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Elicitation Methods Reflection

During the first installment of the project, the HCI team used information from three requirements elicitation techniques: the survey, the exploratory test and the unstructured interview. In this reflection, I would like to focus on the latter.

The unstructured interview, unlike the structured interview, does not have a script or a store of pre-formulated questions to be posed to the stakeholder; the unstructured interview is visualized more as an improvisation by the educator. It appears to be more of a casual conversation, where the educator asks questions, and is free to follow up on the answers provided by the interviewee [1].

Now, during the development of the project, a series of exploratory tests were carried out with target users of the project, who were given some instructions to follow in order to abstract a user profile of them, and to provide valuable information for the User Research. At the end of each exploratory test, an unstructured interview was conducted, mimicking a casual conversation, where they were questioned about the problems they may have encountered during the application of the tests. In order to preserve the information more vividly, both the application of the exploratory tests and the unstructured interviews were recorded at all times.

Once the recordings were available, and based on previous information collected from the user, a report was made for each exploratory test, where the questions of the unstructured interview were used to capture them in two distinguishable sections. A first section, which detailed the user's opinions about the test and the system presented to him/her, and about areas of opportunity that the current system presents.

It is interesting to note how a seemingly informal technique can obtain very useful information from the subject of analysis. However, part of the effectiveness of the information obtained comes from the synergy that the unstructured interview had with the exploratory tests, and how the time of each session was used to maximize the obtaining of information. Being totally strict, the application of the unstructured interview had certain flaws, and despite having mentioned the application, it has little to do with the way in which they were carried out.

The educator's experience in obtaining information in the unstructured interviews plays an important role in the effectiveness of the technique and I, as the main educator of the exploratory tests and also of the unstructured interviews, consider that my lack of experience may have deprived the team of being able to obtain more valuable and concise information about the sessions. An example of this were certain questions asked, where test subjects were asked about their stance with the system presented, where they all mentioned how great the system was, when previously in past iterations of usability testing it was determined that the

system was flawed in terms of usability. This may indicate that respondents were answering according to what they were expected to answer, rather than what they truly thought. It is possible that the user profile influenced their responses, since an effort was made to connect with the test subjects to make the interview more enjoyable and comfortable, but my difficulty in identifying which of the two options is the one that occurred is evidence of the lack of experience present.

[1] Trindade, V. A. (2017). *La entrevista no estructurada en investigación cualitativa: una experiencia de campo*. https://sedici.unlp.edu.ar/handle/10915/64407