

Researching Researchers: Avalon Media System's Ethnographic Study of Media Collection Usage

Evviva Weinraub, AUL Digital Strategies
Northwestern University

Jon Dunn, Assistant Dean for Library Technologies
Indiana University Bloomington

CNI Fall Meeting 2016
December 13, 2016

What is Avalon?

Avalon Media System enables libraries and archives to easily curate, distribute and provide online access to their A/V collections for purposes of teaching, learning and research.

www.avalonmediasystem.org

What is Avalon?

Open source software system currently directed by Indiana University & Northwestern University

Hydra Solution Bundle



Project Funding

- 2010-2011: IMLS Planning Grant
- 2011-2015: National Leadership Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services
- 2015-present: Andrew W. Mellon Foundation



Early Planning Decision

- Focus on:
 1. Infrastructure for media collections management and delivery ***OR***
 2. End-user tools for teaching, learning, and research use?

- Chose to focus initially on option 1

Goals of current Mellon grant

1. Develop additional Avalon functionality
2. Conduct studies of use of audio and video collections by humanities researchers
3. Develop and implement a community-funded business and governance model
4. Deploy Avalon in a hosted SaaS model for testing/pilot

Learning Tools Interoperability

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying `canvas.northwestern.edu`. The page title is `2016SP_ASIAN_AM_214-0_SEC1_AND_HISTORY_214-0_SEC1`. On the left is a navigation sidebar with icons for Home, Account, Dashboard, Courses, Calendar, Inbox, Library Media, Blue Jeans, CTEC, and Settings. The main content area features a purple header with the text "Repository | audio + video". Below this, there are five video entries, each with a thumbnail, title, duration, and a "Select" checkbox. The entries are:

- 2. Continuous Journey (1:26:59)**
Main contributors: Kazimi, Ali
Date: 2005 (Creation date: 2004)
Summary: In 1914 the Komagata Maru, a vessel with 376 immigrants from British India, became the first ship carrying immigrants to be turned away by Canada. The consequences were felt throughout the British ...
- 3. From a Silk Cocoon (56:59)**
Main contributors: Ina, Satsuki ; Clay III, Emery ; Holsapple, Stephen
Date: 2006 (Creation date: 2005)
- 4. Hawaii's last queen (56:22)**
Main contributors: Ducat, Vivian.
Date: 1997
Summary: "Hawaii's last queen tells the story of Lili'uokalani's life, her embattled reign as the queen of Hawaii, and the ultimate betrayal that led to the loss of their kingdom"--Container summary label.
- 5. On strike! Ethnic Studies, 1969-1999 (35:10)**
Main contributors: Shiekh, Irum.
Date: 1999
Summary: A historical presentation of the struggle to create and maintain a Department of Ethnic Studies at the University of California Berkeley. Includes interviews with participants in the 1969 demonstra...

