In the springtime, the villagers tie ribbons in its branches and call it May Queen.

The villagers tell us of a traveler's inn to the west, where we can rest our feet. Continuing in that direction, we come across a mysterious, magical portal. This is **New Kenning** (💡 **AI Text Analysis, G**). According to the locals, the portal appeared suddenly one winter day, and has been growing steadily ever since. We admire this strange and promising new presence in the land before guiding our horses onward.

Just before nightfall, we reach **THE CROW & QUERY** (🍺 **CONVERSATIONAL AI, H**). Inside this thatch-roofed inn, we find a cozy tavern where travelers from distant corners have gathered around the fire for conversation over fresh brewed ale and mutton pies. We take rooms upstairs and tuck in for the night.

Having watered our horses and eaten well, we resume our journey in the morning. We head southward, to the ancient stone circle of **THE GREAT UNDERSTANDING** (🪦 **QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS, I**).



Erected long ago by a forgotten people (or fairies, as the locals claim), the stone circle now serves as an esoteric satellite campus for the Archivale.

From our present location we can see two great manor houses situated in the center of this region. These are the ancestral homes of two great rival families, **GOOGLE WORKSPACE** and **MICROSOFT 365**. Their banners bear images of the 🐉 G Dragon and 🦖 Megalodon 365, respectively, in honor of the fearsome beasts that terrorized the Southern Sea in last year's map, before they were slain and their skins brought back as trophies to the Grand Duchy heartlands.

We conclude our exploration of the Grand Duchy of Insight Management by returning to Archivale, where we board a merchant vessel to the **HIGH KINGDOM OF RECRUITING AND PANEL MANAGEMENT**.

## What's changed since 2022

### 1. New AI tools for Analysis and Note Taking:

**AI MEETING ASSISTANT** – A subcategory of Note Taking (with elements of Transcription). The creation of a new category was warranted by the proliferation of such tools in the wake of AI developments.

**AI TEXT ANALYSIS** – A subcategory of Qualitative Analysis. Like AI Meeting Assistant, this category was created in response to an explosion of AI-powered tools over the last year.

**CONVERSATIONAL AI** – According to our [AI in UX Research Survey](#), 51% of researchers use ChatGPT as part of their research. We felt this tool—and others in this space—deserved its own place on the UX Research Tools Map.

### 2. Separate categories for Quant and Qual Analysis

In previous years, we had a [single category for Analysis](#). This year, we split Analysis into two categories to better represent the use cases of relevant tools and the sometimes vastly different needs of quant and qual researchers.

### 3. A new category for Combined Analytics

These tools are different from Behavioral Analytics in that their core value lies in consolidating, synthesizing, and enabling analysis of user data and feedback from a variety of sources.

Note that our scope does not include very robust BI or CX solutions which are not intended for a UX research use case, although some researchers might leverage these if they are already in use elsewhere in the org.





## The Sun-Kissed High Kingdom of Recruiting and Panel Management

After an uneventful voyage (we passed one sea serpent, but she was friendly) the ship drops us near the **WISEWOOD (🌲 RESEARCH CRM, J)** in the northwest corner of the High Kingdom of Recruiting and Panel Management.



We climb the rocky hill to its top, where a great oracle sits, flanked by cypress trees and graced by a constant gentle breeze.

From this hill, we can see across High Kingdom—from the sandy shores on the east to the golden fields in the south. In the center of this pleasant region, there is a five-cornered crossroads in the shape of a great starfish. It is here that we find the High Seat, the ancestral demesne of 🏰 **USER INTERVIEWS**, whose reach extends from one end of the Kingdom to the other.

The High Seat is visible as we journey along the sea road toward the eastern shore. On our way, we pass through **OLD GRAFO'S GROVE (🌿 DOCUMENT SIGNING, K)** with its rows of ancient, twisty olive trees. The grove has stood for centuries; once, it belonged to a man named Grafo and has been so-called ever since.



