Video Field Studies with your Cell Phone

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FULL-DAY TUTORIAL

Many researchers and practitioners in HCI, Interaction Design, Design Anthropology swear to video when dung field studies of potential users. This is due to the power of the media for capturing practices and contexts, conveying empathy, and engaging audiences.

Newcomers to the field, and in particular practitioners from smaller organizations are understandably nervous about embarking on video projects out of fear that it is difficult to get consent in the first place, that the ethics is difficult to handle, that video shooting makes the social relations awkward, that the editing task is monumental, that equipment is difficult to handle etc.

This tutorial presents a lightweight entry into video field studies, using cheap devices like cell phones and portable webcams for informal shooting and simple computer handling for editing. E.g. how far can you get with an iPhone or a video capable iPod? Or with the GoPRO sports camera? Our approach has a strong focus on how to use video in design, rather than on the technical side. The goal is to engage design teams in meaningful discussions based on user empathy, rather than to produce beautiful videos. Basically it is a search for a minimalist way of achieving what usually requires trained shooting and editing with larger equipment.

Program:

0. Introductions
1. Video Notes - capturing needs
2. Video Cards - setting conditions
3. Video Wall - mapping specs
4. Video Specs - creating solutions
5. Video Prompts - uncovering risks
6. Closing discussion

The program engages participants in hands-on video work.

Theoretical backdrop

The tutorial picks up on the core dilemmas in utilizing user video for design: Is the camera an unobtrusive fly on the wall or a collaborative story telling tool? Is video best seen as data material, as visual ethnography, or as design material? Does video support spec-driven or prototype-driven design? Can video best boost usability testing or shared scenario building?

Participants

Participants with and without prior video study experience are welcome. Participants are encouraged to bring their own video capable cell phone or similar device and laptop. Also, participants should be ready to prepare a few video shots en route to the conference.
Participant number: Max 12

Organizers:

Jacob Buur is professor of User-Centred Design at the University of Southern Denmark, and research director of the strategic research centre SPIRE. Through 20 years of practice in industry and academia he has developed video techniques for bridging user studies and innovation.

Euan Fraser has a background in design and innovation from Strathclyde University and is presently completing his graduate studies in IT Product Design at the University of Southern Denmark

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