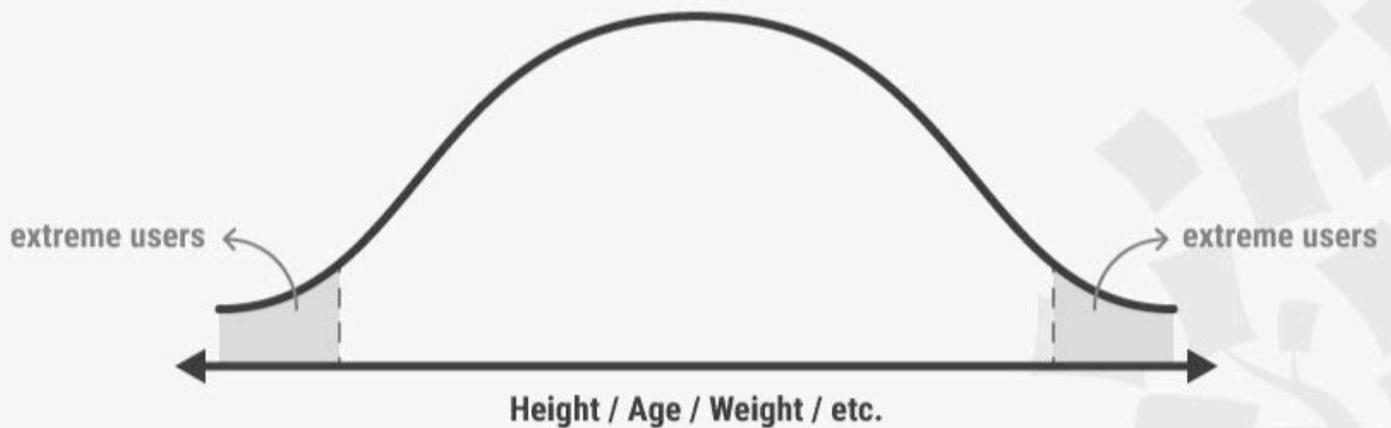


# Engaging with Extreme Users



Extreme users are few in number, but it doesn't mean you should disregard them and aim just for the main bulk of users instead. In fact, they can provide excellent insights that other users may simply be unprepared to disclose.

By focusing on the extremes, you will find that the problems, needs and methods of solving problems become magnified. First, you must identify the extremes of your potential user base; then, you should engage with this group to establish their feelings, thoughts and behaviors, and then look at the needs you might find in all users. Consider what makes a user extreme and you'll tend to notice it's the circumstances involved. A basic example is a grocery store shopping cart and a shopper with five very young children in tow – there are two fold-down seats in the cart, but the other kids (who are also too young to walk) must go somewhere. Our shopper is, therefore, an extreme user of the shopping cart design.

On the one hand, if you can manage to please an extreme user, you should certainly be able to keep your main body of users happy. On the other hand, it is important to note that the purpose of engaging with extreme users is not to develop solutions for those users, but to sieve out problems that mainstream users might have trouble voicing; however, in many cases, the needs of extreme users tend to overlap with the needs of the majority of the population. So, while you may not be able to keep everyone happy at all times with your design, you can certainly improve the chances that it will not frustrate users.