ICS 132: Organizational Information Systems

Analyzing Social Settings - II

recap

- from theory to methods
  - qualitative approach
    - want to get at the DETAILS
    - want to get at the DIVERSITY of settings and attitudes
  - understanding "the member's point of view"
  - observation and interviewing
  - differences between L&L's viewpoint and our own
- today:
  - how to focus data and begin analysis

observation

- learning to look with an ethnographer's eye
  - everything is potentially interesting
  - questions to keep in mind:
    - why was that done?
    - why was it done *just then* and *by so-and-so*?
      - what were the alternatives?
      - why were they not taken?
    - what set of expectations and needs do working arrangements reflect?
    - how did things come to be this way?
- the answers to the questions come later
  - right now, you need to collect the evidence

library observations

- Not a HCI project
- "Fit" between the IS and library functions
  - not just technical features
  - positioning of equipment
  - support for using the equipment
- Public places
  - "cone" of privacy
  - don't have to disturb people

logging data

- fieldnotes
  - notes, mental and jotted
  - memories, thoughts, vignettes, incidents, quotes
  - the importance of the setting
    - most work practice evolves in situ
    - the environment is tailored to the work
  - field notes are a continual site of activity
    - you need to *write stuff down* -- you *will* forget
    - writing them up *quickly*
    - re-reading and re-working
    - early analytic thoughts...

interviewing

- what's the role of the interview?
  - confirming hypotheses
  - generating hypotheses
  - getting a *point of view*
- interview guide
  - a way to pre-organize the information
  - keeping track
    - interviews generate huge amount of data
    - need to
      - log it
      - keep track of the conversation
      - *direct* the conversation

practical features of interviewing

- If possible, record the interview

- Write everything down

- Be flexible in the interview
  - don't be tied to the guide

- Hard interviews

focussing data

- three steps
  - *gather*: observing, collecting field materials
  - *focus*: structuring material, guiding observation
  - *analyze*: developing conceptual analysis
- focussing
  - beginning to ask questions
  - *concurrently* with data gathering
    - getting a handle on the data you're collecting
   - finding the holes

units, aspects, topics

- units
  - it's a question of scale
    - formal and informal
    - not just groups, but actions too (processes, practices)
    - e.g. Conversation Analysis; Marxist economics
  - aspects
    - apply independent of scale
    - meaning; structure; power; ...
- topics
  - topics combine aspects and units
    - organizational factors affecting application adoption
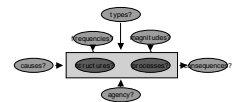
eight questions
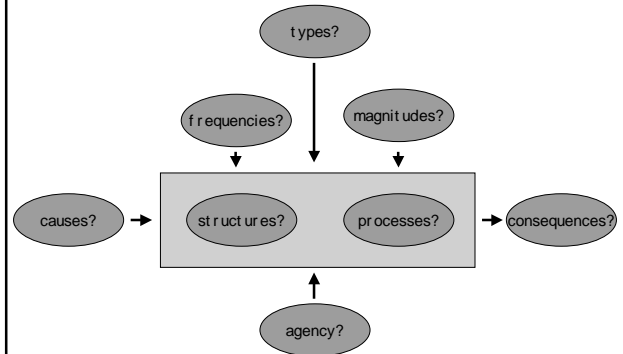
eight questions

- types
  - e.g. the total institution
  - the rule of mutual exclusiveness
 - the rule of exhaustiveness
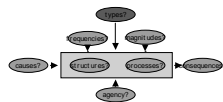
eight questions

- structures
  - related to types, but:
    - what are the internal features of the type?
    - what is the relationship between different types?
    - example: bureaucracies
- processes
  - we've already encountered these...
    - but now, more broadly (and less formal)
   - cycles, spirals, sequences

3

eight questions

- causes
  - not simple cause and effect
    - cumulative causes…think of the processes through which situations come about
  - *situational* versus *dispositional* causes
- consequences
  - functional approach
    - what functions are served?
    - what role doe this play?
  - nonfunctional approach
    - what ends are served?
    - what are the products?
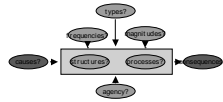
eight questions

- agency
  - the other questions illustrate the *passive* model
    - brute facts and the machinations of the social world
  - people are active entities!
    - coping, acting, scheming, evading, cajoling, maneuvering
    - the issue of agency:
      - whose action brings about the situation?
      - how does this action come about?
    - structure/agency dyad
      - it's a cycle!
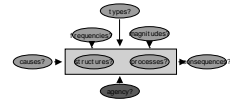
practical features of analysis

- "Immersion" in the data

- Analysis = insight + understanding + data

- "Right" and "wrong" questions

- Coding tips

interview analysis

Conclusion

- Data gathering and analysis is tough

- Interested researcher

- Tell a story

   Good luck on the project !!