

CASE STUDY PROTOCOL

1. Background

- a) identify previous research on the topic
- b) define the main research question being addressed by this study
- c) identify any additional research questions that will be addressed 2.

2. Design

- a) identify whether single-case or multiple-case and embedded or holistic designs will be used, and show the logical links between these and the research questions
- b) describe the object of study (e.g. a new testing procedure; a new feature in a browser)
- c) identify any propositions or sub-questions derived from each research question and the measures to be used to investigate the propositions

3. Case Selection

- a) Criteria for case selection

4. Case Study Procedures and Roles

- a) Procedures governing field procedures
- b) Roles of case study research team members

5. Data Collection

- a) identify the data to be collected
- b) define a data collection plan
- c) define how the data will be stored

6. Analysis

- a) identify the criteria for interpreting case study findings
- b) identify which data elements are used to address which research question/sub question/proposition and how the data elements will be combined to answer the question
- c) consider the range of possible outcomes and identify alternative explanations of the outcomes, and identify any information that is needed to distinguish between these
- d) the analysis should take place as the case study task progresses

7. Plan Validity

- a) general: check plan against Höst and Runeson's (2007) checklist items for the design and the data collection plan
- b) construct validity - show that the correct operational measures are planned for the concepts being studied. Tactics for ensuring this include using multiple sources of evidence, establishing chains of evidence, expert reviews of draft protocols and reports
- c) internal validity - show a causal relationship between outcomes and intervention/treatment (for explanatory or causal studies only).
- d) external validity – identify the domain to which study finding can be generalized. Tactics include using theory for single-case studies and using multiple-case studies to investigate outcomes in different contexts.

8. Study Limitations

Specify residual validity issues including potential conflicts of interest (i.e. that are inherent in the problem, rather than arising from the plan).

9. Reporting

Using a Protocol Template for Case Study Planning EASE 2008 Identify target audience, relationship to larger studies (YIN, 2003).

10. Schedule

Give time estimates for all of the major steps: Planning, Data Collection, Data Analysis, Reporting. Note Data Collection and Data Analysis are not expected to be sequential stages

11. Appendices

- a) Validation: report results of checking plan against Höst and Runeson's (2007) checklist items
- b) Divergences: update while conducting the study by noting any divergences from the above steps.