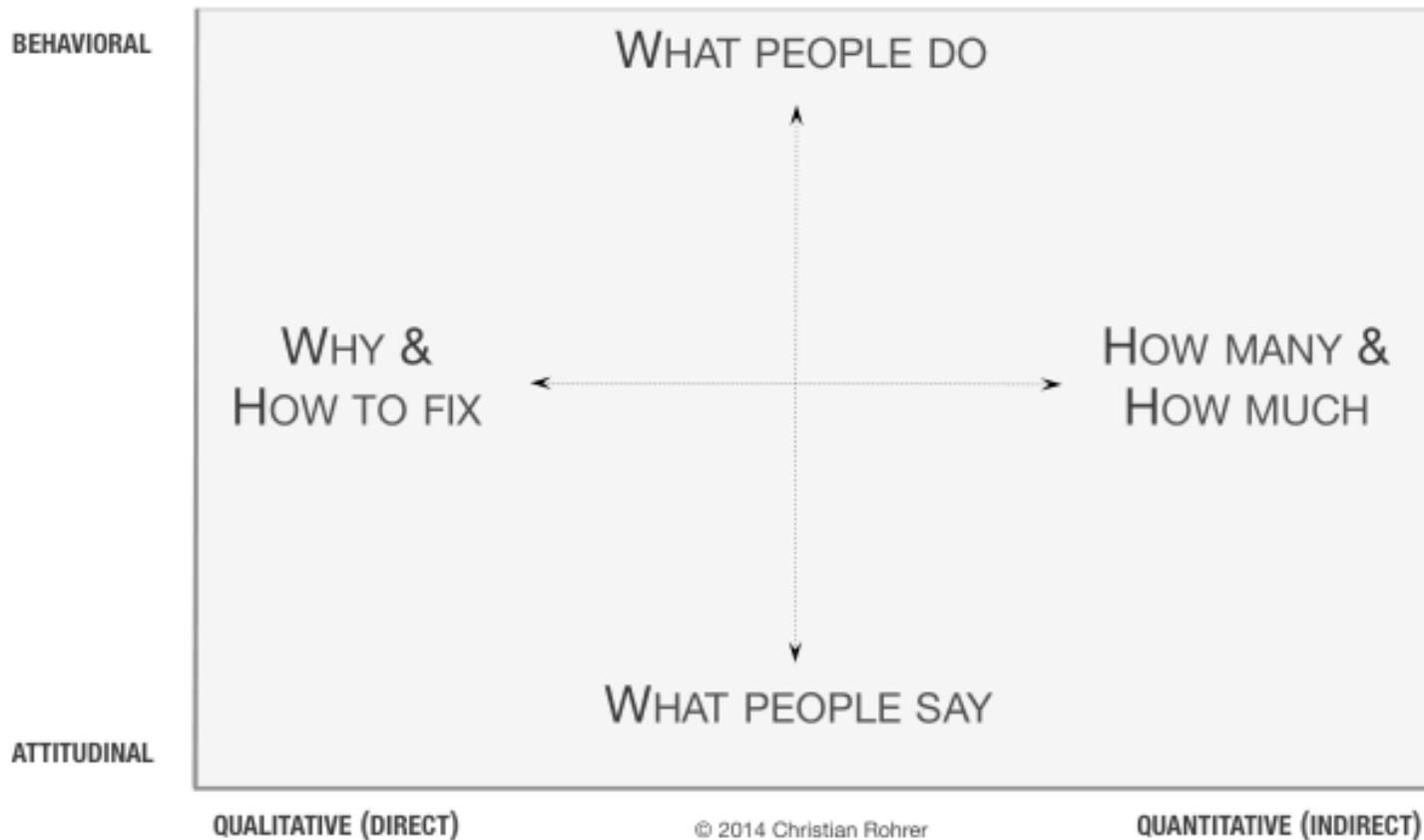
At the bottom of the page, there is a contact information section for the Northwestern University Library, including the address, phone number, and email address.

From Our Mellon Grant Proposal:

- The proposed user research will be multi-method, though primarily ethnographic in character:
- Identify at least two disciplines for focus, such as music theory, ethnomusicology, or film studies.
- Conversations with these researchers will enable us to select a set of researchers for focus who represent a wide range of media research use cases and are willing to work with us during the grant.

Why ethnographic research?

