

CS 6540 — Human-Computer Interaction

Project 5: Conducting Interviews

Due: November 15, 10PM

1 Summary

Note: As previously mentioned, this is a class that is partially focused on giving you *hands-on experience* with *skills that are useful* for conducting HCI research. As a result, this handout sometimes uses the term ‘research’ as an adjective for, e.g., your focus topic for your group projects. We wish to emphasize that despite the occasional usage of that term, the purpose of these projects is entirely educational; we are not actually conducting research (i.e., a systematic investigation designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge) and any findings from these group projects are not publishable. Review from a human subjects board is necessary in order to begin any human subjects research, **including recruitment**. These are classroom assignments, which are meant to increase your personal expertise and knowledge.

This is the second of four group projects.

You should use the same group from the previous project for this project. Additionally, you should use (roughly) the same research topic as in the previous project. *Note:* This does not mean that your research questions cannot evolve or become more specific over the course of the projects; however, you should not change topics entirely between projects.

The purpose of this assignment is to get hands-on experience with writing interview questions, conducting interviews, and transcribing interviews.

Assignment Goals:

1. Get hands-on experience writing neutral, useful interview questions based on a research topic and research questions.
2. Get hands-on experience conducting semi-structured interviews.
3. Get hands-on experience transcribing interviews.

2 Your Assignment Tasks

1. Draft interview questions.
2. Establish recruitment criteria and strategies and recruit participants.
3. Conduct interviews.
4. **Done as an individual, not as a group:** Partially transcribe one interview and turn in transcribed text.
5. Complete and turn in the writeup. Also turn in the interview recordings.

3 Other Details and Requirements

- Total interview number/cumulative interview length requirements are given below. If you believe that different arrangements make more sense for your research question(s), contact course staff and we may approve changing these requirements for your group.
 - **Each member of your group must conduct at least 2 interviews.** 3–4 interviews per group member is preferable. Additionally, we require that each group member be present at **at least 2 other interviews** to observe and take notes. Please have a maximum of 2 members present at interviews.
 - Overall, your group must have **at least 1 cumulative hour of interview time per group member.**
 - You should aim to have interviews take as long as they need to (within reason) to ask the questions that you want to ask. A normal-ish interview length is between 30 and 60 minutes, but you don't need to pad the time with unimportant questions if it makes more sense to do a larger number of shorter interviews. There is no set number of questions you need to ask. Papers that we have read include their interview questions and how long the interviews took, which can help you calibrate.
- As with Project 2 (Think-Aloud), you will be recording participant sessions. For this project we are asking for audio recordings only (not video or screen capture). As with Project 2, think about any privacy or data retention issues and prepare scripts for explaining the situation to participants and obtaining consent. Please make sure that you get permission to share the audio recordings with course staff.
- While you shouldn't wildly change your interview questions between interviews, you should feel free to change, add, or drop questions as you proceed. As much as possible, this should only be done in collaboration with your group members. (Although you'll be using the results in your final report, you are essentially piloting your interview questions.)
- Participants can remain anonymous—we don't need to know who they are.
- Participants must be 18+.
- In general, you can ask any questions that:
 - Are ethical.
 - Have a point. What will you learn from them? Is it interesting? Would other researchers care?
 - * More particularly, *are interview questions the best (or a reasonable) way to get at the information that you want to know?* If the answer is, “actually, the research questions would best be answered by analyzing user logs and asking people is a poor substitute,” then you should *come up with (related) research questions that are more suited to being answered by interviews.*
 - * Imagine that you're writing a paper (like those we've read) that details the research questions, interview questions, and (eventually) results. Would you find the paper convincing?
 - Have something to do with technology.
 - Have something to do with each other and your literature search.

Keep in mind that the results from your literature survey, this project, and the upcoming questionnaire project will be combined into one coherent written report for the final group project.

4 To Turn In

As a group, you will be turning in:

1. **[50 points]** All of your recorded sessions. Each audio file should have an accompanying file with the exact interview materials (script, questions) that were used to conduct that specific interview. **Do not use Canvas to turn in these files.** We suggest that you use <https://gcloud.utah.edu/>, which should offer you unlimited storage. Keep the recorded sessions private (not publicly viewable) and share them with u1210630@gcloud.utah.edu.
2. The writeup of this assignment, as a PDF, to Canvas. Include all group member names on the writeup. Turn in only one writeup per group. As indicated below, all the writeup questions total 79 points.

