

Formative Research (A Very Brief Intro)

UX Design I

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Goals:

Understand the existing **context** and **domain**

+ identify targets for design **improvements**

Methods: formal and informal

Formal Methods

- Interviews
- Surveys
- Focus groups
- Participatory design groups
- Systematic observations
- Shadowing
- Systematic background research
- Task analysis
- Process mapping
- Formalizing mental models
- ...

Formal Methods

Effective and data-rich
(esp. with a large N of participants)

But slow, expensive
(esp. with a large N of participants)

Informal Methods

- Informal observations
- Targeted conversations with key stakeholders
- Foraging on information about the domain
- Asking social network for bug lists
- ...

Informal Methods: quick, cheap, but you can miss important aspects of the problem (unless you are really good)

Whichever trajectory you take...

- **Collect a lot of stuff**
- **Put your materials together**
- **Immerse yourself in them**

Finding Inspiration



Jim Jarmusch
Movie director

“Nothing is original.

Steal from anywhere that
resonates with inspiration
or fuels your imagination”

note & sketch any design ideas that occur to you during formative research

Bug List

- Find examples of other technologies that address your problem
- Try them
- Compile list of frictions and frustrations that you discover in those tools
- Come up with ways of addressing those limitations
- How would a design that addresses these limitations work/look?

Other Sources of Inspiration

- Tech that solves a related problem
- Non-tech solutions for your problem
- Your population's context, habits, culture
- Things, processes, infrastructure used by your population
- Elegant artefacts and processes
- Anything else that strikes your fancy!