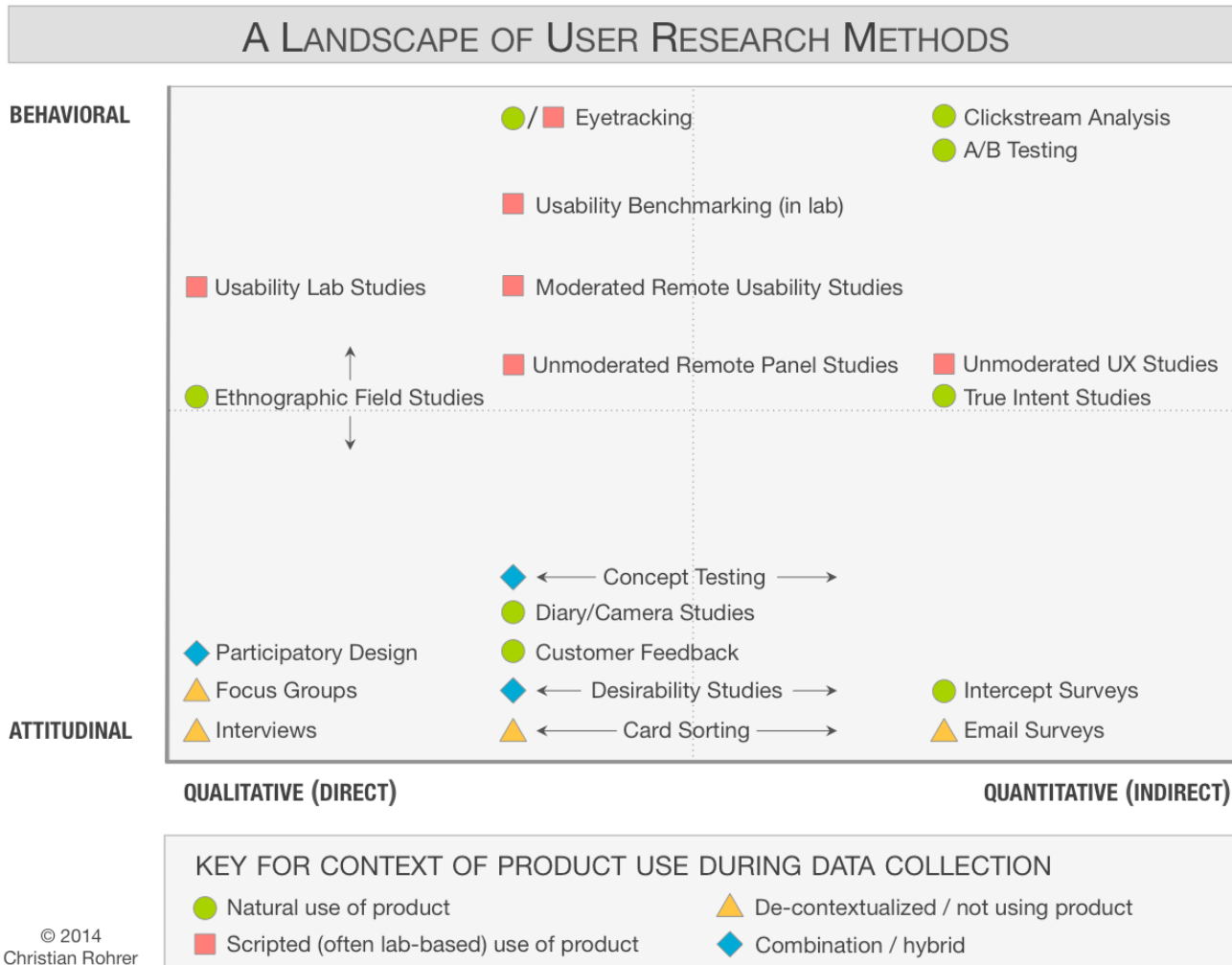
QUESTIONS ANSWERED BY RESEARCH METHODS ACROSS THE LANDSCAPE



© 2014 Christian Rohrer

<https://www.nngroup.com/articles/which-ux-research-methods/>

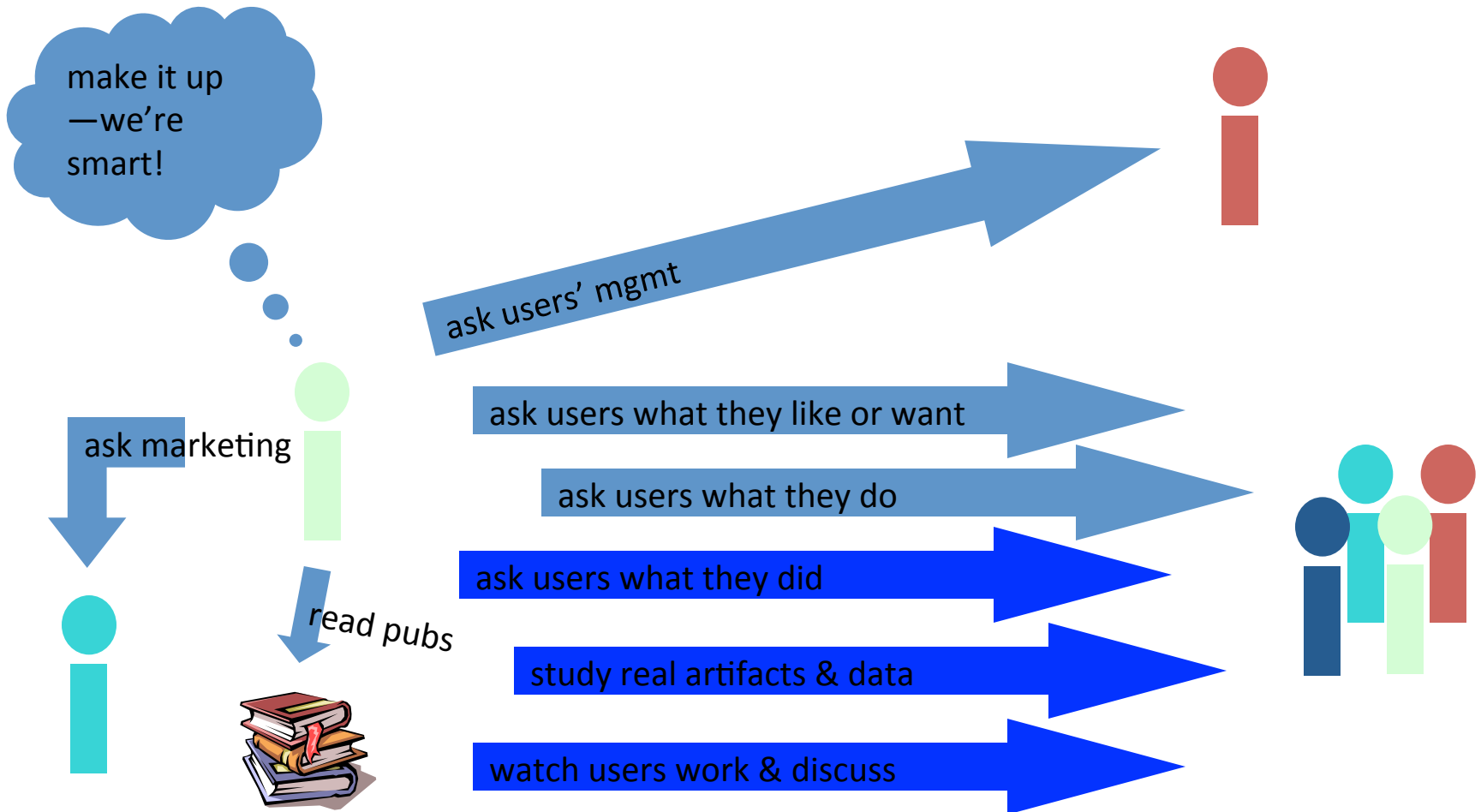
