UXLibs pre-conference workshop

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Aim: To give an introduction to UX ahead of the conference
  • UX and ethnography – what and why?
  • Key techniques (required for the UXLibs conference team challenge)

1: Defining UX and ethnography

Background: My UX journey

• My ‘Road to Damascus’ moment: when I realised that I had been researching users of the library and information services I ran very poorly. I had only been conducting surveys and focus groups and, as a result, was not getting the full picture of the experience of library users. They were saying that our services and staff were excellent but there were many problems hidden just under the surface: the feeling and experience that the space was not fit for purpose for a leading business school, no-one knew how to download ebooks; databases were not being used sufficiently to justify expenditure of £500k per annum. By connecting with people online (on blogs and Twitter), notably including Bryony Ramsden, I learned about the value of alternative ‘UX research’ methods. They revealed the actual – very different and often surprising – experiences of my users. As well as applying them successfully to my own library service, led a UX innovation project across all of Cambridge University’s libraries called Futurelib. See: http://bit.ly/FuturelibUXreports

• I also created the international UX in Libraries conference in order to bring librarians from all over the world together to share best practice and further the activity of UX research.

The story of New Coke

• In April 1985 Coke relied on user testing with 500,000 US consumers when launching a new version of Coke. The strategy failed because users did not tell the truth during the test and were not told it was a choice between old and new Coke. Nor did they drink this new Coke out of a Coke can – the experience was different and when they did come to taste new Coke in what looked like a regular Coke can their reaction was visceral. Protest groups were formed against the new Coke and eventually it was withdrawn and old Coke returned. The point of the story is that during research many people want to please researchers so we need to be very careful when user testing and also go beyond what our users tell us.

Quotes about human nature and users of services

• ‘What people say, what people do, and what people say they do are entirely different things’ — Margaret Mead, anthropologist
• ‘If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said a faster horse’ — Henry Ford
• ‘It’s not the consumers’ job to know what they want’ — Steve Jobs
• And yet, service providers are constantly asking their users: ‘How we can improve the services we offer?’ Are we wasting our time? Sometimes, we are.

UX is more than customer service
• **Question:** Is UX more than just offering great customer service?
  - A more holistic approach.
  - UX is not just about giving users what they want but also what they don’t know they want.
  - UX is less reactive and more proactive.
  - Also if the User Experience is excellent customer service is not required.

Key readings
• **Read:** Useful, Usable, Desirable: applying user experience design to your library, by Aaron Schmidt and Amanda Etches (2014).

Definitions
• ‘User experience is about how someone feels when using a product or service’ (Schmidt & Etches).
• ‘User Experience is everything that happens to your users when they interact with your service in any way (physically or remotely). It includes everything they see, everything they hear, everything they do, as well as their emotional reactions.’
• What is UX in libraries? Or UXLibs? Well, in some ways it’s easier to say what it isn’t. It is not, for example just “good customer service.” Nether is it relying solely on the quantitative data that we love to collect, gate counts, click throughs, surveys, circ stats.

Touchpoints
• Matt talked about how UX for our purposes is about how people interact with our libraries. It’s about how people interact with our library resources. And by resources we mean everything. People, databases, books on shelves, special collections, working space. It’s about their perspective. Think about all the ways in which our users, our members interact with the library.
  • Entering the library
  • Using the circulation desk
  • Using the library discovery tool to find a book
  • Asking a question at the reference desk
  • Talking to a member of staff
  • Picking a book off the shelf
  • Finding a space to do group work
  • Using the library website and databases
  • Information literacy sessions
  • Emails/communication sent from library
  • Doors!
  • Wayfinding
• It would be hard to come up with an exhaustive list. We are looking at any interaction that our users might have. All of these potential interactions are called touchpoints. And it’s these touchpoints and how we design these touchpoints that we need to think about. Think about how our users are affected by what they encounter at every stage of their journey in the library. And what their perspective is of those touchpoints.

• For years as librarians we’ve leveraged our expert intuition to influence the way we present information and resources to our users. One of the beautiful traits of the library profession is that inherent characteristic of wanting to help the user.

**We are not our users**

• We’ve got an expert blind spot. Intuitions are fast, but they are often wrong. Simply because they are not taken from the user’s perspective. As Schmidt would say: we are not our patrons. In order to understand the perspective of our users, it’s important to understand that our students, our users, have different expectations of our libraries and our resources.

• So good user experience is understanding that there are user expectations that we need to live up to, and that there is a user perspective that we need to take into account when designing our touchpoints.

• In order to uncover user expectations and user perspective, we need to uncover complexity and detail. And we can only do this be actually being in our user’s shoes.

