

Introduction to INF 5220/9220 Qualitative Research Methods in Information Systems

INF5220/9220

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Guri Verne, Design group

Qualitative research involves working with *qualitative data*:

- Interviews,
- documents,
- participant observation data,
- photos,

to *understand and explain social phenomena*.



Research versus opinionating

AECOM ABOUT MARKETS SOLUTIONS PROJECTS INSIGHTS INVESTORS CAREERS

How is technology affecting your work/life balance?

15-Jan-2015 | Amy Bourne

Technology is impacting us all, whether we choose to embrace it or not! It's something I've thought about (and written about) a lot, and a recent debate we arranged within the Strategy Plus team threw up some interesting questions about how technology is impacting work/life balance and how it will go on to do so in the near future.

With devices becoming increasingly portable and fast, we can now access our work almost everywhere, seemingly only dependant on wifi connection. Technology's greatest impacts in the way in which we work are often cited as the ability for greater precision, consistency and for easy communication – with one click we can connect with people across the globe at any time of day, making it far easier to do business with companies worldwide – but what about the impact on office culture?

The ease of sending emails is overriding the office worker's impulse to pick up the phone or walk over to someone's desk – many of our clients complain of "email culture", with clogged inboxes and endless "reply-all". This begs the question of whether new technology has influenced our business culture or business culture is influencing how we use new technology.

It seems to me that, because we have access to information instantaneously anytime, we also seek this from people as well as technology. There have probably been times when we can all admit to wondering why someone hasn't responded to our email immediately!

Whilst it's useful to stay connected, being able to access five different communication methods – from messaging to face time on our smart phones – also means we have to think harder about our work/life balance. To resist checking emails away from the office, when it's so quick and easy to do so, is more difficult than it may seem. Has it become the norm for our working hours and own time to become blurred?

This blurring of boundaries can also work the other way, with many of the most popular workplaces bringing elements of home-life into their culture and design. In a recent list published on Glassdoor, based on both a survey of workers' opinions on the pros and cons of holding a job at their company, as well as ratings on how satisfied they are there, the top three companies (Google, Bain & Co. and Nestle Purina) were all supported by employee comments citing things like "beautiful campus" and "excellent culture", with employees at Nestle Purina even able to bring pets into the workplace. Employees clearly place high value on being able to bring elements of their home and social life into the workplace, and employers are increasingly finding ways to offer this.

www.forbes.com/sites/realspin/2013/09/20/how-technology-will-greatly-enhance-the-life-and-work-of-the-middle-c

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How Technology Will Greatly Enhance The Life And Work Of The Middle Class

Capital Flows, CONTRIBUTOR
Guest commentary curated by Forbes Opinion.
FOLLOW ON FORBES (444) Opinions expressed by Forbes Contributors are their own.

By Gary Shapiro

(Photo credit: Wikipedia)

There's been some buzz lately around the not-so-new idea that emerging

SAM HUNT MONTEVALLO

SAM HUNT TAKE YOUR TIME

HOVER TO EXPAND

QUALITATIVE - QUANTITATIVE

- Observation
- Interview
- Texts/documents Audio / video
- Small numbers (focused)
- In-depth
- How, what, how come
- Questionnaires
- Experiments
- Statistics
- Large numbers (broad)
- Broad rather than in-depth
- How many? Why (causality)?

What is best?

- No research approach (quantitative or qualitative) is better than any other.
- In choosing a method, everything depends upon what we are trying to find out .
- Thus, it depends on your research question (Silverman 2005).

Qualitative research

- “Qualitative research methods are designed to help researchers understand people and the social and cultural contexts within which they live. [...] the goal of understanding a phenomenon from the point of view of the participants and its particular social and institutional context is largely lost when textual data are quantified” (Myers living version).

The course will take you through the following issues and topics:

Qualitative versus quantitative research methods
(the course is about qualitative research)

Different philosophical assumptions, often labeled:

- positivist,
- interpretivist and
- critical research paradigms

(we will mainly use texts from the interpretivist tradition)

What is Hanne Cecilie doing here?



