

Formalizing your Curiosity

Wisconsin Public Library Consortium (WPLC)
Workshop 3 of 4

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Joshua H. Morrill, PhD Morrill Solutions Research

Josh has been providing research and evaluation consulting with corporate, non-profit, and academic groups for the last 13 years. He worked as an emerging trends analyst for Gartner where he helped uncover some early usage of cell phones for game play.

As a consultant, Josh has worked extensively with the National Science Foundation in the assessment of various STEM (Science Technology Engineering & Math) technology initiatives. He has worked with National Science Digital Library project to assess the effectiveness of this initiative for faculty and librarians across the nation. And, more recently, Josh has worked with NSF and partners at the University of Illinois and University of Central Florida to conduct a large national study to develop a learner segmentation based on what people want out of learning technologies.

Josh has also partnered extensively with libraries. In particular, Josh has partnered with the Wisconsin Public Library Consortium (WPLC) in the development and implementation of a longitudinal study of Wisconsin public library users (and non-users) in 2003, 2007 and 2012. Josh also partnered with the University of Wisconsin and University of Illinois systems to assess student use and reactions to eTextbooks.

In addition to research, Joshua has also conducted several strategic planning and future-visioning workshops for corporate, library, education and non-profit groups that use scenario-based planning to help these organizations plan around future uncertainties. Joshua is a frequent speaker nationally. Josh holds a Ph.D. in communication science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison with a concentration in small group decision-making and quantitative research design and analysis



*Research is formalized curiosity.
It is poking and prying with
purpose*

-Zora Neale Hurston



From last time...
Any Questions About Surveys?

We are going to be working through some of the **WHY- WHAT-WHAT- & HOWs** of any research project

1

Why are you doing this research?

What is the driving need?

2

What do you really want to know?

How can I ask the right research question?

3

What are options for getting information?

How reliable is reliable enough?

4

How do I interpret what I have?

What are some pitfalls for understanding data?

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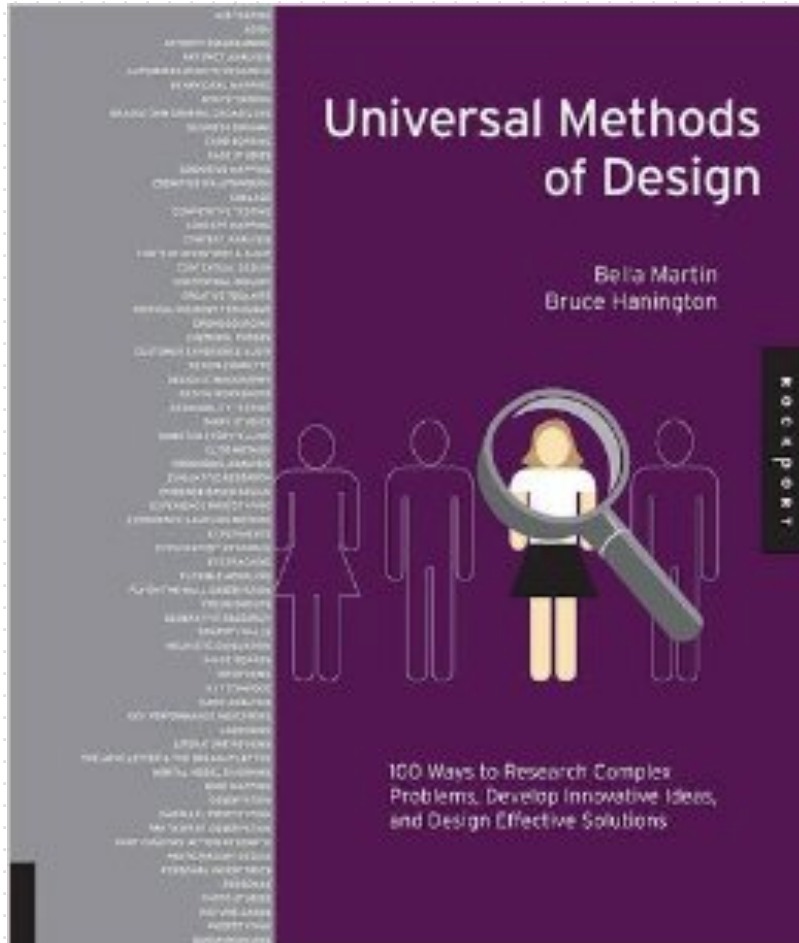
4

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Qualitative Methods

This great (but horribly named) book outlines 100 qualitative techniques!