Which ethnographic research?



© 2014
Christian Rohrer

<https://www.nngroup.com/articles/which-ux-research-methods/>

discovering user needs



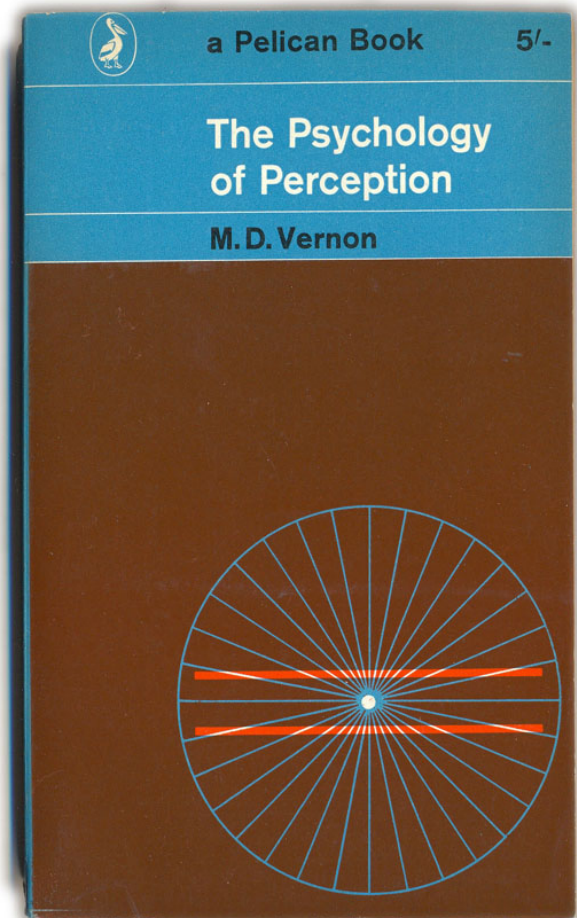
Avalon's User Research FOCUS:

Uncover issues users have trying to use streaming media within their research projects.

Look at the technology they employ, and how they use technology in ways that help and hinder their research processes.

User Research Methodology

WHAT IS CONTEXTUAL INQUIRY



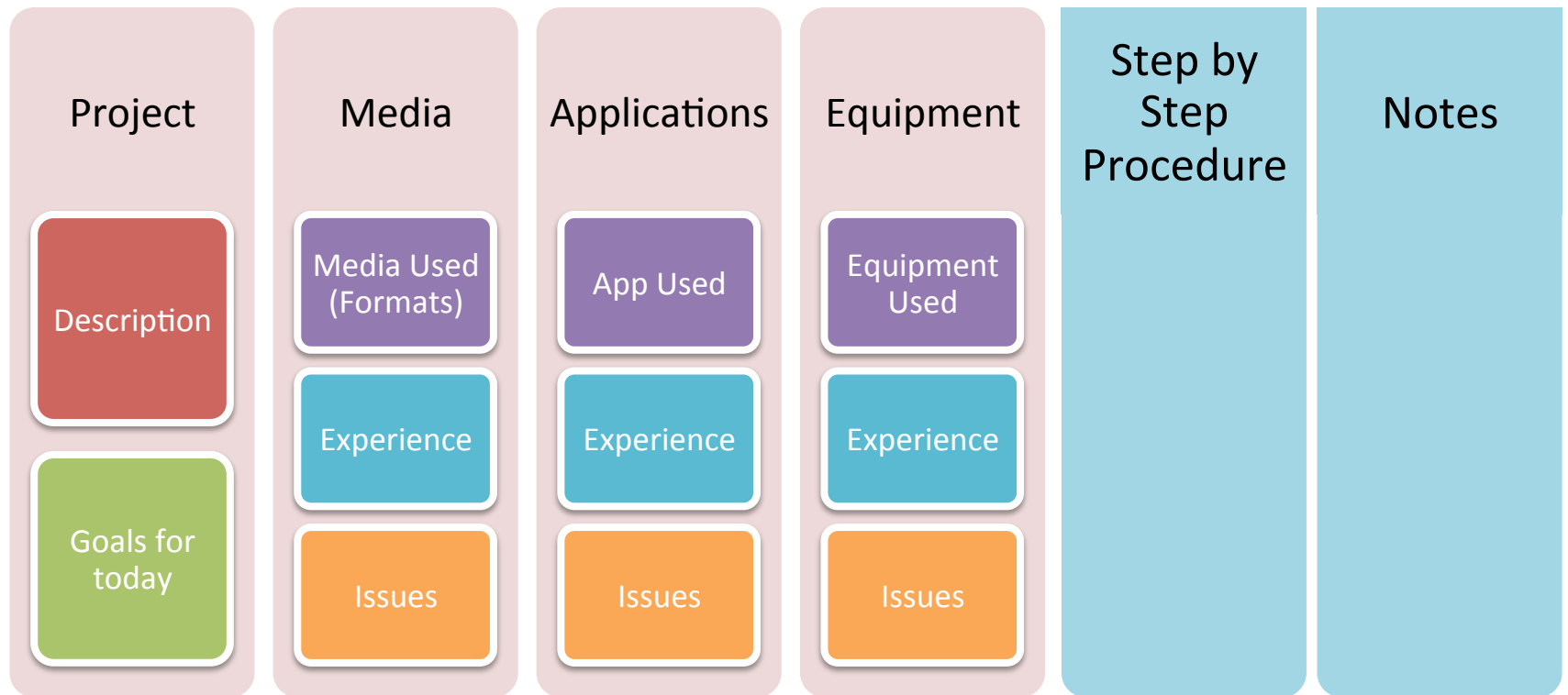
The key differentiator between contextual inquiry and other user research methods is that **contextual inquiry occurs in context.**

