INTERVIEWS

IN

USER CENTERED SOFTWARE ENGINEERING

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CREDITS

- **slides** Lecture on User Centered Software Design by Prof. Judy Olson, 191A, 2012
- **book** Understanding Your Users: A Practical Guide to User Requirements Methods, Tools, and Techniques by Kathy Baxter
- **git(hub)** reveal.js: The HTML Presentation Framework by Hakim El Hattab
INTERVIEWING BASICS

• What are interviews good for?
• What are interviews not fit for?
• How do you prepare for an interview?
• How do you conduct an interview?
WHAT ARE INTERVIEWS GOOD FOR?

- Eliciting requirements: understand your domain more
- Developing personas: understand your users more
- To prepare for a usability/design/development activity
  - open ended interview followed by a close ended interview
- To follow up on a usability/design/development activity
  - e.g. follow up for a survey
WHAT ARE INTERVIEWS NOT FIT FOR?

• Collecting data from many users, interviews take time
• Collecting data very quickly, interviews take time
• Asking sensitive questions that might require anonymity.
• Geography can play a small role as well.
PREPARE FOR AN INTERVIEW

STEPS

1. Know why you are doing the interview. ...
2. Pick the right type of interview.
3. Write down the interview.
4. Practice the interview with each other.
5. Assign roles for the interview.
6. Collect all materials required for the interview.
7. Recruit your users.
WHY YOU ARE DOING THE INTERVIEW.

- Define the goal of the interview. ...
- Eliciting Requirements?
  - "What does it mean to be X?"
  - "Does the data need to be secure?"
  - "What should the product do?"
  - "Why should the product do this?"
  - "What are you using now?"
- Clarify any domain specific jargon or definitions.
WHY YOU ARE DOING THE INTERVIEW (2).

- Developing Personas?
  - "What should the product do?"
  - "What are you using now?"
  - "How do you do X now?"
  - Ask about the expertise of the user
  - "When do you use X the most?"
- Write out your questions as you are figuring this out!
PICK THE RIGHT TYPE OF INTERVIEW.

- Unstructured
  - You are unsure of the kind of responses to expect.
  - You only have a general sense of what you want to cover.
  - Easy to follow up with the interviewee about an answer.
  - Data gathered is very rich.
  - More time spent per question.
  - You may not end up asking the same questions.
PICK THE RIGHT TYPE OF INTERVIEW (2).

- Structured
  - You know exactly what to ask.
  - You know about the kind of responses to expect.
  - You ask the same questions.
  - You do not ask follow-up questions on the spot.
  - Data gathered is more structured.
  - Takes lesser time.
PICK THE RIGHT TYPE OF INTERVIEW (3).

- Semi-Structured
  - The best of both worlds: Exploratory and Well-defined.
  - You know exactly what to ask and cover.
  - You allow the interviewee to dwell deeper into details.
  - You ask follow-up questions on the spot.
RECRUIT YOUR PARTICIPANTS.

- Who would you ask?
  - potential users, administrators, developers
- How many do you ask?
  - number of different kinds of users
  - number of personas you need to develop
  - number of domains involved
- How do you ask?
  - Put up/email notices
  - Invite personally (?)
5 MIN ASSIGNMENT

1. Decide on 1 reason to interview
2. List 2 possible kinds of users whom you should interview.
3. List 2 other reasons for interviewing.
WRITE DOWN THE INTERVIEW.

- An interview is **not** a conversation!
- Write a **lead statement**
  - Goal of the interview
  - Checklist of Topics to be covered
  - Time required
- Write down the **questions**
  - Frame the questions with proper language.
  - Keep the questions short, (20 words or less).
  - Break down long questions into simpler ones.
  - Remember: the interviewee is not reading these questions.
- Write down the **closing remarks**.
- Prepare a script (can simply be lead statement + questions + closing remarks)
5 MIN ASSIGNMENT

List 5 questions that you will ask your participants.
PRACTICE THE INTERVIEW.

- Test the questions.
  - clarity. questions easy to understand?
  - validity. questions asking what you think they are asking?
  - check your questions for bias.
    - "don't you think that X takes more time than Y?"
    - "does X take more time than Y?"
    - "which takes more time: X or Y?"
- Time the interview.
ASSIGN ROLES FOR THE INTERVIEW

- Participant
- Interviewer
- Note Taker(s)
- Videographer
COLLECT ALL MATERIALS REQUIRED FOR THE INTERVIEW.

- Script (Lead statement, Questions, Closing remarks)
- Laptop, Notebook, pen(cil) for note-taking,
- Audio or video recorder (interviewee's consent)
- Memory aids, e.g. calculators, calendars
- Material useful for asking questions, e.g. screen shot of current system.
CONDUCT AN INTERVIEW

- The Phases of an Interview
- Things to keep in mind
- Professionalism is a must!
THE PHASES OF AN INTERVIEW
FIVE PHASES

• 5–10 minutes: Introduction (greetings, instructions, overview)
• 5–10 minutes: Warm-up (easy, non-threatening questions)
• 85–100 (?) minutes: Body of the session (detailed questions)
• 5–10 minutes: Cooling-down (summarize interview, easy questions)
• 5 minutes: Wrap-up (thank participant, leave/escort out)
THE PHASES OF AN INTERVIEW

OTHER PHASES TO KEEP IN MIND

• Simple to complex
• More to less familiar (for the participant)
• Open to Close? vice-versa?
THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

- Nonverbal responses
  - Facial expression
  - Body language
  - Take notes
- Acknowledging
  - be interested, but neutral
  - "uh-huh", "OK", "I see"
- Paraphrasing
  - useful for your own checking.
  - shows that you are engaged.
  - "If I understand correctly", "Let me summarize everything so far"
THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND (2)

- Probing
  - "tell me more about X"
- Focusing, redirecting
  - "Show me" - keep things grounded in the specific
- Keep on track
  - "That’s really interesting, but I have to get to these other questions before our time runs out."
PROFESSIONALISM IS A MUST!

- Be on time.
- Be prepared.
- Dress well.
- Be polite.
- Do not argue.
- Do not force responses.
- The participant is helping you. Not necessarily the other way around.
YOU CAN NOW START INTERVIEWING!

10 min class activity
Conduct a short interview with the questions that you came up with earlier.
THE END.