Understand Your Users: Exploratory Studies

- Observing participants performing some type of activity (ongoing behaviour)
- Can be controlled (lab) or naturalistic (field)
- Different possible levels of participation
- Written or video recording (requires consent!)
Understand Your Users: Exploratory Studies

- Naturalistic Observations
  - Non-Participatory
  - Passive Participation
- Controlled Observations
  - Active Participation
  - Complete Participation
Understand Your Users: Exploratory Studies

- Record artifacts users manipulate
- Use codes and symbols
- Separate “says” and “does”
- Separate tasks, goals, motivations
- Keep your side notes separately
- Separate actions and body language
- Separate observations and interpretations
Understand Your Users: Exploratory Studies

- In depth discussion of the topic with a participant
- Usually one-on-one
- Written, audio, video recording options (requires consent!)

- Questionnaires
- Observations
- Diary/Camera Studies
- Participatory Design
- Ethnographic Field Studies
- Contextual inquiry
Understand Your Users: Interview

- Structured
- Semi-Structured
- Narrative (Unstructured)
- Focus Groups
Understand Your Users: Interview

**Structured**
- Same set of questions
- Standardized process
- Little freedom of expression
- Often self-reported

**Semi-Structured**
- List of guiding questions/topics
- Trajectories in a conversation
- Often preceded by observation
- One of the most popular

**Narrative (Unstructured)**
- Focus and goal guide the discussion
- Open-ended questions
- Freedom of expression & little control
- Popular in ethnography

**Focus-Groups**
- Semi-structured in a group
- Moderated
- 6-10 homogeneous strangers
- May permit discussion
- Emerged in the 1940s
Understand Your Users: Exploratory Studies

- Questionnaires
- Observations
- Interviews

- Diary/Camera Studies
- Participatory Design
- Ethnographic Field Studies
- Contextual Inquiry

- Includes a mechanism (diary or camera) to record / describe relevant activities in “everyday” settings
- Longitudinal
- Data recorded by participants based on provided guidelines
Understand Your Users: Exploratory Studies

- Participants are given design elements
- Inclusive design process - constructing ideal experience real time with a researcher
- Helps to understand values and uncover mental models
Understand Your Users: Exploratory Studies

- Natural environment, everyday life
- First-hand participation in users’ activities
- Description of the scene, key events, key actors, key artifacts and actions
- Combination of observations and interviews
- Focus on objective behaviours
Understand Your Users: Exploratory Studies

Ethnographic Field Studies

Observations + Interviews + Natural context
Understand Your Users: Exploratory Studies

- Natural environment, everyday life
- First-hand participation in participants’ activities
- Relatively short (several hours)
- Researcher heavily involved in the process and constantly asks questions
- Mostly rely on self-report data

- Questionnaires
- Observations
- Interviews

- Diary/Camera Studies
- Participatory Design
- Ethnographic Field Studies

- Contextual inquiry
Understand Your Users: Exploratory Studies

There is a product

- True-Intent Studies
- Remote Unmoderated Usability Studies
- Intercept Surveys
- Clickstream Analysis

There is NO product

- Diary/Camera Studies
- Participatory Design
- Questionnaires
- Observations
- Interviews
- Ethnographic Field Studies
- Contextual inquiry
Translating Needs Into Functionalities

- Make data actionable
- Identify right time and place
- Turn problems into tasks
Translating Needs Into Functionalities

Make data actionable
- Adjust personas
- Affinity diagrams
- Breakdowns
- Cultural model
- Artifact models

Identify right time and place
- Physical model
- Sequence model
- Flow model

Turn problems into tasks
- Thinking
- Memory
- Attention
- Motivations
- Habitation