It's not simply an interview, and it's not simply an observation.

It involves observing people performing their tasks and having them talk about what they are doing while they are doing it.

User Research Methodology

CONTEXTUAL INQUIRY-OBSERVATION



User Research Methodology

 Avalon User Research Study
Observation Sheet

1. Name, Date, Location:		
2. Project Description:		
2a. Research planned for today/goals of work session:		
3. Media Used: (include format)	4. Media Tools/Applications Used:	5. Computer Equipment Used:
3a. Experience with media:	4a. Experience with apps:	5a. Experience with equipment:
3b. Issues with media:	4b. Issues with apps:	5b. Issues with equipment:

 Avalon User Research Study
Observation Sheet

6. Step-by-step processes:	7. Observation notes
-----------------------------------	-----------------------------

User Research Methodology

CONTEXTUAL INQUIRY: Follow up interview



User Research Methodology

DIARY STUDY

The screenshot shows a Blackboard LMS interface for an assignment titled "Diary Study Week #5". The breadcrumb trail is "CCS_AVALON_ASSESSMENT_OF_SCHOLARLY_NEEDS > Assignments > Diary Study Week #5". The left sidebar contains navigation icons for Account, Dashboard, Courses, Calendar, and Inbox. The main content area features a "Diary Study Week #5" header with "Published" and "Edit" buttons. Below the header is a text box with the following instructions: "Please describe a moment in your research this week where you worked with time-based media on a computer. Be specific as to what material you were working with - the title of the video as well as the platform you accessed it with. What did you plan to do with this media? What did you accomplish? What kept you from getting things done? You can talk about environment here as well as technology. What helped you in getting things done? What were the frustrations?" Below the text box, it states "Please submit your response by attaching a Word document or PDF." The assignment details are as follows:

- Points:** 0
- Submitting:** a text entry box or a file upload
- Turnitin:** Turnitin has been enabled for this assignment.

Due	For	Available from	Until
Jun 5	Everyone	Apr 16 at 12am	-

On the right side, under "Related Items", there is a link for "SpeedGrader™".

Study Results

For scholars of all levels: More importance is put on content and accessing it, less on interface.



They will use whatever player/tool is available to access the film/music/footage they need for their project.

Study Results

No one uses just one tool while accessing and researching media.

Ripping

HandBrake

MakeMKV

Viewers

Adobe Suite

iMovie

Preview

QuickTime Player

YouTube

Note Taking

Handwritten notes

(legal pad/scraps of paper)

