

Pat (Patricia) Jones¹



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

Pat loves public transportation and knows at least three routes to get there from home. 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 evenings she plays computer puzzle games like Sudoku before bed.

Background knowledge and skills

Pat works as an accountant in a consulting firm. She prefers to stay with the technologies for which she has already mastered the peculiarities. She just moved to this employer 1 week ago, and their software systems are new to her.

She describes herself as a “numbers person”, but she is not a professional programmer and has never taken any computer programming or IT systems classes. Pat has a degree in accounting so she knows plenty of Math and knows how to think in terms of numbers.

In her free time, even though she’s an accountant and deals with numbers all day at work, she likes working with numbers in her free time, too. She especially likes Sudoku and other computer games that involve puzzling.

Motivations and Attitudes

- **Motivations:** Pat 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. She tends to use methods she is already familiar and comfortable with to achieve her goals.

- **Computer Self-Efficacy:** Pat has medium computer self-efficacy about doing unfamiliar computing tasks. If problems arise with her technology, she will keep on trying to figure out how to achieve what she has set out to do for quite awhile; she doesn’t give up right away when computers or technology present a challenge to her.

- **Attitude toward Risk:** Pat is busy and so she rarely has spare time. So Pat is risk averse and worries that she will spend time on them and not get any benefits from doing so. She prefers to perform tasks using familiar features, because they’re more predictable about what she will get from them and how much time they’ll take.

How Pat Works with Information and Learns

- **Information Processing Style:** Pat leans towards a *comprehensive information processing style* when she needs to gather information to problem-solve. So, instead of acting upon the first 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.

- **Learning: by Process vs. Tinkering:** When Pat sees a need to learn new technology, she does so by trying out new features or commands to see what they do and to understand how the software works. When she does this, she does so purposefully; that is, she reflects on each bit of feedback she gets along the way to understand how the feature might benefit her. Eventually, if she doesn’t think it will get her closer to what she wants to achieve, she will revert back to ways that she already knows will work.

¹Pat represents a fraction of female users with backgrounds similar to hers. For data on females (and males) similar to and different from Pat, see <http://gendermag.org>