Universal Methods of Design: 100 Ways to Research Complex Problems, Develop Innovative Ideas, and Design Effective Solutions

Bella Martin

Bruce Hanington

Qualitative Methods

Qualitative can be good at answering “Why”? ...especially when you have no idea of even what to ask in a survey.

CLASSIC *Milk Shakes*

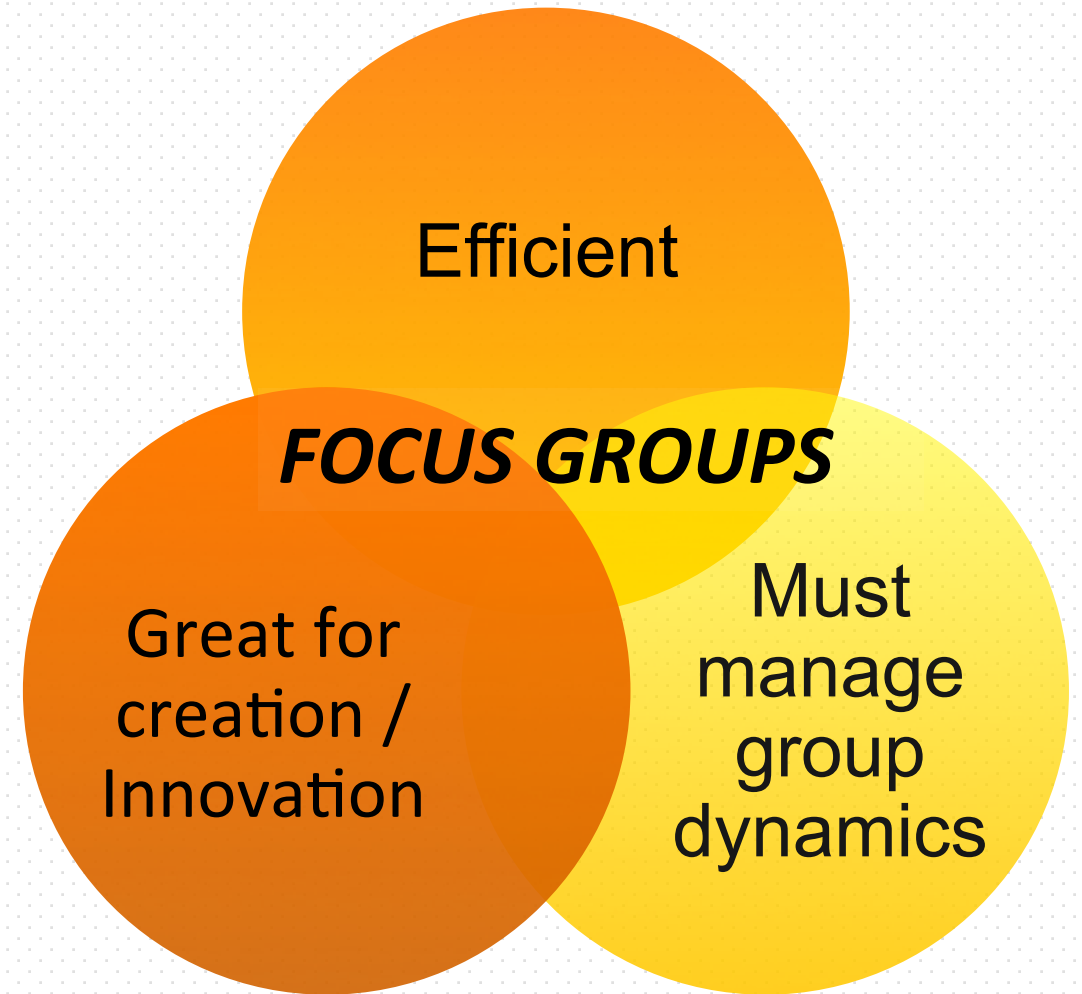
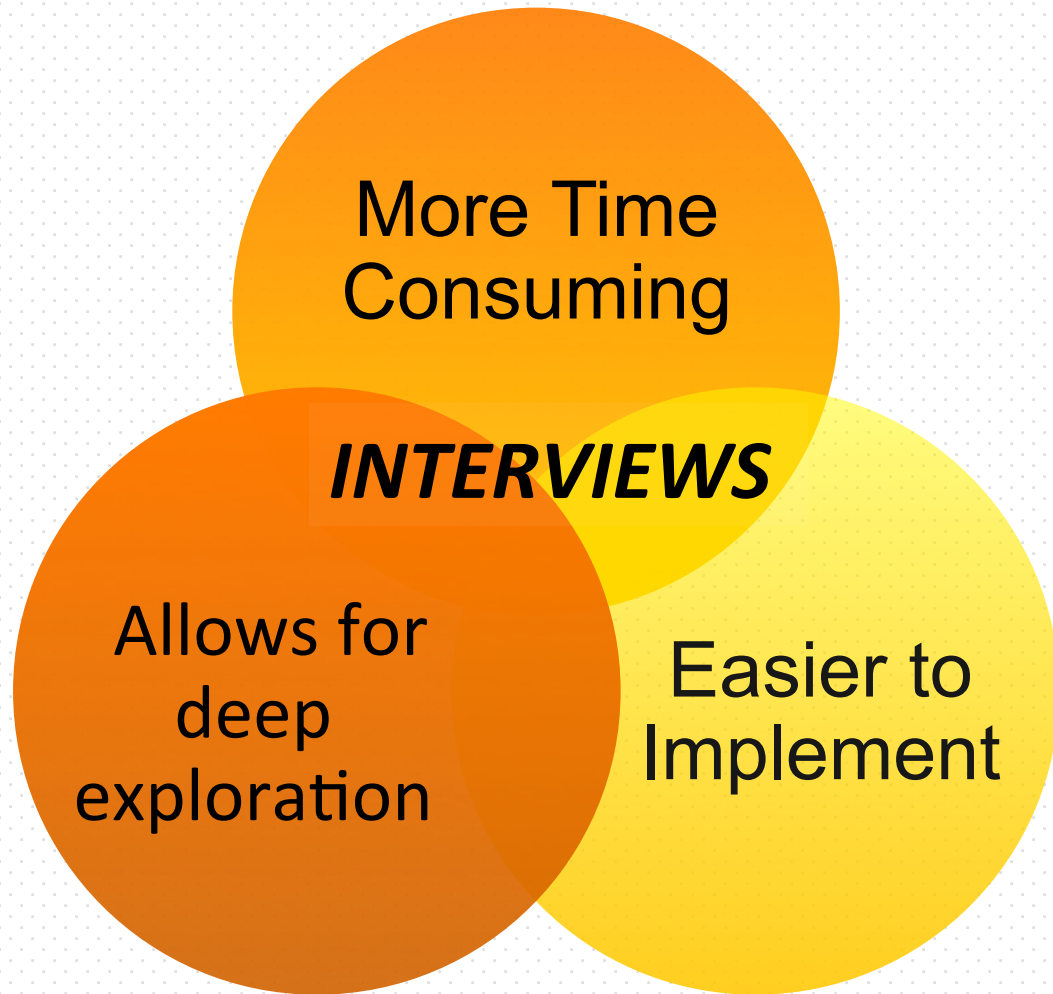