TextEdit

Writing

Google Docs

KeyNote

Microsoft Word

Pages

Scrivener

Collecting/Citing

External Hard Drive

DropBox

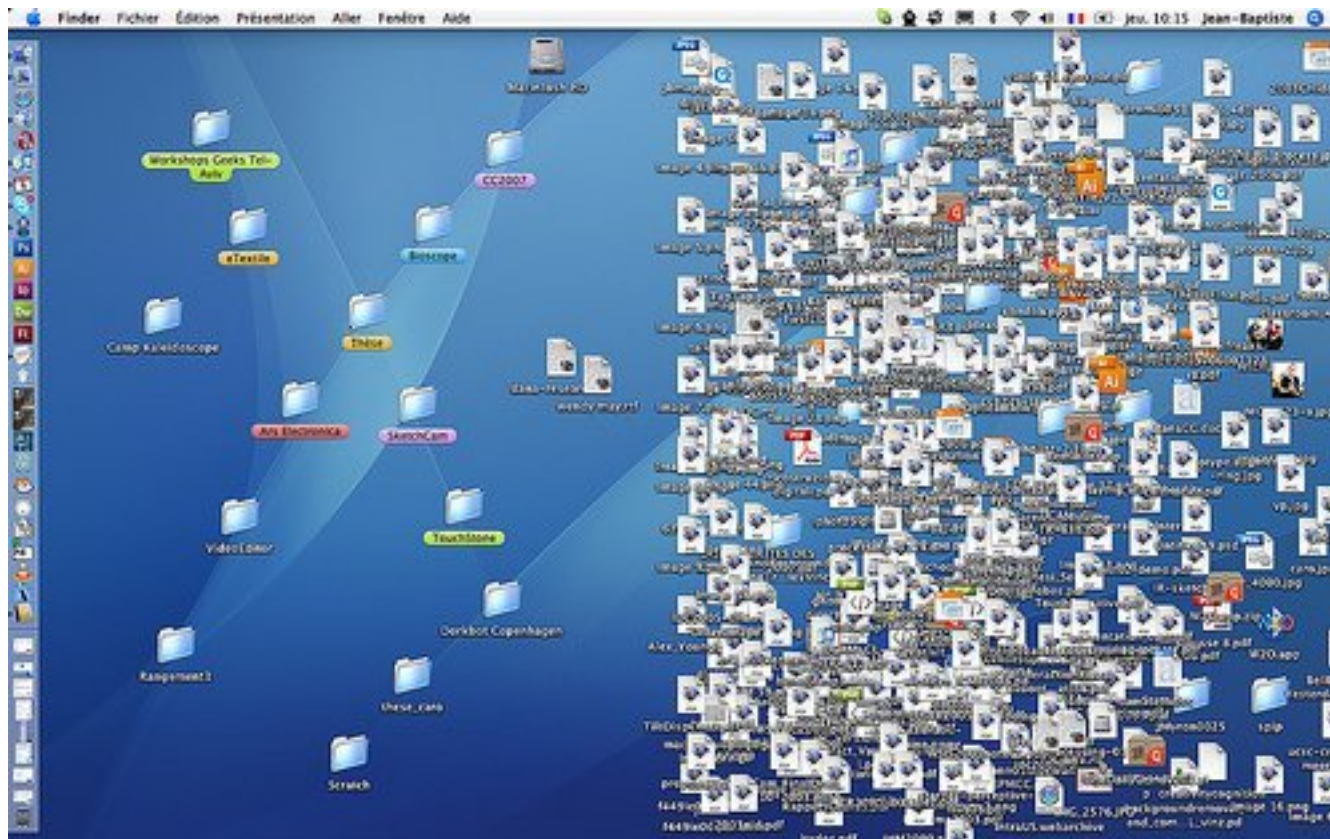
EndNote

Zotero

“My computer is particularly slow, I should restart it, but I have too many documents open.”

Study Results

COMMON FRUSTRATIONS USING MEDIA for SCHOLARSHIP:
Difficulty locating files on own machine.



Study Results

COMMON FRUSTRATIONS USING MEDIA for SCHOLARSHIP:

Lack of training in technology for research needs.

“I should really learn how to use iMovie properly but I don’t have the time and my research budget doesn’t allow for taking a class.” (Tenure Track Study Participant, Northwestern)

“I was looking for something else for my research and I found this program to use.” (Graduate Student Participant, Northwestern)

“I rely on my techie-friends and students to help me when I get stuck.” (Visiting Professor Participant, Northwestern)

Study Results

COMMON FRUSTRATIONS USING MEDIA for SCHOLARSHIP:

Difficulty getting hi-res screen shots for presentations/publications/use as evidence.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=37XhluqsWVk>

Study Results

COMMON FRUSTRATIONS USING MEDIA for SCHOLARSHIP:

Lack of authoritative sources

LIVE LIKE LUCY
(You'll Love it!)

NOW . . . FOR YOUR HOME,
THE LOVELY "I LOVE LUCY" SUITE!

