Course C23
Analyzing Qualitative Data from Field Studies
4 units

Instructor: David A. Siegel, Dray & Associates, Inc.

Companion Course: Understanding Users in Context

Benefits:
Field studies are essential to user-centered design, but the data from these studies can be overwhelming and ambiguous. As a result, conclusions are all too often impressionistic or anecdotal, with vague or even misleading implications for design. This course will teach you techniques for analysis to improve the credibility and validity of your findings, to keep them focused on design, and to help you avoid drowning in your data.

Origins:
This course is updated from a tutorial that has been presented successfully at CHI and many other international conferences. It underwent a major revision last year for CHI 2006.

Features:
* Why we need a more disciplined approach to analyzing fieldwork data
* What "scientific rigor" means in relation to qualitative data
* How to archive data to maintain the link between data and conclusions, and to facilitate analysis; and how software tools can help in this process
* How to triangulate in on valid conclusions through iterative use of complementary analysis techniques, including coding strategies, clustering and affinity diagramming, extracting dimensions, and exploring networks of relations
* How field research findings can drive concrete decisions in strategic planning and design of products
* How to deal with common validity concerns regarding qualitative field study data, such as the small sample problem, “outliers,” and appropriate generalization from qualitative data
* Tips and tricks for managing organizational issues in communicating fieldwork findings

Intended Audience:
This tutorial is intended for practitioners who want to improve the validity and credibility of their field user research. Ideally, participants will have some experience in fieldwork including ethnography, contextual inquiry, or naturalistic usability, with a practical focus on any aspect of product definition and design. However, it also will be of interest to people who have a background in more structured forms of user research, such as lab usability, who want to prepare for the less structured world of field research. However, the course does not focus on techniques of data gathering in fieldwork, and assumes that people have a basic knowledge of these techniques.

Presentation Style:
Lecture, demonstration, discussion, and hands-on exercises built around simulated field research. The course also includes a demonstration of Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS).

Instructor's Background:
David A. Siegel is well-known as both a presenter and consultant who has done field research to drive product planning and design for a long list of clients. He does fieldwork projects of all kinds both in the US and internationally. He has published many articles and several book chapters on User Centered Design. He was co-editor of the Business Column of *interactions* magazine from 2001 through 2005, and is currently on the editorial board of *UX*, the magazine of the Usability Professionals Association.