What are options for getting information?

How reliable is reliable enough?

The case of the 10am, employed milkshake!

The Classics: Focus Groups & Interviews



Who Should You Talk To?

- A set of interviews or focus groups do not necessarily need to be representative. You need a group that will produce some information you can use.
- Sometimes focusing who you talk to can provide a much clearer interpretation of what was said.
- While interviews and focus groups need not be representative---make sure you have thought through the implications of who you DO talk with. (i.e Regular Library Users vs. Non-Users)



Focus Group / Interview Tips

3

What are options
for getting
information?

*How reliable is reliable
enough?*

- As a rule of thumb - Keep things to 1 hour or less
- Can get interesting information if you have participants “create” something. (IL Building Project)
- Generates a LOT of information that can take time to get in a useable form.
- Think about WHO you want to talk to and why.

Other Interactive Methods

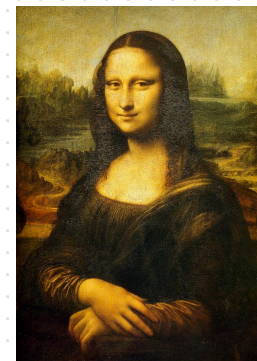
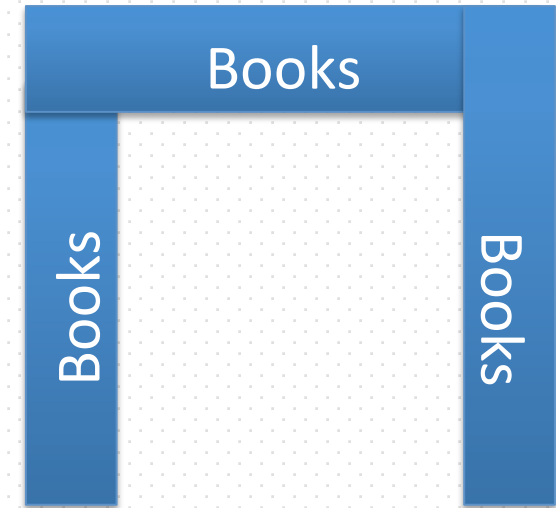
Participatory Design

