

Interview techniques for design research

Media Design Research seminar
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7 steps to research

- Identify
- Survey
- Plan
- Collect data
- Analyze data
- Discuss findings
- Present

It is extremely important, from the beginning, to try to assess whether the research you intend to conduct is:

1. Viable – You can indeed find and use the sources and data.
2. “Worth it” – The research will generate interest in others.

A comparison of research perspectives

Basic belief	Positivist	Interpretive	Design
Ontology	A single reality, knowable, probabilistic.	Multiple realities, socially constructed	Multiple, contextually situated, alternative world states.
Epistemology	Objective, detached observer of truth	Subjective	Knowing through making.
Methodology	Observation, quantitative, statistic.	Participation, qualitative.	Participation, qualitative; developmental (co-design)
Value	Truth, universal prediction.	Understanding, situated description	Control, creation, understanding

Association for Information
Systems website, 2006

Poly-contextual vs. anthropocentric view of the world....

Design thinking approach

- Deduction – Empirical methodology, experiments, quantitative methods
- Induction – Research is done to make sense of phenomena

Deduction: Build a hypothesis and set out to prove it. Causal relationships are established.

Induction: Data collection follows theory

Sources

- Primary
- Secondary

Primary data: Is unique to You. Examples: The results of interviews with subjects; the transcription of an ancient text. What are some examples of primary sources?

Secondary data involves using information that others have gathered through primary data.

Primary sources

- 16th century Dutch collars.
- Anna Mendieta's performance reconstruction, photographic sequence.
- Tom of Finland's exhibition air mail commemorative stamps.

National Archives of Finland



National Archives of Finland



National Archives of Finland



Surveying literary sources

- Detective
- Foundation
- Framework
- Reflection
- Telescope
- Arrow
- Demonstration
- Voice

When you use secondary data, your sources will most likely consist of literature. There are many possible ways to interpret the data that we get through literature.

1. Detective following leads through trails. Some of the clues might not lead anywhere. Others might be old and therefore of no use. Still the literature can help you to understand where others have been.
2. Foundation – Your work as building on the work of others. Will it be valued if it does not?
3. Framework – You are expected to show what has been done by others and why yours is different. This can then help you to form a theoretical justification for your own project.
4. Reflection – The literature can allow us to compare our ideas with the ideas of others.
5. Telescope – The literature might allow you to focus on a problem, or a set of questions. The object of research can be “magnified” so you can look at it closely.
6. Arrow – Literary sources can be used as guides that take other along a path, indicating where to find fuller explanations.
7. Demonstration – Rather than generate new data, you might wish to

Examples of literary sources

- Encyclopedias & compendia
- Books, specialized
- Journals, peer-reviewed
- Conference proceedings
- Journals & magazines
- Online repositories
- Films and other audio visual sources?

Primary sources and design research

- Focus groups
- Case studies
- Diaries/cultural probes
- Protocol analysis
- Interviews
- Fieldwork
- Workshops

Focus groups: 8-10 stakeholders who are invited to test and talk about a particular product, advertisement, problem.... The set up provides good social stimulation. See Krippendorff p. 225.

Protocol analysis: Talk out loud while doing. Newell and Simon (1972)

Observation: Can include Post Occupancy Evaluation (architects and interior design) and Evidence Based Design (EBD) That things actually work.

The interview

- **Clarity**
 - Need to know exactly what information you want/need beforehand.
 - Format, including instructions for completion must be precise
- **Length: Only what is absolutely necessary should be included.**

The interview

- Introduction is very important.
 - Organize into sections
 - Demographics always first
 - Essential information first
- Consider coding non-numerical responses, if possible.

The interview

- Questions should be short, simple and to the point.
- Avoid leading the respondent.
- Each question should address a single issue.
- The language should be neutral
 - No 'embarrassing' words
 - No slang

The interview

- Closed questions
- Attitude questions can be coded
 - Likert scale
 - Semantic differential scale
- Open questions –
 - Better if inserted at the end of a section.
 - Can provide additional valuable information

Likert scale measures attitude.

Likert Scales

Please circle the number that represents how you feel about the computer software you have been using

I am satisfied with it
Strongly Disagree ---1---2---3---4---5---6---7--- Strongly Agree

It is simple to use
Strongly Disagree ---1---2---3---4---5---6---7--- Strongly Agree

It is fun to use
Strongly Disagree ---1---2---3---4---5---6---7--- Strongly Agree

It does everything I would expect it to do
Strongly Disagree ---1---2---3---4---5---6---7--- Strongly Agree

I don't notice any inconsistencies as I use it
Strongly Disagree ---1---2---3---4---5---6---7--- Strongly Agree

It is very user friendly
Strongly Disagree ---1---2---3---4---5---6---7--- Strongly Agree

Semantic Differential Scale

For each pair of adjectives place a cross at the point between them which reflects the extent to which you believe the adjectives describe policemen

clean	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	dirty
honest	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	dishonest
kind	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	cruel
helpful	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	unhelpful
fair	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	biased
strong	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	weak
foolish	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	wise
energetic	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	lazy
unreliable	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	reliable

(Robson, 1993)

The interview

- Once your questionnaire is ready, it is good to do a test with colleagues and friends to check if all the questions are intelligible.
- Snail mail samples should include self-stamped envelope, SASE.

The interview

- Structured – Follow a set of questions
- Unstructured – Can be a free open discussion, or can also loosely follow a pre-set agenda. This is the most complicated and time consuming data gathering method.

Need to record and transcribe. It is important to codify each line

The interview

- Closing – Interviewing can be an emotional situation. You are asking a person to give of themselves and let you into their mind. When concluding the interview, try to have an atmosphere of closure, conclusion.
- Thank the interviewee for their time. Usually a small token of appreciation, such as a movie ticket, or coffee and dessert can be given.

Need to record and transcribe. It is important to codify each line.

Lucy Suchman