

Based on your experiences, what is the value of creativity workshops in visualization design studies? I'm using the word value to mean their importance or usefulness.

Spend less than an hour on this. Bullet points are fine, but please use complete sentences.

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In my experience, the most time consuming part of a DS (by far) is trying to define a problem. This is slow because not only are the standard methods themselves slow (interviews, contextual inquiry), but any of those interventions tend to change and shift the problem itself. So while we use slow methods, those methods induce change, which requires more interventions to keep defining.

CW are brilliant because that shaping and shifting of the problem happens in one place, together. So you get people on board, quickly, with defining what the problem should be.

I think they also help in getting consensus on what the problem is, which you may never actually fully get to when left to interact with a group of collaborators individually.

I also know from personal experience, that thinking deeply about a hard problem for just an hour at a time (the time for a typical interview) is only just long enough to get into the weeds of the problem. The extended nature of the CW allows people to get in a head space to think deeply about a problem without having to always page back in the details. I suspect that there are nuances that come out more quickly and cleanly because people spend a significant amount of time thinking about just this thing.

The interpersonal aspects of the CW also are important. First, I think that have such a structured, methodical approach to problem understanding lends an air of credibility to the vis designers. I've found in past projects that it can take quite some time to build credibility because some collaborators don't appreciate the research of what we do and see us more as software engineers. The CW is clearly a valid method, which gives authority to the vis designer from the beginning.

Second, as we've seen in our CW, there is also a great leveling of knowledge and authority within a domain group. I can only assume that this helps in giving a voice to all ideas equally, without the power-dynamics playing a role in which ideas are deemed better or more important.