CS160 Discussion Section
Matthew Kam
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Office Hours
• John Canny (jfc@cs)
  Tu 11-12, W 1:30-2:30, 529 Soda

• Matthew Kam (mattkam@cs)
  M 4:30-5:30, Th 10-11, 551 Soda alcove

• Hesham Kamel (hesham@eecs)
  W 11-12, F 11-12, 525 Soda

Concepts
• Contextual inquiry
• Task analysis
• Scenario
• Storyboard

Contextual inquiry
• Methodology to gather information for task analysis
• Combines advantages of interviews and observations
• Should be performed in teams, not by individual team members!!!
  – Interviewers (1-3)
    • Different perspectives help create cross-sectional understanding of users
    • Team develops common understanding
  – Note-taker (1)
    • Smooth flow of interview is important
    – Photo, tape recorder, video (1)

Contextual Inquiry vs. Task Analysis
Where does contextual inquiry fit in?

Contextual Inquiry Tips
• Start with potential users, users of competitive products, decision makers, etc.
• Use time after interview to analyze info and refocus for next interview
• Refocusing includes choosing subsequent interviewees
• Select interviewees who can develop our understanding of the users, their tasks and work contexts

Contextual Inquiry Tips

- Make preliminary notes to focus interviews. Can be based on:
  - Assumptions
  - Info from previous interviews
- Clarify notes with interviewees
- If they use computers, ask what workarounds they resort to
- Don’t talk all the time
  - Periodic silence during observation
- Resume with interviewee’s words or thoughts if interrupt at inconvenient time

What Should Tasks Look Like?

- Say what the user wants to do, but not how the user would do it
- Some should describe a complete job
  - Don’t fixate on partial task elements
- They should be very specific
  - Hard for users to accurately evaluate something that isn’t concrete and specific
- They should reflect who perform them
  - Features for tasks should be tailored for intended users

Task Analysis

- Goal is to understand the users, their needs and work processes, and what supports or hinders them
- Analyze results obtained from contextual inquiry
- Use personas (and their characteristics, values, goals, etc.) to select tasks that are representative
- Use personas and their goals to ensure that tasks describe a complete job

Task Analysis Tips

- Use questions given in lecture
- Easier to work from transcripts than original interview notes, tape recording
- Team (over individual) analysis of interview transcripts
  - Saves time in long run
  - Builds team ownership
  - Clear understanding of group’s focus: “What is our purpose or design concern?”

Task Analysis Tips

- Info analysis is not the same as decision making
  - Don’t skip “ludicrous” ideas immediately
  - Don’t structure / categorize info too early
  - Use Post-It notes (i.e. affinity diagram) instead http://www.balancedscorecard.org/files/affinity.pdf
- Use and reuse the interviewees’ language
- May need to validate interpretation with original interviewee

Scenarios

Scenario

- Scenarios provide context of real work for users to evaluate storyboards
- Spells out what a user has to do
- And what user sees step-by-step in performing a task using a system
- While tasks are design-independent, scenarios are design-specific
- Force designers to get their designs specific and human-centered

Scenario Tips

- Think of a scenario as “play acting” the persona
- Focus mainly on daily scenarios
- Also focus a little on necessary but less frequent scenarios
- Should have more breadth than depth, i.e. described from start to finish than exhaustive detail for each step

Storyboard

- Sequences of sketches that show what the screen would show
- And the actions that user can take at key points in the task
- But only show limited details
- Allow designers to show users (using scenarios) what it is like to do real work with their design

More Tips

- Don’t confuse problem statement with abstract of solution
- Perform contextual inquiry conscientiously
  - Don’t cut corners
  - Otherwise, where is your data going to come from?
- Cite specific details from contextual inquiry, etc.
  - Several individual project proposals graded down for being vague
  - Gives impression that corners were cut, sloppiness, etc.

More Tips

- Writing style
  - Write as if you would for a client, i.e. professional tone
  - To the point, i.e. short and sweet
- Reality check: Would you be impressed by your report if you were the client?

Administrivia

- Contextual inquiry / task analysis assignment due Feb 12, 2003
  - Turn in 2 printed copies in separate stacks
  - Single-spaced; quality over quantity
  - See me in OH with drafts if help needed
  - Extension may be granted; email request with reasons to jfc@cs, cc to mattkam@cs and hesham@eecs
- Lecture today
  - EECS instructional and NT account forms to be handed out
  - Come with draft (whatever you’ve done so far) of contextual inquiry assignment, if possible
Administrivia

- Laptops TBA
  - Don’t need them till hi-fi prototype assignment
- GUIR test subjects
  - One per group for now