

<b>COMP3503/IENV7933</b>	Design and run an interaction inquiry	
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Description & Criteria.

# Design and run an interaction inquiry

**Type:** Interaction Inquiry

**Learning Objectives Assessed:** 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 (see course profile)

**Due Date:**

Presentations in class, 23 Oct 2007

**Weight:** 25%

## Overview

The emphasis of this course is on methods and processes that can be used to inform the design of technologies, based on an understanding of how people will use them. This assignment requires you to work in a team of three to design an *interaction inquiry* for a particular design/problem context, based on the methods taught in class and other complementary work. The team then follows the inquiry design and reports on the outcomes. The assignment is documented as a stand-up presentation, poster, demo, or in another appropriate format for presentation to the class. A selection of these works will be chosen for display in the Information Environments Program End of Year Exhibit.

We use the term interaction inquiry to denote the range of methods that may be employed to understand the people and the problem context being designed for.

In lectures and readings you have been, or will soon be, introduced to a variety of methods, including ethnographic observational study, personas, participatory design, cultural probes, contextual interviews, scenarios and the video card game. For this assessment, you should choose appropriate method(s) for the chosen context—modified as appropriate if you believe this is necessary—run the inquiry, and report on the findings. Please note that questionnaire surveys and similar quantitative methods are not part of the material for this course and are therefore **not** considered appropriate for this assessment.

## Design contexts

The following list of recommended design contexts should be chosen from for your inquiry. The Ipswich campus-based contexts are the result of actual requests for studies to be conducted. Other contexts of your own choice are possible, but should first be agreed upon by a member of teaching staff.

1. Social interactions at wifi hotspots. UQ ITS is interested in expanding wifi coverage around the Ipswich campus. Where is wireless networking currently used? Where is it in the most demand? Are there any areas it is currently not installed which would make good locations based on current student social routines and work habits?

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2. From café kiosk to work hub. The UQ Ipswich library is interested in changing the current configuration of technology in Café 8 to move away from short, focused internet kiosk-style interactions with the PCs towards the possibility of somewhere that extended work could happen in a café environment. Coupled with this is a potential move from the current Dell PCs to Intel-based dual-boot iMacs. Would people make use of such a set-up? Which concerns do they need to address about the kind of work they are thinking about and the environment it would take place in? Is the current spatial layout the best way to encourage this change of use for the Café?
3. Managing personal information across multiple boundaries. People's lives are increasingly busy at work, at home, at school, and at play. Various tools exist to support the management of personal information to coordinate our schedules, such as calendars, telephones, address books, todo lists, pin boards, fridge doors, etc. We are interested in the design challenge for supporting people to manage these multiple high and low tech solutions to the problem of keeping up with modern life. What are the needs for a system (which may in fact be a number of interoperating systems) to support these everyday activities?
4. Promoting physical activity. The developed world is facing the problems of a sedentary lifestyle, with increased opportunities and requirements for work and play which in turn reduce our opportunities for physical exercise. Increased incidence of obesity and diabetes have been linked to society's reduction in physical exercise. Medical experts recommend at least three 30 minute periods of raised heart-rate activity per week in order to maintain cardio-vascular fitness. How can we design mobile technologies to support and encourage people in switching to, and then maintaining a healthier, more physically active lifestyle? What can we do to understand what people currently do to get active, and how technology can augment and further encourage this?

## Deliverables

### Poster

This is an academic poster, not a piece of marketing for your project (although it could do both if done well). The emphasis should therefore be on communicating information about your work in an effective manner.

To pass this assignment, you should have planned and carried out an inquiry related to the course material, and report on this via your poster.

To pass with credit, you should demonstrate a degree of mastery of the method you adopt/adapt, including it's appropriateness for the problem context you have chosen.

To pass with distinction or higher, you should show some flair in applying existing methods into contexts where they have not previously been applied, or adapting a method to suit a specific problem context.

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Marks will be given for content as well as how the information is displayed. Bear in mind that the poster should act as a device to support you talking about your work (when you present in front of the poster) as well as a stand-alone description. The best posters will be visually appealing as well as conveying information.

In terms of display/presentation format, please ensure that the following information is contained on your poster:

- A Title for the work
- Names of the students involved
- Date carried out
- A high level description (abstract/executive summary) of the work.

#### **Other presentation materials**

Any other materials used to present the work, or as a part of the inquiry should also be submitted. If available digitally, they should be compressed into a single .zip archive and submitted on disk along with the image file (pdf preferred) for the poster. Materials which are only available physically should be handed in to IEP reception by the end of week 13.