User Interface
Software Project

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Contextual Inquiry
Contextual Inquiry

- Similar to ethnography
  - Studies the user in place
  - Tries to capture the reality of his work culture and practice

- Different from ethnography
  - It is not open-ended
  - The investigator has a specific focus
  - Its goal is to
    - find the right design
    - design the right system
Contextual Inquiry

- Contextual Inquiry
  - Is like being an apprentice to the user
  - Go to their location
    - See their work place
    - See the objects they use
    - See the artifacts they create
    - Experience their communication patterns
      - verbal
      - non-verbal
  - Gather data
The user is the expert and a partner to the investigator

However, the investigator is not passive
• Her goal is to understand what is going on.
  • Asking questions...
  • Questioning motivations...
  • Make sense of the actions is expected

She must be ready to challenge her assumptions of understandings of the place, user and task
Contextual Inquiry

- Step 1
  - Data collection
    - Interviews
    - Photographs
    - Videos
    - Drawings
    - Sample collection
Contextual Inquiry

- Step 2
  - Data analysis
    - Sequential analysis of actions
    - Physical models of actions
    - Models of communication flow
    - Cultural insights
    - Artifact categorization
Contextual Inquiry

• Step 3
• Outcome
  • Representation of the required task sequences, artifacts and communication channels that must be supported.
  • Understanding of physical and cultural constraints
Course Path

- What is wanted
- Analysis
- Prototype
- Design
- Implement and deploy