Through the grove, past Grafo's Manor and down to the shore we go, lured by the hypnotic song of the sirens in the distance. Since we wisely brought ear plugs for the occasion, we carry on safely down the beach. Named **CHRONOS COVE** (🌊 **SCHEDULING, L**) for its association with the god of time, this stretch of coastline was sometimes called "the Sands of Time" by the ancient poets.

After a refreshing swim, we continue south. And in the fading light of day, we come upon the **ELYSIAN FIELDS** (🌾 **INCENTIVES, M**). The name of this place was mistranscribed by previous cartographers as "Fields of Gold."



But we won't fault them for the mistake—these swaying fields of wheat are indeed eternally golden and—thanks to a goddess's blessing—have never failed to produce an abundant harvest in 800 years of seeding and sowing.

Resisting the urge to rest among the honey-colored grasses, nudge our horses onward.

Our last stop in the High Kingdom is **THE GROTTTO** (🏰 **PARTICIPANT PANEL, N**). The high walls of these fabled limestone caverns dance with the reflection of its moon- or sunlit waters. Known to the ancients by various names such as the Promethean Pool or Koios Cavern, The Grotto is a source of continuous wonder and worship.

Feeling restored from our sojourn in this pleasant, sun-drenched corner of the world, we continue on foot to the **PROVINCE OF VISUAL THINKING AND DESIGN**.

## What's changed since 2022

Most of the changes in this region boil down to clumsy mistranslation by previous scribes unfamiliar with the local tongue (e.g. “Fields of Gold” for “Elysian Fields”). These translations have since been updated, though the categories themselves remain largely unchanged.

But there is one new addition:

### 1. A new category for Document Signing

Did you know that User Interviews offers document signing as part of our suite of top-rated recruiting and panel management tools?

Well, we do (we also offer automated scheduling and incentives, for that matter) and we figured it was time for our annual map to reflect the fact that collecting participant signatures is a frequent and important step in the UX research process.





## The Mythical Province of Visual Thinking and Design

Somewhere along the way, the sunshine and gentle breezes of the High Kingdom begin to give way to the Province of Visual Thinking and Design's soaring mountains and clouded skies.

This change in terrain is dramatically illustrated by our first stop in the region: the cloud-covered peaks of **STORMS HEAD (☁ WHITEBOARDS & FLOWCHARTS, O)**. Above a halo of fluffy clouds, a small but revered monastery sits perched atop the mountain.



We rest here for the night, and are awoken the next day at dawn by the sounds of monks at their prayers. Heading down the mountain again, our descent is marked by the omnipresent rumbling of thunder and the occasional tiger roar (confusing the two sounds is an easy but fatal mistake).

As we make our way through a dense sea of bamboo, we are joined on the road by a trio of merchants heading to **PROTOTYPING PREFECTURE (🔥 PROTOTYPING & DESIGN, P)**.

Here we find villages clinging to misty mountain sides; small in size, but rich in tradition, these villages are famed for their rosewood teahouses. Their paper lanterns lead us through the mists like so many will-o-the-wisps.

We have been forewarned that the rest of our journey involves thick jungles and desert sands—both terrains unsuitable to horses. The traveling merchants are happy to take them off our hands.

So onward we go—on foot, across a painted bridge—to the **GARDEN OF THE HANGING MOON** (🌸 **DATA VISUALIZATION, Q**).



A yawning, circular moon gate marks the entrance to this tranquil garden—built by an empress as a gift for her favorite wife—notable for the winged pagoda that floats in the center of the reflective lotus pond which gives the place its name.

Reluctantly, we leave this tranquil garden to arrange passage on a small fishing boat toward the southern **ARCHIPELAGO OF ONGOING INSIGHT COLLECTION**.



