



Katie Bennett

Thirty-two-year-old Katie would have gone into fine art if she felt she could have made a living at it; now she runs the business side of her husband's small landscaping firm and saves her creative ambitions for the weekend.

A couple of years ago, Katie bought a pocket digital camera so she could post photos of completed jobs on the company's Web site, which she put together using iWeb on her Mac. As she started experimenting with getting the best images, Katie realized that photography offered many of the creative opportunities she enjoyed in painting. She was hooked. Looking for a more capable camera that wouldn't break the bank, Katie went to CNET.com for advice. After looking at a few comparisons but not reading detailed reviews, she went to the nearest Best Buy and bought a Nikon D70 with its kit lens and an inexpensive tripod, relegating her compact camera to snapshots at family events. She also considered Canon's Digital Rebel, but chose the Nikon because it "felt more like a professional camera."

Katie got home and sat down with her new camera and its somewhat intimidating manual. After half an hour of fiddling, she was overwhelmed by the options and decided to give the auto mode a try. Katie started hiking about on weekends to shoot landscapes, from sweeping skylines to dew-covered flowers. She was pleased with some of her shots, but wondered why some weren't much better than what she could do with the pocket camera; many did not meet her expectations. After reading a few issues of *Outdoor Photographer*, she decided she might do better with different lenses. Confused by all the letters, numbers, and lens specifications, Katie went to the local specialty camera shop for advice on which macro and wide-angle lenses to buy; she did not expect the staff at Best Buy to provide good advice. She was reluctant to buy the cheaper lenses made by other manufacturers because surely Nikon would make the best lenses for their own cameras.

Katie is thrilled with her new ability to capture images of the local flora as she would have composed them on canvas. Though Katie enjoys it when people admire her photos, she's more motivated by the satisfaction of achieving her own creative vision. She can now capture the compositions she wants, but still isn't quite happy with some of her photos.

Katie gets up early on Saturdays to catch dramatic sunrises, frequents every park and beach in the area, and takes the occasional day trip. She loves the excuse to get out into nature. She goes out equipped with her camera, lenses, tripod, and a couple of 4 GB memory cards. Katie takes 100 to 300 shots on the average outing. She can often take her time composing a shot because plants and scenery don't move much, but sometimes needs to move quickly to capture a butterfly perched on a flower, or a shaft of light coming through the clouds just so. She usually takes a photo on the auto settings first, pointing the auto focus at the area where she wants to capture detail in the hope that this will set the correct exposure. She then dials the aperture up and down and takes a couple of shots to bracket the exposure; she read about this technique in her magazine. She still gets overly dark areas or blown-out highlights in many photos; she's increasingly frustrated by the intricacies of correct exposure. She deletes the worst photos from the camera on the spot.

Katie brings her camera home and plugs it into her Mac using the USB cable. She dumps the images into iPhoto and sees what she can learn from the bad ones before deleting them. She makes a few minor adjustments, but is generally reluctant to manipulate her photos, believing she should be able to get the right image in the camera to begin with. She posts her favorites on her personal Web site, uses them on her computer desktop, and occasionally orders large prints of especially good images via iPhoto. Katie feels a bit limited by iPhoto's organization options, but appreciates its ease of use and integration with other tools.

Katie is considering upgrading to a higher resolution camera, but is reluctant to spend the money unless she knows she can get the results she wants.

KATIE'S GOALS:

- **Be able to capture what she sees in her “mind’s eye.”** Katie knows she has an eye for composition, but is frustrated when her inability to master difficult lighting makes for a lackluster photo.
- **Enjoy the scenery.** Katie takes photos of nature as a way to enjoy its beauty. She doesn't want to be so focused on the mechanics of using her camera that she forgets to enjoy what she sees.
- **Feel like a “real” photographer.** Katie is proud of some of her images, but hesitates to think of herself as a photographer because she feels she hasn't mastered some of the fundamentals.

If you read carefully, you can see that nearly everything in the description conveys or reinforces something important about Katie's attitudes, goals, and behaviors. Even the mention of specific store, Web site, and product names has a purpose: They reinforce that Katie has ambitions but isn't sure where to get the best advice. Although the fact that she runs a landscape business is clearly fictitious and not directly relevant, one or two such details can make a persona seem like a real human being instead of a sterile set of characteristics.

What personas are good for

Personas can help you design pretty much anything that will be used or experienced by a human being, such as enterprise and consumer products, Web sites, services, internal business processes, organizational structures, events, advertising campaigns, documents, courses, and environments. The contents, structure, and design of this book have been driven by several personas. I've even heard from people using simple personas to design employee benefits packages and church picnics.

Personas are helpful in accomplishing a wide range of activities, including defining and designing the product, communicating with stakeholders about your audience, building consensus and rallying a team around a goal, marketing the product, developing documentation, and even prioritizing bug fixes.

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