

# Considering Qualitative Evaluation

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# Overview

Talk 1: Setting the stage: qualitative

**Talk 2: Observation as a skill**

*Activity 1: Practicing observation*

*Activity 2: Interviewing 1*

*Activity 3: Interviewing 2*

Talk 3: Interviewing as a skill

*Activity 4: Interviewing 3*

Panel: open discussion

Talk 4: In summary – next step analysis

# Overview

A discussion of

- Motivation – why observe
- Observation as a skill – how to learn/teach
- Observation for new insight – how to catch that ‘edge’
- How to get from insight to design
- Design critique as method

Why do we do empirical research?

# Purpose

1. Understand effectiveness  
(getting the design right)
2. Understand what people want/need  
(getting the right design)
3. Trigger invention and/or innovation  
(getting the right design)

# Purpose

## **1. Understand effectiveness, usability (getting the design right)**

- after creation of prototype/software/system
  - usability studies
  - ‘usability considered harmful (some of the time)’  
(Greenberg & Buxton)
    - When?

# Purpose

## **2. Understand what people want/need (getting the right design)**

- Participatory design
  - Do the people who will use it know best?
  - What is the role of the designer?

Henry Ford

*'If I had asked people what they wanted,  
they would have said faster horses'*

# Purpose

**3. Trigger invention and/or innovation  
(getting the right design)**

What to do?

observation for inspiration

informed by ethnographic methods

ethnographic studies done professionally

## Ethnographic studies done professionally

- not the right settings
- no intention for invention

we have an  
ethnographically inspired approach

with intention for invention

or possibility intervention

heavily based on observation

observation is a skill

observations on several levels

one level can lead to requirements

## Other observation possible levels

- Lower level
- Meta level
- Finer details
- Kinetic level
- ....
- Multiple possible 'levels'

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- Multiple possible 'levels'
  - leads to ideas about 'self as lens'

How to teach/learn observation?

# Teaching observation

## How I learnt

- Enforced lengthy observations
- Lots of drawing exercises
  - Upside down
  - ‘No peeking’
  - Quick response (1<sup>st</sup> thought best thought)
  - Minimizing (a few good lines)

# Teaching observation

## How I teach

- Parallel observation
- Discussion of field notes
- Dissecting a small video sample
- Self as lens

problem is we see what we expect to see

the challenge

to see beyond our expectations to reality

relates to change blindness

- Show change blindness videos

bottom line

unless we work at it we see  
what we expect to see

successful observation gathers a lot of data

# Possible results

- Rich 'slice'
- New understanding
- Theoretical insight
- Inspiration

## If success

- Still work to do
- How do these results get used in design

# In summary we want

- Sensitive observation
- Brilliance in catching a new edge
- Creative design response