Interaction Design for the Animal Disease Spread Modeling Application
Preliminary User Interviews

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Following is an outline for the procedures that will be followed and the general flavor of the questions that will be asked in the user interview and contextual inquiry stages of the preliminary user research study. The protocol will be conducted with four individuals who use the Animal Disease Spread Modeling application in the general course of their scientific work. Below, text in italics represent literal script items, while non-italic text represents specific lines of inquiry designed to elicit responses containing specific information. This protocol outline is intended as a means of conveying to participant-recruiters and stakeholders the general approach and intention behind the research protocol. It should not be shared with potential study participants.

Introduction

First off, thank you for your time. What I would like to do here is learn a little bit about the work you do and observe the manner in which you conduct tasks in your day-to-day use of the existing Animal Disease Spread Modeling application. I will be conducting similar research sessions with a number of other individuals from within this office.

Would it be alright with you if I record this interveiw? This allows me to do two things: I can stay focused on what we are talking about without being distracted by note taking, and it ensures greater accuracy in the analysis that occurs after the session.

Summary of protocol

The activities that I have planned for today should take about 45 minutes to complete. I would like to start off by asking you a few questions, but before we get started, do you have any questions for me?

Establishing the context (approx. 10 minutes)

-Tell me a little bit about the kind of work you do.

- What is your particular area of expertise?
- Is there anything that you find particularly exciting or interesting about your job here?
- How did you come to be a [insert line of work]?

- In regard to technology:

- On a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being expert and 1 being just capable, how would you rate your own ability to use your computer and software?
- And what kind of computer do you use?

- When you are working on a project that involves the disease spread modeling application how much of the work is conducted within the application?

- What other tools might you use in a typical project?

- What project are you working on right now?

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Task-based inquiry (approx. 30 minutes)

I would really like to see how you work with the disease spread modeling application. Would you please open up a current project and show me what you are working on? ...As we proceed, I would like you to please think aloud so that there is a verbal record of your process, what you think about in specific areas and interactions within the application, how you draw in information from outside sources...

- What did you start with when you set up this project?

- What part of the model setup is most time consuming?

- Are there parts of the input process that you find fun, or that you are particularly efficient at?

- What's the most important part of the parameter input process? Is there one factor that the efficacy of the whole model hinges on?

- When reviewing the results of a simulation, what are you looking for? How do you parse the data that you are presented with?

-Is there a method that you use to determine the validity of the simulation?

   *While the first question will be asked as presented, all following questions will flow organically from that original question and will likely be modified by it content of the preceding discussion.

Wrapping up (approx. 5 minutes)

Ultimately, all of the information I have gathered from this session and a few others will come together to inform a generalized sketch of the overall ADSM user group, the types of problems you are looking to simulate, and how effectively the application facilitates those efforts. Insights gained from these sessions will inform the redesign of the application and will ensure that the next iteration of the Animal Disease Spread Modeling application greatly improves upon the user experience of its predecessor. Thank you so much for your time.

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