## What's changed since 2022

Last year, this region was located on the western side of the map. Its present location was home to the ruined Imperial City of End-to-End Platforms (more on that later). The same mysterious and fast-acting plate tectonics which destroyed that city also transported the Province of Visual Thinking & Design east, where it now sits.

In the process, the existing categories were redefined for clarity and a new one was added.

### 1. Updated existing definitions

**PROTOTYPING & DESIGN** – This was changed from “Wireframing & Prototyping” and its definition was refined to make the distinction between whiteboard/flowchart tools clearer and to clarify this is a category for design tools only.

**WHITEBOARDS & FLOWCHARTS** – Formerly “Brainstorming & Collaboration.” We renamed this category (because what SaaS tool isn’t collaborative these days?) and updated the definition to leave less room for interpretation.

### 2. Created a new category for Data Visualization

Researchers use data visuals to present and share their findings in an accessible way. Many also use data visualization tools to explore, analyze, and interpret their data through analysis. The addition of this category felt like a no-brainer.





## The Peaceful Archipelago of Ongoing Insight Collection

Upon arriving in the humid Archipelago of Ongoing Insight Collection, we quickly discover that our old map was woefully incomplete (owing in part to the dense jungle in this region, which makes mapping difficult—and also to simple incompetence from our cartographers).

For starters, what was drawn as a single landmass turns out to be a series of islands (clue's in the name, really). The first of these islands is home to two important and related locations: the Granary and the Floodlands.

The country roads around the thatch-roofed **Granary** (🏠 **Feedback Inbox, R**) are busy as members of the Ricegrowers Union come to store their harvests.



(Fyi, the Granary offers an excellent monthly CSA farmshare.)

Nearby we find **THE FLOODLANDS** (🌊 **AUTOMATED FEEDBACK, S**). These immaculately terraced and communally owned rice paddies are flooded several times a year to increase their yields, a practice which lends its name to the area. The farmers offer us bowls of steaming rice and stir-fried squash flowers in exchange for news from the north.



So it is that, with full bellies, we follow the southerly road across a wooden bridge and through the **TWIN MARSHES** (🌿 **A/B TESTING, T**). These low-lying marshlands are peppered with humble stilt houses, and scented with lemongrass (an effective mosquito repellent—something visitors to this place will need plenty of!).

Having purchased several bottles of lemongrass oil and duly covered ourselves in it, we carry on toward the lively merchant port of **THE PEARL ISLE** (👉 **BEHAVIORAL ANALYTICS, U**).

This busy town—which was once two separate settlements, Session Analytics and Product Analytics—is crowded with multi-story houses, noisy taverns, and fragrant night markets. It is a vibrant place, and gets its name from the bustling pearl trade which attracts merchants from far corners of the realm.

From an innkeeper in town we learn that in order to reach the **AULD ALLIANCE OF ACTIVE RESEARCH**, we must curve westward, passing through yet another island. So, pockets full of pearls and pastries, we forge on.



The thick jungle makes for slow going, and it takes us hours to reach **THE FORETOLD PATH** (🔮 **PREDICTIVE INSIGHTS, V**). Tendrils of incense smoke emanate from this temple, where slippery predictions about the future can be purchased through pearls or prayer.

“Your curiosity will be rewarded,” we are told, after surrendering a particularly lovely pink pearl. Feeling a bit cheated by this generic prophecy, we continue westward.

## What's changed since 2022

We added two new categories, and consolidated two former categories into one.

Also, we also updated the name of this region from *Passive* Insight Collection to *Ongoing* Insight Collection—while the former was not inaccurate (insights are gathered whether there's an active research project running or not), the “passive” part suggests an indifference to the data which we felt was out of step with our audience.

### 1. Combined Product and Session Analytics

On previous maps, “Product Analytics” and “Session Analytics” were separate categories. There was a high degree of overlap, and in many cases the distinction between the two was unclear (even internally, if we're being honest). These categories were consolidated into Behavioral Analytics to more accurately reflect the current landscape and avoid unnecessary confusion.

