Learning about your users

Learning about your users

- This is empirical work.
  - "Empirical" = based on data.
  - So you have to collect data about your users.
- 2 kinds of empirical work:
  - Formative: to inFORM design (this is what we're talking about right now.)
  - Summative: to evaluate your design later. (We'll talk more about this later.)
  - But it's really a continuum…

- How does formative empirical work with users fit into P R I C P E ?
  Check off <u>all</u> the PRICPE steps that apply.
  - a. Predispositions
  - b. Research
  - c. Insights
  - d. Concepts
  - e. Prototype
  - f. Evaluate

- Formative empirical work:
  - is the main part of "R" (Research)
- One kind of formative empirical work:
  - interviews.

Interview types for this course

- Open-ended/unstructured, structured, semi-structured.
- General guidelines:
  - Have goals set.
  - Avoid long/complex questions.
  - Avoid jargon.
  - Avoid leading questions, be alert to unconscious bias.
  - Be precise in recording/noting, don't "fix".

Four key issues (!!!)

- 1. You need goals (Research questions)!
  - Where do these come from in PRICPS?
- 2. Consider relationship w participants.
  - Comfort, trust, IRB, are you a participant...
  - Examples?
- 3. Triangulate!!
  - Independent data point to same conclusion.
  - Examples?
- 4. Pilot!
  - ...your PROCEDURE and everything in it.

- In this course we'll do only these two:
  - Interviews one-on-one
  - Observations in the field
- There are other methods for doing formative empirical work too...
  - Example

Interview Sequence

- 1. Introduce yourself.
  - who are you exactly, and why are you here?
  - reassurances about confidentiality, IRB procs,
  - IMPORTANT: ask their permission,
  - set up data collection (quickly/efficiently).
- 2. Warm-up:
  - Ask non-threatening, easy questions, eg: background things.

- 3. Main interview:
  - In logical sequence, save hardest for the end.
- 4. Cool down
  - Easy questions, to defuse tension if arose.
- 5. Closing
  - Thank them!!
  - Put stuff away, signaling that the interview is over, any further conversation is not part of it.

General guidelines for interview questions

- THEY are the point, not you.
  - Use vocab THEY know (avoid jargon).
  - LISTEN. Write down what they say + body language, pauses, signs of emotion, etc.
  - After an answer, stay silent a bit to see if THEY want to add something.
- Avoid long/complex questions.
- Avoid leading questions/be alert to unconscious biases.
- Be precise in recording. Don't "fix".

Unstructured interviews

- No list of questions.
  - But you still need an agenda, checklist, to ensure everything covered.
- Both you and interviewee can steer a conversation.
- Advantage: lots of rich data, unanticipated, affords emergence of surprises.
- Disadvantage: hard to analyze, can't replicate.

Structured interviews

- Opposite of unstructured.
- Fixed list of questions.
- Only you can steer the conversation.
- Disadvantage: no rich data, all anticipated.
- Advantage: easy to analyze, easy to replicate.

Semi-Structured interviews

- Combines aspects of each.
- Fixed list of questions, each of which is followed by conversation and follow-ups as appropriate.
- Advantages: some rich data, some unanticipated, surprises possible, yet some of the data is easy to analyze to replicate.

Semi-structured interview example

- What websites do you visit frequently?
  - A: ....
  - Why?
    - A: ...mentions several but says she likes <w> best.
  - And why do you like <w>?
    - A: ...... <x> ....
  - Tell me more about <x>?
    - A: ......
  - Anything else about <x>?
    - A: ....
  - Thanks. Any other reasons you like <w>?

Example

- Break: view 1-2 minutes of [Steve Krug](#)'s [demo interview](#).
  - Position to "Getting the user talking" (segment #2, minutes 3:13-5:00).
  - Thought exercise.

- What kind of interview is this segment?
- What part of the interview sequence was this?
- Did you notice anything he did that violated the guidelines?

Answers to the thought exercise

- What kind of interview is this segment?
  - Semi-structured:
    - Fixed list, with follow-ups based on what she said.
- What part of the interview sequence was this?
  - The warm-up.
- Violated the guidelines?
  - Mostly did great, but there were some violations:
    - Interrupted, talked over her.
    - Leading questions: "and that's fun?" "like-half-and-half?"
    - Never stayed silent to let her add to her responses.

In-Class Interviewing Activity

- Now you get a chance to practice.
  - Via the interviewing activity on the class web site.