What is Hanne Cecilie doing here? (paradigm)



Positivist research



Interpretive research



Critical research

Issues and topics 2

Different types of qualitative research:

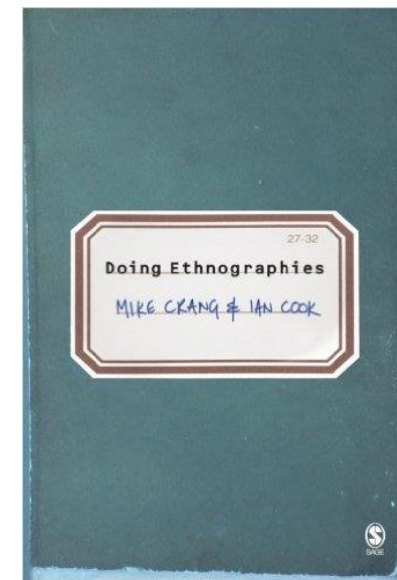
- case study,
- ethnography,
- action research,
- grounded theory

Methods for data collection:

- interviews,
- observations (passive, participant),
- audio recording,
- video recording,
- documents

Issues and topics 3

- Legal aspects of research in Norway
- Internet research
- Analysis
- How to structure written work
- The position of the researcher

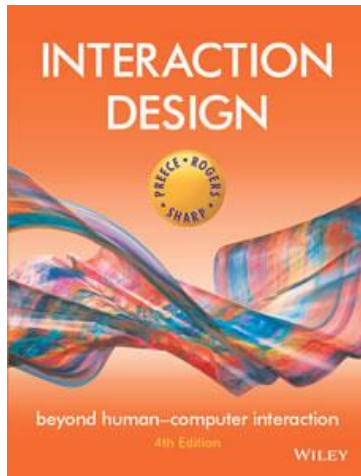


You'll learn about different types of research (as sketched above).

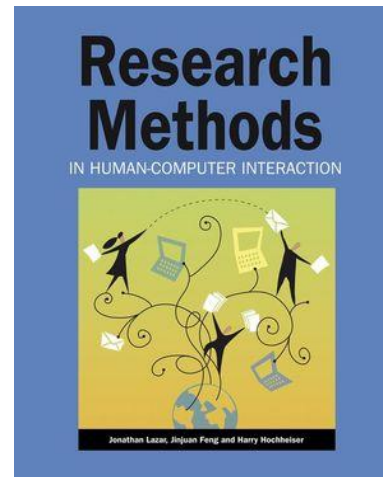
- How to do it yourself (assignments are central for learning), and how to analyze and write up your findings.
- The course has one course book (Crang and Cook (2007)).
- In addition we will work with a number of articles, both discussing methodological issues and as exemplars of these different types of studies.
- See course page for literature (syllabus) + detailed teaching plan for readings and assignments.

A word of caution

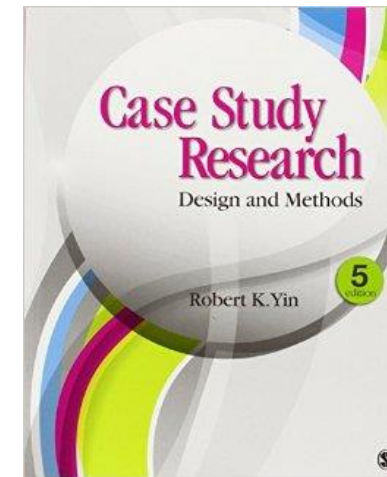
You may have experience with other textbooks, e.g.:



(INF 1500/1510)



(INF 2260)



They take different approaches.

Preece, Sharp and Rogers on data gathering

«.. data gathering is a central part of **establishing requirements**, and of **evaluation**. Within the requirements activity, the purpose of data gathering is to collect sufficient, accurate, and relevant data so that **a set of stable requirements can be produced**, within evaluation, data gathering is needed in order to **capture users' reactions and performance with a system or prototype**»

Having passed INF5220

After you have completed this course, you

- know about different qualitative methodologies and methods that are used within the Information Systems field when generating empirical material
- know the differences between these methodologies and can argue for your methodological choices
- have practical experiences with interviews and observations
- have an understanding about the relationship between research questions, methodologies and paradigms
- have learned what a research design proposal should contain and have practical experience with formulating one
- know about the legal and ethical framework for the conduct of research in Norway

Group work

Ideally 4 members in each group.

- Discussions in groups,
 - oral presentation in class
 - written assignments
- must be accepted in order to take the exam.

You'll receive feedback on your assignments by TA (teacher assistant) Hanne Cecilie. It's not mandatory to receive feedback, but it is a great opportunity to learn and discuss. Hanne Cecilie will send out invitations through doodle.

Group work II

Paper presentation:

Each group is responsible for presenting a paper to the class **and** questions to another group's presentation to be discussed in class. Next week we distribute the papers

Exam information

Graded marks A-F (master students)

Passed/non passed on B+A level (PhD students)

The grades will be based on individual oral or written exam in week 22 or 23.

PhD-students

The PhD-students are required to read from the additional list.

In April/May we'll have a mini-seminar which must be accepted in order to attend the exam

- or an essay

Other

Guest lectures:

Dave Randall on Ethnography

Gisle on internet research, privacy and ethics.

Wilhelm Damsleth on Grounded Theory

Tone on analysis and design

Film: Kitchen Stories – very illustrating