### 2. New categories for ongoing insight collection

**FEEDBACK INBOX** — Creating this subcategory of Automated Feedback tools solved a problem: Where should we put feedback boards and other PM tools that—although designed to consolidate feedback in one place—are not quite repositories?

**PREDICTIVE INSIGHTS** — We created this category to account for the recent proliferation of AI-powered research tools. We expect this category to grow over time—though we have our suspicions about the quality of the insights these user-less solutions can provide.







## The esteemed Auld Alliance of Active Research

There is just one region of this vast land left to explore: The Auld Alliance of Active Research.

Crossing the bridge from the Archipelago, we arrive first in the **AUTONOMOUS EMIRATES OF SPECIALIZED STUDIES (🏠W)**. This large territory is made up of a loose confederation of settlements and peoples, scattered across the sunbaked, red rock steppes.

In the northern part of this land lies an ancient City—home to renowned scholars, sprawling markets, well-irrigated gardens, sherbet parlors, and a great domed multi-faith house of worship.

This City is a hub of trade in the region, often visited by **The Travelers (👤Diary Studies & Mobile Ethnography, W2)**, a nomadic community that is granted free passage in these lands.



The Travelers (officially called the Traveling Polity of Ethnographic Insights, but what a mouthful!), do not stay in one place for very long. To find them, we're told, you must follow the dusty trail left by their richly painted caravans.



Our next stop—the fabled **HOUSE OF THE ALBASAR** (👁️ **BIOMETRIC STUDIES, W1**) lies to the south of the City.



This imposing and enchanted lighthouse is manned by the Albasar, all-seeing warlocks who use their power of sight to (among other things) guide ships safely through the narrow, monster-infested straits nearby.

We do not linger here (the warlocks have weird vibes), instead heading inland to the red rock desert. Along the way we are met by a party of riders—these are the wealthy sons and daughters of this region, come to let their prized birds of prey soar and hunt at **FALCON RIDGE** (🦅 **PLAYTESTING, W3**). They tell us that we “simply must” return in the spring, when the valley below will be carpeted in wildflowers.

Our route takes us next to the banks of the **Ancient and Unwavering River of Everflowing Insights** (🧠 **USABILITY TESTING, X**). The captain of *The Queen Cleo*, a shallow-bottomed barge with peeling red and gold paint, agrees to take us up the river.

This waterway (commonly called the AUREI, because who has the time?) snakes its way, south-to-north, through the southern desert of the Auld Alliance.

Rich, loamy farmland on either bank provides wheat and wealth to scores of unnamed settlements.



As we float along the river, we stop at two such settlements. The first (🐪 **BETA TESTING, X1**) lies at the mouth of the AUREI estuary.

Residents of this village are known locally for breeding camels with an excellent temperament (they hardly spit at all, unless insulted). We buy a pair, in exchange for the last of our pearls.



A little further on we pass the second settlement of note (🌴 **CLICK TO COMMENT FEEDBACK, X2**), located near the eastern banks of the river and shaded by large-leaved palms.

Although modest, this village has produced many royal advisors over the years—the people here are known for their sharp and highly specific yet helpful criticism.

Deciding we're not in the mood to be told of our shortcomings, we sail onward without stopping.

Gradually we wend our way north, where we alight from our barge and make our way to **THE GREAT CHISME** (☕ **INTERVIEWS & DISCUSSIONS, Y**).

We hear this place before we see it—a sprawling marketplace filled with myriad outdoor cafes serving flavored teas and toasty coffee houses, all of which hum with lively conversation and not-so-idle gossip. Watch your step—much tea is spilled here!



After several pots of strong coffee and mint tea, we hit the road for the last time, heading east again to the **SURVEYLANDS** (🐪 **SURVEYS, Z**).



Miles and miles of shifting sand dunes stretch before us—some bright yellow, others gleaming white, still more made of black grains from volcanic rock to the north.

