

Assignment 1: Contextual Enquiry

Due: February 14th BEFORE class

Overview

In this assignment, you will use the contextual enquiry method to learn more about the practices of some target participants. Use the assigned readings and slides from class to make sure you use the method properly. **Be sure to make an early start on this assignment. It will take time to schedule participants for observations, do the interviews, and analyze the data!**

Requirements

1. You must work alone.
2. You must do at least three interviews with target users using the contextual enquiry method (you are not allowed to interview classmates!) Each interview should last at least 20-30 minutes.
3. Choose a topic. Options include:
 - a. Do the contextual enquiry to support your startup project, specialization project, or some other class project you need to do.
 - b. Do the contextual enquiry in some other setting of your choice. e.g, interview cab/Uber drivers, employees at an organization of interest, roommates/friends cooking dinner, friends going to the gym, friends doing their work at a company. Anything reasonable.
 - c. **Talk to me or the TAs if you are unsure about your chosen topic/participants.**
4. Prepare and do the contextual enquiry:
 - a. Choose a focus for the interview. Prepare questions and choose tasks.
 - b. Recruit participants
 - c. Try to keep a “master/apprentice” mindset.
 - d. Work to establish a partnership with the participant.
 - e. Do lots of talking and thinking out loud (both you and the participant).
 - f. Take notes, pictures, sketches to record data from the interview.
 - g. Audio record the interview if the participant is willing.
5. Analyze the data you’ve collected. Be sure to identify:
 - a. What are the participant’s goals? What are they trying to accomplish?
 - b. What was the same across participant interviews? What was different?
 - c. What resources do participants use to do the task?
 - d. What problems or hindrances do they encounter doing the task?
 - e. What are any areas for improvement or design implications?
6. Submit a report describing your work (details below)

Report Guidelines

You will submit roughly 5-10 pages of text, photos, notes, sketches, as described below. Feel free to use this as an outline for the report, or you can organize your report differently provided it at least contains the following information:

- High-level description of your chosen problem / topic (1 paragraph)
- What is the focus of your contextual enquiry?
 - Specific description of task chosen for the contextual enquiry and how it fits into the big picture of your problem / topic.
- Description of participants (1 short paragraph per person).
 - How did you recruit participants?
 - Give a bit of relevant background on each participant, why they are appropriate target participants. For privacy reasons, do not use real names or identifying information about your participants.
 - e.g., Record the participant's age, gender, relevant background and experience
- Description of how you conducted the contextual enquiry
 - What activities / tasks did you observe?
 - What context did you observe them in?
 - What questions did you ask?
 - What data did you record and how did you record the data?
- Analysis
 - Summary analysis of observed tasks and the context in which activities are currently accomplished
 - What resources and tools are used in currently accomplishing the activity?
 - What hindrances or problems are they currently encountering in the activity?
 - Other observations that were interesting or surprised you
 - **Include your raw notes, photos, sketches as an appendix in your report.**
- Reflections
 - What did you learn from studying participants?
 - How did your observations change the way you thought about the problem / topic?
 - What problems did you encounter in running the contextual enquiry? What did you learn from those problems? What would you do differently?
- Key design issues
 - Based on your observations, what are the key issues that your design would need to address?
 - What key features need to be included for a new design to be successful?
 - How are your proposed design ideas derived from your interview data?

Grading Criteria

- Conducting method properly
 - Picking appropriate participants
 - Appropriate description of method
- Analysis
 - Including raw notes, pictures, and data from contextual enquiry
 - Including analysis of raw data and main takeaways
- Drawing appropriate conclusions
 - At least 4 resources used and 4 hindrances encountered
- Reflections
 - Explaining what you learned from the process
- Design
 - At least 4 key design issues from your observations