UX Fundamentals

Week 3: Prepping and Conducting User Research

Feb 8 2021
Connecting the process to your course deliverables outlined on your Miro board

- Initial assumptions
- Secondary research
- Plan and conduct user research
Assignment for this week:
Prep for user research

● Write your **research plan** and begin drafting your **interview guide**.

● Recruit **five users** to interview.
  All interviews should be conducted by **Weds. Feb 17**, to give you time to synthesize insights by **Sun. Feb 21**.
Developing Interview Questions

Generate Questions: Write questions you want to ask during the interview. Don't forget to prepare follow-up questions! We don't ask one question and then move to the next; we ask follow-ups to learn more about the interviewee's unique lived experience. Tip: Avoid yes/no questions!
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most people are here
study the extremes
Someone who has never used the app

study the extremes

App power user
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Project example: OVCDEI-UIUCollab

How might we motivate meaningful interdisciplinary collaboration based on the needs of people across intersectional identities and the spectrum of points in career?
- What are typical ways that individuals initiate collaborative researches?
- What factors influence individuals to form collaborations at different stages in their career?
- What does collaboration and seeking collaboration look like in quantitative fields like STEM versus qualitative fields like the humanities?
- How important is various funding availability (grant, sponsored research, general funding availability) to motivate productive research collaborations?
- What is the role of administration/leadership on every level in promoting research collaboration?
- What features are essential to have in a platform to promote collaboration versus features that would be nice to have?
We modify the interview guide into different templates for various audience - admin, faculty, students. Here are sample questions for our student interviewees:

- Tell me more about your journey to Illinois.
- Tell us about a successful collaboration that you have been involved in.
- Have you experienced any obstacles if you have attempted to initiate a collaboration as a student?
- If you have been in a collaboration that dissolved, what was the reason? What would you change or do differently?
- What are the unique challenges/advantages to collaboration belonging to a marginalized or underrepresented group?
- What resources or tools do you use to look for collaboration within or across departments on campus?
Conducting user research sessions

Interview tips

**Approach with a open mind.**
Don’t judge or jump to conclusions. Be curious.

**Have a conversation, not an interview.**
Avoid following a rigid script. Don’t make them feel like they’re being tested. We are here to learn from these people, not evaluate them.

**Empathize and identify with the people you meet.**
Try to see things from their point of view. Understand their perceptions. Don’t correct, refute, or challenge.

**Ask open-ended questions.**
Avoid leading questions. Instead of “Do you like this?,” ask “What do you think of this?”

**Tell me about a time when...**
Ask participants to tell a story about an actual event in their past. This encourages people to move from the abstract to the real.

**Try not to fill any silence.**
After asking a question, give them time to reflect and answer.

**Do not assume you know what they are going to say.**
Don’t put words in their mouth. Always ask participants to explain their reasoning.

**Allow for interpretation.**
Keep in mind that what they say might not match up with what they do. They may not be able to verbalize (or even know) what they need.
Conducting user research sessions

Interview tips

- Assign team roles before the interview: facilitator, note takers.

- Ideally the main note taker should not be the person leading the questions, as they will need to maintain good eye contact to build rapport with the participant.

- For note taking, write in the voice of the participant. Don’t be tempted to interpret the meaning during the interview – be true to their intent. Aim for direct quotes wherever possible.

- Try to debrief immediately after the interview. Spend half an hour chatting through the key insights with your team members.
## Conducting user research sessions

### Interview tips

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Listen Closely</th>
<th>Don’t Assume</th>
<th>Dig Deeper</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pay close attention to what they are saying and be sure to write down quotes.</td>
<td>Don’t judge or jump to conclusions. Be curious.</td>
<td>Ask more questions, dig deeper to get at the heart of their motivations.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Validate Feelings</th>
<th>Ask “Why?”</th>
<th>Let Silence Breathe</th>
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<td>Make the interviewee feel comfortable and heard.</td>
<td>Ask follow up questions. Get every detail you can out of their stories</td>
<td>After asking a question, give them time to reflect and provide additional information in an answer.</td>
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Arc of an interview

Willingness to share

Time

Intro Yourself
Intro Project
Build Rapport
Evoke Stories
Explore Emotions
Question Statements
Thank & Wrap-up
Things to do this week:

1. Each **group** should **contribute at least one suggested reading** to the #week-3-discussion channel, about the topic of **User Interviews**.

2. Complete **Deliverable 1B** in your group’s Miro board by midnight on Sunday 2/14.

What to expect next week:

1. You’ll start **conducting your interviews**, completing them by **Wednesday 2/17**

2. We’ll introduce you to methods for synthesizing your interview insights, and you’ll need to complete your first synthesis assignment, **Deliverable 2**, by **Sunday 2/21**.