

CSC318  
A2- Formative Study Instruments  
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Target Audience: Grocery stores  
Instrument: Field studies

### **Introduction**

To find out how to effectively reduce food waste and reduce environmental impact, there are two main groups to be observed; the retailers of food and the consumers. For this study, we will be looking at the retailers. Although the production of food also emits harmful gases (greenhouse gases), this is out of the scope. However, the delivery and the actions after the food is shipped out to retailers can be probed and looked into.

### **Method of Probing**

A field study will be conducted at grocery store, whether or not they are independently run or a large corporation. It is preferable to having sessions at both an independently run store and a large grocery chain. This will help shed light to any difference in terms of how they operate or deal with expiring food.

### **Recruitment Plan**

For the grocery store chain, the manager will be contacted and asked for permission to conduct the field study. It will be explained to them what the research is for, what they can expect and what it would entail. Some of the chains that are of interests include Metro, Bulk Barn, Rabba, Galleria and Independent City Market.

For the independently run grocery store, permission would be asked from the owner. Likewise, it will be explained to them what the research is for, what they can expect, and what it entails. Stores of interests would have to sell any food items, but more specifically, produce. This is because produce seems to make up most of the food waste (SAVE FOOD, 2012).

To convince them, we will highlight some questions and explain how uncovering some of their practices might minimize their loss, such as how they order food and the amounts they order it in, or how they deal with expiring food.

### **Detailed Research Instruments: The Observation Plan**

For this research study, we will aim to have at least 5 companies participating in it. They do not have to be completely different chains as long as they are from different locations.

#### During Recruitment

After meeting with the owner/manager, if permission is given, further information will be given, provided they have time. Otherwise, a meeting will be set up. Information that would be given would include what they can expect and approximately how long it will take.

This time will also be used to ask if video recording or picture taking would be allowed, a nondisclosure agreement would have to be drafted and provided for both parties to sign as well during the day of the field study. A pencil/pen and paper will need to be brought for the field study. And if they allow it, a cellphone will also need to be brought along for the field study.

A date for the field study would then be set up as well, after asking the employees for permission as well. Preferably, the day would be when shipments come in so we can see how they store and how much they order or when they are clearing out expiring food.

#### On the Field Study Day

The study will start off with an introduction about who we are and what we are doing, what they can expect and some small chit-chat to get them comfortable. We will proceed to show them all the things we will be using; a phone (if they allowed recording or pictures), or a notebook (to jot down anything crucial).

If filming or photography is allowed, there will be two people from the team conducting the field study. This is to ensure that the filming does not distract from what is happening around as it frames a small section of what is happening.

During the observation period, we will follow the participant around as they get the new stock in, stock up the shelves, remove any expiring ones, dispose of the expiring/expired food. This will show us their food practices and how they deal with food waste.

While we follow the participant, we will also ask them a few questions. Some of the questions are listed below:

1. What happens to expiring food?
2. Where are these expiring food placed?
3. What happens to expired food?
4. How often to they order food/produce?
5. How do they decide what to order?
6. Do they keep track of how much food is wasted?
  1. If yes, how much food ends up being tossed out weekly/daily?
  2. If no, would it be beneficial to know? profit/loss

After the session is done, a follow-up question period begins, where we will ask any questions to confirm or clarify. Alongside clarification questions, we will also ask a few more questions such as:

1. Did they do anything differently today than they usually do?
2. Was their practices today established recently or has it been around for a long time?
3. Was today a typical day?
4. What do they think of those practices?

At the end, there will be a debriefing session where we will also ask them if they have any questions for us and ask them if they expect anything else from us. This will be useful for the future studies.

#### **References**

SAVE FOOD: Global Initiative on Food Loss and Waste Reduction. (n.d.). Retrieved January 20, 2012, from <http://www.fao.org/save-food/en/>

## Appendix 1: Research Protocol

1. **Project Title:** Field Study of Grocery Stores
2. **Investigators:** Sharene Thio <carleen.thio@mail.utoronto.ca>, Kyle Osborne <kyle.osborne@mail.utoronto.ca>, Zhou YuFeng <yufeng.zhou@mail.utoronto.ca>, Michael Le <mich.le@mail.utoronto.ca>, Pratyush Kanwar <pratyush.kanwar@mail.utoronto.ca>, John Oabel <john.oabel@mail.utoronto.ca>
3. **Purpose:** The purpose of our research is to understand grocery stores' food practices to help us derive requirements for the design of novel interactive computational media that are intended to be useful to other grocery stores. A brief description of our design concept is: To identify food practices in grocery stores in order to minimize food waste and negative ecological impact. This will in turn also minimize loss for the businesses.
4. **Process to be followed:** We will brief the participants about the purpose of the study, explain the consent form to them, and ensure that they sign the consent form. We will then engage the participants in their shift as a field study. We will also with their permission make observations as follows: a field study will be conducted by one or two investigators, in which they will shadow and ask the participant a few questions while they are at work (grocery store) about how the food practices at work.
5. **Participant selection:** Participants will be chosen from any of the employees in the available grocery stores accessible to the investigators. They will be identified via recommendation from the manager and selected according to whether or not they stock, order, or dispose food the grocery store. In general, they will be characterized by their role in the grocery store.
6. **Relationships:** Our relationship to the participants may be described as follows: a master/apprentice model, where the investigator will be an apprentice and see what the master (participant) does, while they walk the investigators through their activities.
7. **Risk and benefit:** There will be minimal risk to the participants, for example that they feel that they have wasted their time. The only benefit will be to contribute to the education of the investigators. Participants are free to withdraw before or at any time during the study without the need to give any explanation.
8. **Consent details:** We will brief the participants about the purpose of the study, and explain the **attached consent form** to them, and ensure that they consent to participate and sign the consent form.
9. **Compensation:** Participants will receive no compensation.
10. **Information sought:** The information to be sought is described in the attached observation plan.
11. **Confidentiality:** Information will be kept confidential by the investigators. Names or other identifying or identified information will not be kept with the data. The only other

use will be to include excerpts or copies in the assignment submitted, but names and other identifying or identified information will not be submitted.

## Consent Form: <Field Study of Grocery Stores>

I hereby consent to participate in a research study conducted by Sharene Thio for an assignment in University of Toronto Computer Science course *CSC318 The Design of Interactive Computational Media*.

I agree to participate in this study the purpose of which is to understand how grocery store orders, and stock up food as well as dealing with expired or expiring food.

I understand that

- The procedures to be used include being followed around while I do my job, while they jot down relevant information as well as answering any questions they may have .
- I will receive no compensation for my participation.
- I am free to withdraw before or any time during the study without the need to give any explanation.
- All materials and results will be kept confidential, and, in particular, that my name and any identifying or identified information will not be associated with the data.

### PARTICIPANT

Name (please print)\_\_\_\_\_

Signature\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_

### INVESTIGATOR(s)

Name\_\_\_\_\_Signature\_\_\_\_\_