ICS 132: Organizational Information Systems

Analyzing Social Settings - II

**recap**

- from theory to methods
  - qualitative approach
  - want to get at the DETAILS
  - want to get at the DIVERSITY of settings and attitudes
  - understanding “the member’s point of view”
  - observation and interviewing
  - differences between L&L’s viewpoint and our own
- today:
  - how to focus data and begin analysis

**observation**

- learning to look with an ethnographer’s eye
  - everything is potentially interesting
- questions to keep in mind:
  - why was that done?
  - why was it done *just then* and by so-and-so?
  - what were the alternatives?
  - why were they not taken?
  - what set of expectations and needs do working arrangements reflect?
  - how did things come to be this way?
- the answers to the questions come later
  - right now, you need to collect the evidence

**library observations**

- Not a HCI project
- “Fit” between the IS and library functions
  - not just technical features
  - positioning of equipment
  - support for using the equipment
- Public places
  - “cone” of privacy
  - don’t have to disturb people
### logging data

- **fieldnotes**
  - notes, mental and jotted
  - memories, thoughts, vignettes, incidents, quotes
  - the importance of the setting
    - most work practice evolves in situ
    - the environment is tailored to the work
  - field notes are a continual site of activity
    - you need to **write stuff down** -- you will forget
    - writing them up **quickly**
    - re-reading and re-working
    - early analytic thoughts...

### interviewing

- **what's the role of the interview?**
  - confirming hypotheses
  - generating hypotheses
  - getting a **point of view**
- **interview guide**
  - a way to pre-organize the information
  - keeping track
    - interviews generate huge amount of data
    - need to
      - **log it**
      - keep track of the conversation
      - **direct** the conversation

### practical features of interviewing

- If possible, record the interview
- Write everything down
- Be flexible in the interview
  - don’t be tied to the guide
- Hard interviews

### focussing data

- **three steps**
  - *gather*: observing, collecting field materials
  - *focus*: structuring material, guiding observation
  - *analyze*: developing conceptual analysis
- focussing
  - beginning to ask questions
  - **concurrently** with data gathering
    - getting a handle on the data you're collecting
    - finding the holes
units, aspects, topics

• units
  – it’s a question of scale
    • formal and informal
    • not just groups, but actions too (processes, practices)
    • e.g. Conversation Analysis; Marxist economics
  – aspects
    • apply independent of scale
    • meaning; structure; power; ...
• topics
  – topics combine aspects and units
    • organizational factors affecting application adoption

eight questions

• types
  – e.g. the total institution
  – the rule of mutual exclusiveness
  – the rule of exhaustiveness

• structures
  – related to types, but:
    • what are the internal features of the type?
    • what is the relationship between different types?
    • example: bureaucracies

• processes
  – we’ve already encountered these…
    • but now, more broadly (and less formal)
      – cycles, spirals, sequences
eight questions

- causes
  - not simple cause and effect
    - cumulative causes… think of the processes through which situations come about
  - situational versus dispositional causes
- consequences
  - functional approach
    - what functions are served?
    - what role does this play?
  - nonfunctional approach
    - what ends are served?
    - what are the products?

agency

- the other questions illustrate the passive model
  - brute facts and the machinations of the social world
- people are active entities!
  - coping, acting, scheming, evading, cajoling, maneuvering
  - the issue of agency:
    - whose action brings about the situation?
    - how does this action come about?
  - structure/agency dyad
    - it’s a cycle!

practical features of analysis

- “Immersion” in the data
- Analysis = insight + understanding + data
- “Right” and “wrong” questions
- Coding tips

interview analysis
Conclusion

- Data gathering and analysis is tough
- Interested researcher
- Tell a story

Good luck on the project !!