Observation

I214
Spring, 2010
Figure 1. The Family Archive and Interface
What your looking for

• Patterns
And possibly:
• Useful info to answer questions or illuminate such things as design choices
• Problems
• Things that question your assumptions
What you observe and note

1. Space: the physical place or places
2. Actor: the people involved
3. Activity: a set of related acts people do
4. Object: the physical things that are present
5. Act: single actions that people do
6. Event: a set of related activities that people carry out
7. Time: the sequencing that takes place over time
8. Goal: the things people are trying to accomplish
9. Feeling: the emotions felt and expressed
Sites/Evidence

• Live observation
  – Geographical place
  – Virtual place

• Records of prior activity
  – Records of action
  – Digital “transcripts”
  – Photos, videos, audio, etc.
  – Traces, “outcroppings”

• Retrospective reports
Fieldnotes

• http://www.louisianafolklife.org/Resources/main_prog_models.html
• http://www.mcmel.org/DisWeb/samplefieldnotes.htm
Figure 1 Site plans of two rooms in the two hospitals
Strategies for taking fieldnotes (from Wolfinger)

- Salience—what seems most important
- Comprehensiveness—everything (or as much as you can)

And

- Temporal—in chronological order

‘You have already made many choices when you sit down to write, but you probably don’t know what they are’ (Howie Becker)
Interview participants expressed their desire to see the whole room of the remote site. They value being able to see not only the people talking but also people not directly engaged in conversation.

Being able to see remote people’s gestures and having good eye contact were also mentioned as important criteria by some of interview participants. One participant described the problem of visibility this way:

“it certainly does limit... The body language is not often seen on a video link, particularly if not everyone in the room is able to be seen on the screen, and that could be part of why one end doesn’t talk so much because people can’t see you know somebody on the screen.”
The issue of lack of social and spatial awareness due to the limited visual information is evident from the instances of unawareness of individual people’s presence, such as asking “Is X there or not?” “Is Y sitting in the background?”.
the family was keen to repeatedly berate the grandad for a reported misuse of the system in which he’d managed to accidentally delete some scanned pictures of which the rest of the family had been particularly fond.

They were making it clear to the grandad that he shouldn’t use the device unsupervised (and we noticed this during interactions in our presence when he would indirectly ask his daughter for permission to hit some buttons on the interface)...

[this] raised a tension over who had the right or perhaps the competence to use the device, lest the ‘family’ archive be disrupted.