For all of the innovation methods described in this book, it is essential to identify the end-user needs, which for simplicity I will call *user needs*. However, before you can find out the user needs, you will need to identify and define who your target users are.

Defining New Target Users

If your company already has a successful social website for teenagers, but you want to create a similar website for other users, you may need to start defining who the target users should be. Should your website be for elderly people looking to talk to their grandchildren? Or should you instead focus on tweens? Or should you create a social website for exotic butterfly enthusiasts? You may have several possible groups in mind, as illustrated in Figure 3-1, but your goal should generally be to narrow this down to just one group, or at least a few groups that are related.

*C. Kraft, User Experience Innovation*  
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If you have a start-up company, you’ll probably already have certain target users in mind when you start creating your first product, but it is still worth considering other target users from the beginning.

Having multiple target user groups may be a big advantage for some types of products. However, targeting multiple groups also has some pitfalls. You can’t always please multiple groups at the same time.

How to find specific new groups of users to target is out of the scope of this book, and will depend on a variety of factors, including the current competition, the nature of your product(s), and the disposable income of the different groups you are targeting.

Larger companies often use internal or external market research to identify new potential target users. Smaller companies may lack the resources for extensive market research, but may have intrinsic insight into markets that can be profitably targeted. One thing, though, is for sure: you need to thoroughly investigate the market to find out who the potential target users for your product are.

Some companies tend to automatically choose target groups that are similar to their current user base. This can be a safe choice in some situations. In other situations, this sort of inward focus may cause a high risk of overlooking great opportunities with completely different target user groups.

**Targeting a Predefined User Group**

In large companies, user experience designers are often given a specific target user group as the starting point for the innovation work. Mature adults with a relatively large disposable income is an example of such a predefined group. You will often want to display these users with a representative photo, like in Figure 3-2, before continuing your work. A photo of your typical target users can help you a lot in the proceeding steps.

Depending on the quality of the market research, the research material may also contain a number of insights for the predefined group of users that you are targeting. This research may even specify end-user needs.

However, in almost all most cases, you will want to find, interview, and get to know your target users better. This is because innovation is much easier when you have faced the target users than it is when you solely base your innovation on market research data and statistics. Even when needs are well defined by current research, you are well advised not to skip the interviewing process. After all, data and statistics can take you only so far.