Interview

# Description

Interviewing the potential user of the future system is a method to gather information quickly and friendly in order to acquire a deeper understanding of them: facts, attitudes, beliefs, desires and experiences (LIBRO p.33). Generally, it is composed by an interviewer and one informant at a time and can be conducted face-to-face, by phone, videoconference or via instant messaging system (gov).

# Benefits

* the interviewee has the full attention of the interviewer so that:
  + the discussion can be adapted at any time : explore more or less in deep a topic, change topic,….
  + mistakes and misunderstandings can be quickly identified and cleared up

# Best Practices

It is important to keep in mind from the beginning that interviewing requires practice and experience. Indeed, it would be appropriate to hire an experienced practitioner at the beginning.

In order to perform an efficient interview, the following points should be considered:

1. plan interviews carefully by deciding in advance:
   1. who to interview: select the representative participants
   2. what you want to learn
   3. what questions to ask to gather the relevant information
   4. how long the interviews should be
   5. prepare an interview schedule
   6. try the interview at least once and make sure to know well the schedule
2. during the interview:
   1. make interviewee feel comfortable
   2. ask questions in a neutral manner, listen well and be analytical
   3. create friendly atmosphere by being casual yourself but don’t forget to keep control of the discussion by directing it toward the information you want to obtain
   4. audio or video record the interview (remember to ask permission to the user) because if you rely only on the notes, they are likely to be incomplete and important information can be missed. The disadvantage of recording it is that users can change their behaviour at the beginning.

There are two main types of interview: structured and unstructured.

1. Structured: characterised by predetermined questions and let little space for expanding the topics.
2. Unstructured: main topics are set and can be discussed and explored. Big topics should be broken into sub-topics. This type of interview is more informal and generally is useful early in the design process to gather requirements.

The less the interview is structured, the easier is to find relevant issues and rich information. However, such interviews can provide so much information that could be harder to analyse later. To solve this problem, an efficient method of analysis is to break up the discussion of the interviewee into simple sub-topics.

The interview is usually composed of four phases:

1. Introduction: the warm-up part where the interviewer and interviewee introduce themselves.
2. The “energising” phase where the topic is presented.
3. The “body” of the interview is the main phase where the interviewer asks questions to the interviewee. Before this phase ends, make sure that all the relevant information needed have been covered.
4. The "closing" phase. At this time, the interviewer summarises what he has learned during the interview by checking with the interviewee if all is correct, if it has been covered all the areas and if something is missed. Moreover, a good practice is also to ask to the interviewee if there is something to improve for the next interview.

<http://www.usabilitynet.org/tools/interviews.htm>

<http://www.webcredible.co.uk/user-friendly-resources/web-usability/user-centered-design.shtml>

# Examples

Libro p.33-34