As individuals, you will be turning in:

1. **[15 points]** A partial interview transcript. **Each group member** must transcribe **at least 10 minutes** of interview audio. You should coordinate to make sure that everyone transcribes a different 10-minute window. **Each member** should turn in their own transcript. You must indicate which file is being transcribed and what time frame in the file the transcription covers. You must also indicate which of the interviews you conducted and which interviews you attended as an observer/note-taker.

5 The Writeup

The writeup is a reflection on drafting, conducting, and transcribing semi-structured interviews. In general we aren't as much looking for the "right" answer as for thoughtful reflection. There may be some redundancy in your answers, but in general attempt to use the question answers to convey any interesting insights that you encountered during the assignment.

1. **[10 points]** Give the final version of any interview questions and scripts that you used to conduct the interviews. Also include recruitment materials (e.g., email text). If the materials changed substantially over the course of the project, then give the original drafts as well.
2. **[4 points]** Give the research questions that you were you trying to address via your interview. Overall, did the answers from the interview questions help answer the research questions? Why or why not? Did you make substantial changes to either the research questions or the interview questions to make them better aligned? If so, explain.
3. **[3 points]** Why are your research questions/interview subtopics important? Who cares, and why?
4. **[3 points]** Why are your research questions/interview subtopics/interview questions **well-suited to an interview method, specifically?** Why are they not better addressed by e.g. an eyetracking study, questionnaire (N=500), log analysis, etc.?
5. **[25 points]** **For each interview question**, give a detailed explanation for why you are asking it. What are you attempting to find out with that question? Why is what you are attempting to find out relevant to your research question? Why is your question a good way to find out what you're trying to find out? Were there notable changes that you made from earlier question drafts in order to better get at what you want to know?
6. **[3 points]** If you had to categorize your interview questions into groups that represent interview sub-topics, what would they be? (You may have already done this.)
7. **[3 points]** What were inclusion criteria for participation in your study? What were exclusion criteria?
8. **[15 points]** You don't need to do formal qualitative analysis, but: as a group, spend time discussing your interview results. Write approximately 500 words addressing your interview results: What were some trends that you observed? Were there things that surprised you? (This is essentially getting started on writing the results section of your final group report.)

9. [3 points] How did you recruit for your interviews? What worked well? What didn't work well?
10. [2 points] If you were conducting these interviews for research (instead of coursework), would you recruit differently? Why or why not?
11. [2 points] If you were conducting these interviews for research, are there any other things that you would have done differently? Why or why not?
12. [2 points] Did group members feel that they learned anything from observing each other? Why or why not?
13. [2 points] Did group members feel that they learned anything from transcribing interview audio? Why or why not?
14. [0 points] Did you use other resources to learn about drafting, conducting, or transcribing semi-structured interviews? If so, what were they, and were they helpful?
15. [2 points] Were there any ways that you felt the format and requirements of this project limited questions that you would want to ask, if you were pursuing this project for research purposes? Were there other research topics or research questions that you (as a group) would rather have pursued if you weren't required to conduct interviews?

Notes

- Distance collaborations are alright! Specifically:
 - You can run interviews remotely (phone or video chat) or recruit remote participants.
 - If it is difficult to coordinate attending group members' interviews, you can instead listen to the audio recordings of the interviews. (It is, however, better to attend in person—you'll both be able to see body language and observe interactions that take place before recording starts.)
- For **every interview question**, you should ask yourself and be able to answer:
 - Why are we asking this question?
 - What are we hoping to learn from any answers?
 - (If your answers to the above two points don't closely match the interview question you're asking, can you reasonably ask the question that you actually *mean*? *Can* you actually articulate what you mean? Group discussion helps here.)
 - How does this relate to our research questions? Note that if you feel that a question is asking something important but can't articulate why, it doesn't necessarily mean that you should remove the question! You should discuss with your group to see if anyone can explain why it *is* an important question to ask. Sometimes by going with your gut and drafting questions that 'feel' important, you are forced to discuss important revisions to your interview focus or research questions.
 - If we wrote up something about the question answers in a paper, what would it look like? What would we be able to claim? What would we *not* be able to claim?
 - Can we think of ways to misunderstand or be confused about the question (definitions of terms, what "this" refers to, taking out of context, etc.)? (Interview pilots, of course, are very useful for this reason!)