# GRP-02d – (Individual) Interview Study Preparation

**Interview Protocol design**: Before you start interviews, design an Interview Protocol that represents the “big” questions you want to ask. Then define detailed questions to ask. Some of the list of questions here will be answered by your survey, but if aspects of user segment characteristics are unclear, you may wish to explore these further.

**There are many different types of interviews, but they all represent the same basic technique**

***Typically go from general to specific questions:***

Start with demographics and relevant experience (esp. technical expertise & internet use)

Explore what users are doing, when they use the site – five aspects:

* The context of use (where?)
* The user work or play processes of which this is a part (what they are doing and how the site fits into their “flow” of work (when? what triggers this use?)
* The purposes of use (why?)
* The processes of use (how?)
* The problems, experience, and transparency of use

Other questions to ask:

* What features do you use most and why?
* What features do you never user – and why?
* What do you wish the site/app would do, that it does not – and why?
* You have to think of your own questions here – think about the types of usability or utility issues you explored in the competitive analysis.

Dive into the detail:

* How do the users wants to use the site or a specific page, or feature?
* What problems do they experience?
* What is it, about this particular type of user, or context of use, that makes them behave in this way?

***Some questions may be best explored by asking each user to demonstrate how they interact with the site or app.*** Take observation notes while the user explains what they are doing, and *what thoughts are going through their mind as they do it*. Especially note any problems, errors, or confusion experienced, e.g. “I’m always confused by this menu, because the tabs don’t take me to the page I expect. ”

***Think through what aspects of site users and use you want to know about - design a set of questions to explore these – e.g.***

*Think about categories of use that you could ask about – design questions about those, e.g.*

* Youtube has content providers and content consumers, so you could ask about whether/how/why people provide content vs. whether/how/why people consume content on Youtube.

*Try to think about what differentiates your site (from Competitive Analysis) – and how attractive these aspects are to users*

* Netflix prides itself on tailoring categories of content to various aspects of the user’s way of thinking about movies. So you could ask about how useful these are, how people find content to watch, and if they can find content they want to see.

*While it helps to be prepared with what you think are the main purposes of user visit, ask users what they think are the main reasons to visit the site*

* Drexel University website has people who visit it to find information about current degrees and courses, potential degrees and courses, financial support and fees, professors, research, student success, etc. You could explore which of these attract users to the website

*What do users like most about the site?*

* Explore what users like generally, then explore what they like most about various pages, features, areas of the site
* Also explore what users *dislike* about the site, or about specific pages, features, areas

**To summarize:** to design an effective interview protocol, you need a framework to define questions that should be asked, based on what you know about the site and its typical users.

Write down your questions, then think about:

* Ordering of the questions
* What probes you can ask, to get more detail (the how? why? when? where? for what purpose? questions)
* How should you reword leading questions?

***WHAT ARE LEADING QUESTIONS?*** *Suppose these are interview questions asked by researchers at Facebook. Think about why each one is leading the user into some pre-set assumptions or pattern of thinking, then make revisions to your interview protocol to remove leading questions:*

1. Most people don't, but do you face any challenges when sharing content on Facebook?
2. How angry do you usually feel when someone posts an annoying comment on one of your posts?
3. Wouldn't you say that the benefits of a global, connected community outweigh the drawbacks?
4. Should concerned Facebook users take care to read the terms of service carefully prior to use?
5. What are some reasons why you dislike Twitter as compared to Facebook?
6. Do you always check Facebook on your phone?

**But** *include enough exploratory questions that you can be surprised* – the purpose is to discover what users are like and why (e.g. why people hate Youtube search – what they think an effective search should achieve, that Youtube search fails at!)

***Define how you will ask questions for each area*** *and* ***think ahead about what probes you will use****:* the what?, where?, when?, why?, for what reason? follow up questions.

***Practice your interview on a friend or relation before you try it out on a stranger***. Practice being present, thinking about what someone just told you, and practice following up with exploratory probes.

***Write and practice your introduction***: “Hi – I am Susan Gasson. I am conducting this interview for an HCI class at Drexel University. May I record this session? I will ONLY use it to analyze anonymous information for my class assignment – and I will delete the recording in 2-3 weeks, when I am done with this analysis. No personal information will be revealed to anyone else.”

***Practice your use of Zoom.*** Make sure you know how to set up a meeting so it is recorded, so there is no “waiting room,” and how to send an invitation to your interviewee. Zoom is better than Skype as you get a *transcript* – which you need to check and correct(!) following the recording (or **type up yourself** if you use another recording method!).