



UNIVERSITY OF
MICHIGAN

Extracting Data From an Interview

Understanding User Needs

Kentaro Toyama

Associate Professor, School of Information



© 2015 Kentaro Toyama and The Regents of the University of Michigan
Except where otherwise noted, this work is licensed under
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/>



Review

Note-Taking

Try using paper and pen/pencil.

- Devices can create a mental barrier.
- Print out interview protocol with blank space under core questions.

Write down...

- Key points, in short phrases
- Things that audio recording would not capture: impressions, facial expressions, physical context...
- Follow-up questions
- Etc.

Important, even if audio recording.

No “right” way to take notes. Develop your own style.

From Notes to Qualitative Data

As soon as possible after an interview, review notes and audio recordings and write down *affinity notes*.

An affinity note is...

- a sticky note on which you write
- a participant code (type and number: C01, C13, G04, M02, etc.)
- a statement or question
- that comes from your notes or audio recordings
- which is probably relevant to the needs assessment.

Affinity Note Guidelines [1/2]

Include...

- Factual statements – complete sentences
- Participant quotations (in quotation marks)
- Observations, as statements
- Interpretations of the above
- Questions

Tips:

- Make each note understandable on its own.
- Be concrete but concise.
- Aim for about one affinity note per minute of interview.

Affinity Note Guidelines [2/2]

Interpretations:

- Repeating themes
- Contradictions or conflicts
- Key findings
- Root issues
- Anything else that might be relevant

Good quotes:

- Unexpected
- Representative

Module Assignments

Interview and observations

- At least two sets
- Each at least one hour
- Take notes! (You will submit them.)

Affinity notes

- At least 100 notes
- Type 20 of the notes into module assignment for peer-review. Use participant codes; draw from all of your interview participants. Include...
 - 5 factual statements
 - 5 quotations
 - 5 observations or interpretations
 - 5 up to you

See module handouts for more details.

Interviews – 2-3 hours
Affinity notes – 4-6 hours
Total ~8 hours