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Ethnography of scientists can provide a rich framework to gain insights to create actionable results that inform library services for research scientists.

Why do Ethnography in libraries?

Ethnographic research is very useful to build knowledge that contributes to good library services design. The way that users obtain, evaluate, use, and archive information is much different today than it was twenty years ago, or even ten years ago.

And yet, some things remain the same.

In exploring issues around the research process, libraries can collect powerful knowledge about their users, and use this to improve how the library meets the needs of the users.

Bootstrap (Rapid) UX

A small team, of four to six librarians is ideal. It is good to have a range of skills represented: librarians that are good at interviewing, solving problems, and doing project management. It is crucial to have a person that has authority to make service changes as a research team member.

UX at Fondren:

History:

A number of projects have been undertaken, ranging from usability of a new website, or how researchers in a building were adapting to being in a new building.

- Library Catalog Usability Study (August 2012-current)
- iPad Faculty Study (January 2012-May 2013)
- Research Flow (July-September 2011)
- Discovering Discovery: How Researchers Find the Sources They Need (April-May 2011)
- Establishing Fondren@brc: Insights from a User Study (June-August 2010)

Project Management

- Pre-Project Planning: Logistics
- Where will you share data with other team members?
- Living in the cloud (Dropbox, GoogleDocs, Dedoose) ensures that you have easy access to project materials for all of the project team members. Even with a short, small-scale study you end up with a good amount of data. You might have mp3's of recorded data, transcripts, coded transcripts, and photographs.
- Who will be your participants? Because of the rapid approach, it is good to quickly identify who the key stakeholders might be, or who your target group of interest might be.
- Bootstrap UX will limit the number of interviews that you do. Aim for between 6-12, and that should be a good amount of data.

Other Resources:

Andrew Asher ERIAL Toolkit http://www.erialproject.org/participants/anthropologists/

ANTHROLIB http://www.library.rochester.edu/anthrolib/

Sample Transcription template available at: http://bit.ly/I1PG3e

ANTHROLib Bibliography https://www.zotero.org/groups/anthrolib_bibliography

Ethnographies of Science:

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Pre-Project Planning: Research Design/Ethnographic Methods

- What do you want to find out-Each research project needs to have one driving project question
- Forming Good Questions-you will ask each interview subject a series of questions
- IRB (even if you don't have an IRB process)
- What methods will you use?

  - Interviews
  - Photo Diaries
  - Mapping Diaries
  - Journals
  - Participant Observation
  - Focus Groups

- Literature Review--has someone else done a similar study? Do some research in the library literature, and find out!

Sample Timeline

- Pre-Project: Create and get approval for research instrument
- Week One & Two: Interviews
- Week Three & Four: Transcription and Coding
- Week Five & Six: Generate Service Recommendations and Report Writing

Collecting & Transcription

- Transcription
  - You might decide to do full transcription, or partial. A recent project, A15, did not audio record at all, and utilized typing in notes at the point of interview.

Analyzing Data

- Coding: This is the process of generating words, and short phases to give meaning and summarize the text of the interviewee.
- Ethnocharette

Report Writing

- A brief report is done at the end of the project. The structure will usually include your methodology: how you went about your study, how many people you talked to, and what you were trying to find out. The end of the report will be a listed of recommended actionable items, and perhaps some recommendations for areas that need further study.

Generating Service Changes

A Note on Ethics:

Research subjects consent is crucial. They must understand what the research project is, and how their data will be used, if there are risks or benefits for them, and how their confidentiality will be protected. Written consent is not always necessary, but it is a best practice. You might decide to either video or audio record your interview as well, and consent must be given for any use of those images for your research.

Selected Literature on Ethnographic Methods

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