We’ve been warned to tread carefully in these lands, for all manner of scorpions and trapdoor spiders make their nests in the dunes—and they do not enjoy being disturbed.

But a few precious, arachnid-free oases offer relief to weary travelers. It is at one such spot that we stop to rest, leaning back against the humps of our well-behaved camels. A group of local travelers have made their camp nearby, and the sounds of their heartfelt singing and ululation drifts across the water to our own campfire.

Tomorrow, we will head to the coast, where ships are waiting to take us back to our own lands.

So as the sun sets over the dunes, we pause to listen to the music, exchange LinkedIn profiles with our traveling companions, and reminisce on our great, educational adventure through the Realm of User Research.





## What's changed since 2022

### 1. New subcategories of Usability Testing and Specialized Studies

**DIARY STUDIES & MOBILE ETHNOGRAPHY** — We decided it was time to grant this group of tools its own place on the map. This is a subcategory of Specialized Studies—all diary study tools are specialized study tools, but not the other way around.

**BIOMETRIC STUDIES** — As above, this is a subcategory of Specialized Studies.

**PLAYTESTING** — We were inspired to create this category as a result of write-in responses about games research tools in our State of User Research survey.

**BETA TESTING** — One of two subcategories of Usability Testing (along with Click-to-Comment Feedback) that felt distinct and specific enough to cluster together.

**CLICK-TO-COMMENT FEEDBACK** — As above, this is a subcategory of Usability Testing.



## What's changed (continued)

### 2. Updated definitions for Surveys and Interviews

**SURVEYS** – Our previous definition was updated to explicitly include longer surveys that are distributed in-app, while still excluding always-on pulse checks like NPS. We also clarified the definition to account for increase in "video survey" features, which might see a tool lumped in with "specialized" despite being otherwise unambiguously survey software.

**INTERVIEWS & DISCUSSIONS** – In the past, we called this category "Video Interviews." There are a wide variety of reasons why researchers and participants might choose to conduct interviews over voice or even live messaging (for example, when researching with participants with visual disabilities, for example, or in areas with poor internet connectivity). This category was updated to better reflect these use cases.





## A note on the destruction of the Imperial Walled City of End-to-End Platforms

Last year, the [2022 UX Research Tools Map](#) was dominated by a large, fortified city in the east called the **IMPERIAL WALLED CITY OF END-TO-END PLATFORMS**.

This city was created to account for the proliferation of “all-in-one” or “end-to-end” research platforms, as established players continue to add new features that address additional stages of the research process. Many of these tools are closed systems—they are feature-rich but are not especially integration-friendly with other tools in the space.

You will no longer find the Imperial Walled City of End-to-End Platforms on the map, for it was irreparably destroyed in an earthquake. (Luckily, no one was harmed and the city’s residents were peacefully repatriated to the corners of the realm from which they’d originally come.)

This change to the landscape—or, more aptly, our decision to change the way we drew the landscape in 2023—reflects the reality that few (if any) tools are really “all-in-one.”

End-to-end, one-and-done, a silver bullet. It’s a seductive promise: Why have 10 tools when you can have 1? It’s also, frankly, a lie. We encourage you to [read this article](#) from Erin May, SVP of Marketing & Growth, which explains our position on such platforms in more compelling depth.





The fifth annual **UX RESEARCH TOOLS MAP FROM USER INTERVIEWS**—an illustrated guide to the ever-changing world of user research software—is intended to both awe (so many tools and features!) and to educate.

This year's map contains nearly 400 logos (a staggering number), each plotted according to their core use case to help you visualize the relationship between tools, as well as the volume of solutions available for any given UXR need.

There are many more ways to explore this year's map, including:

- Navigate the realm online (recommended)
- Download a high-res copy of the map
- View the full tools list (Sheets / Excel)
- NEW IN 2023: Make your own map (Figma)



Go check it out!

[View the map](#)