Involves participants creating ideas in an involved
-or lightweight- way

Illinois Building Project: Had students draw their ideal
library study space. (Variation on graffiti wall technique)

**Good: Generating Ideas, Generating Interest. Nice things
to show at final meeting of administrators.**

Bad: Interpretation/ Analysis



Other Interactive Methods

Spot Sampling

Researchers appear at a random selection of places at a random selection of times and record what people are doing

Good: Get Behavioral Information

Bad: Are you editorializing? Does this activity change peoples behavior?

The case of the research stalker



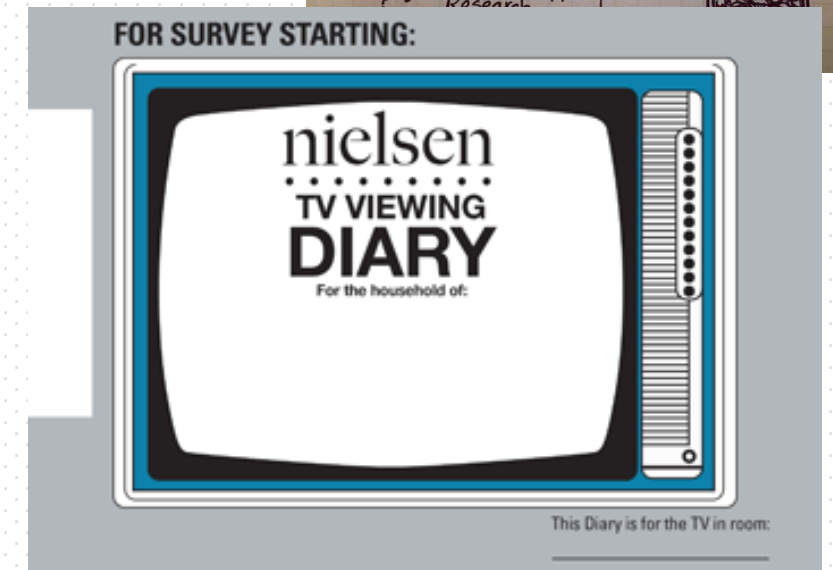
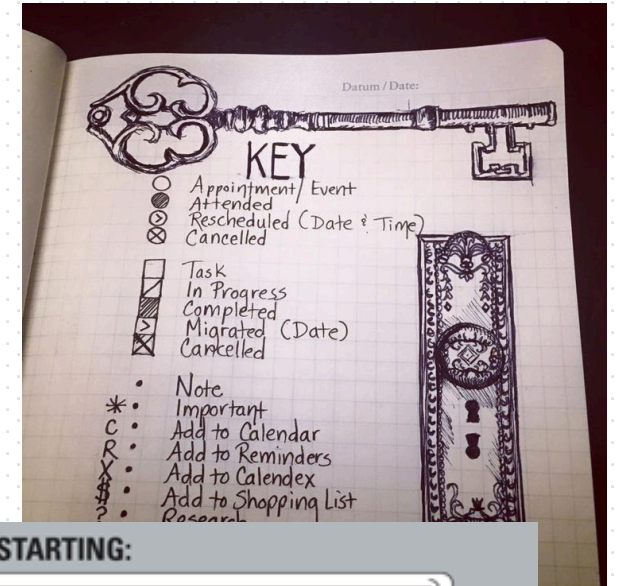
Other Interactive Methods

Journaling

Researchers ask participants to keep a log/ journal/ blog over a fixed amount of time

Good: Gets very in depth information with nice artifacts at the end

Bad: Combing through the data. Are people really being honest? Will people do this without compensation?



Other Interactive Methods

Full Participant Observation

This combines participant observation (from the participants point of view) and simulations to get a first-hand experience of situations.

Good: can give some really helpful information on customer service.

Bad: Difficult to do. Can make people feel “tricked”

HELPFUL TIP: A good way to get this same info without doing it yourself is through “Secret Shopping”.

Industrial Designer Patricia Moore
(Age 26)



Questions



Thank You

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