Fashion Trend
by JOHNSON-CASPER

Here's The Beautiful Fashion Trend Bedroom Suite Created Especially For Lucy and Desi And Their Sensational Television Show, "I Love Lucy"—Chosen For Their Hollywood Home, Too! Brought To You By Thousands of Fashion Trend Dealers From Coast To Coast!

Double Dresser and Bookcase Bed . . . \$198⁰⁰

JOHNSON-CASPER FURNITURE CO., INC., EDMOND, WYOMING

*It's Live Fashion Trend! See Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz, stars of the hit show "I Love Lucy" show. You, too, will love this Fashion Trend suite. For its charming, chic, especially created for Lucy and Desi by Johnson-Casper. . . for its subtle, elegant, graceful of light, lovely lines and proportions. . . for its many quality features that make Fashion Trend one of the most famous pieces in America. . . and for the unbeatable price that makes Fashion Trend as easy to own as it is to love! See the "I Love Lucy" suite at leading furniture and department stores — (See Ads Leaflet)

<http://7thhouseontheleft.com/2011/10/love-lucy/>

Study Results



Sand dunes in the Rub' al Khali ("Empty quarter") of Saudi Arabia, COURTESY WIKIPEDIA

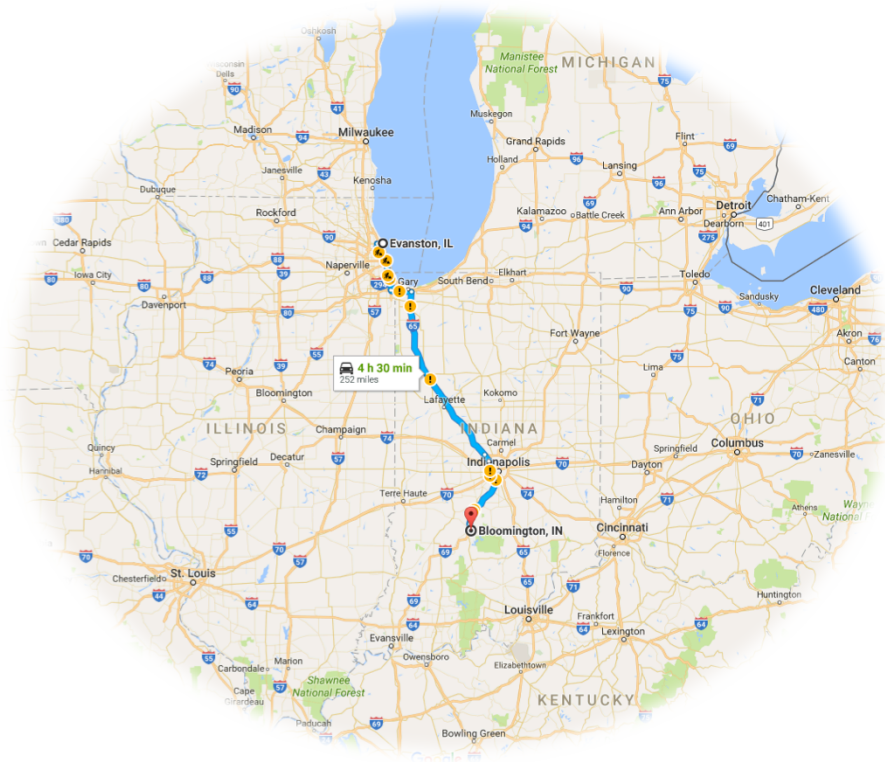
Lessons Learned Thus Far

- Recruitment



Lessons Learned Thus Far

- Working from 2 separate institutions



Consistent training and use of materials

Crucial projects based on immediate institutional needs

Changes in staffing across both project teams (including loss of initial leadership on study)

Policy differences across institutions

We're listening...

Evviva Weinraub, Northwestern University

Associate University Librarian, Digital Strategies

evviva.weinraub@northwestern.edu

Jon Dunn, Indiana University

Assistant Dean for Library Technologies

jwd@iu.edu