**Attitudinal and behavioural research**

It’s also important to recognize that here are 2 types of user research:

1. Attitudinal: reveals user attitudes and opinions, how they feel about a product or service
2. Behavioural: how users actually behave, how they interact with and use the service.

We’re OK at the former (not great), but until recent years rarely conducting the latter.

• We need to put ourselves in our users’ shoes more and seek a deeper understanding of what makes them tick.

• Accept user behaviour – shortcuts, workarounds, odd approaches. They are not wrong, there are reasons why, and we can learn from them.

• We need to shift focus from what we think our users SHOULD BE DOING, to what they are ACTUALLY DOING...

• Above all else we need to undertake extensive attitudinal and behavioural user research and STOP using the least valuable methods available: surveys and focus groups.

**Problems with surveys and focus groups**

• What are the problems with surveys?
  
  * only reaching a % of users; largely filled in by pro- or anti- users; mainly quantitative data; comment boxes left empty; self-reporting is unreliable; closed or leading questions; frustrating to complete; too many of them; too long

• Well-constructed surveys can offer some insights but they should not be used as the sole means of establishing user behaviour or experience. Institutions will always want quantitative stats.
• Problems with focus groups:
  o pleasing the conveners; groupthink; The Vividness Effect; not a level
ing field (loud people thrive, quieter people not heard, more senior
people given the floor out of deference); people don’t know enough
to make an informed decision (aren’t
given full facts or context); people are
COMPLETELY AWFUL at predicting
their future behaviour

• Focus groups can work if they are:
  o open-ended in purpose; not making a
‘yes’ or ‘no’ decision; seeking to
uncover opinions and experiences; facilitated well (ensuring equal involvement)

We need to conduct other types of user research that are more revealing about user attitudes and
behaviours. We need to conduct ethnography.

Ethnography

• Bryony explained about how her PhD has used critical ethnographic based methodology and is
awaiting her viva.

• Ethnography is a collection of methods primarily used to gather rich detailed qualitative data

• Ethnography has its roots in anthropology and sociology. Researchers ‘go into the field’ to research particular
cultures, behaviours, peoples. Margaret Mead was a huge
influence over the development of the feminist movement
in the 60s, and the wink relates to Clifford Geertz, an
anthropologist who developed ‘thick description’ in
reference to the density and depth of field notes taken and
written up when researching. The wink is a reference to
developing an understanding of how behaviours can be very
open to discussion and interpretation: what is a wink, who
is it for, what it communicates, is it a conspiratorial wink or
just a twitch?! Modern anthropologists have placed
themselves at great risk, such as Punch and his research into
police corruption, or can be much more fun like working for
Lego to help create productive innovative environments for
staff, plus areas like design anthropology that help study
how products are used, where their design fails.

• Ethnography is very much a collection of methods, so I’ll just run through a few of them, without
too many spoilers for later in this session! One of the best known is observation, the classic ‘going
into the field’ perspective to learn about what happens. It’s very useful, you learn a LOT from it,
but it can be very time consuming, and needs serious ethical consideration and approval to ensure
it is conducted appropriately

• Interviewing techniques are another favourite, you can collect observational or other data, discuss
it with participants, go in with some very loose open questions and try to learn as much about an
overarching topic as possible. Interviews are useful, interesting, and participants often really enjoy
them!
• One of the more unpredictable ways of collecting data is to ask participants to take photos, with prompts, to learn about their library use and study practices. Foster and Gibbons used some unusual prompts to learn more about how students’ personal lives can interact with study practices, such as their request for a photo of a favourite pair of shoes – this led to a conversation with one student who had saved up from working to buy his favourite running shoes, and using the library resources had meant he didn’t need to spend a lot of money on books, so it took him less time to save up for them!

• Ethnographic methods are often participant-led, that is the data is generated by the participants, and they help interpret it too – so we need to remember that we are looking at people’s personal lives, their day-to-day ups and downs, and sometimes we can find out some very personal or sensitive information in the process, so we need to respect that.

• In summary ethnography involves:

  culture, interview, details, unstructured, social, holistic, context, observation, complexity; offers a far more complete and complex bigger picture of our users’ behaviours and needs, indeed their lives; retain both naivety and cynicism; it doesn’t have to take years: quick ethnography has its place – just a few hours can reveal a great deal

**UX/ethnographic research techniques**

• Behavioural mapping, Card sorting, Cognitive mapping, Contextual inquiry, Cultural probes, Graffiti walls, Guerrilla interviews, Love/break-up letters, Observation, Photo studies, Semi-structured interviews, Touchstone tours, Usability testing, User journey mapping

**Summary:**

• Go beyond surveys, focus groups and quantitative data to find out how users really behave and what they really need.

• Attitudinal research should be supplemented by behavioural research.

• We are not our users and should be realistic and not judgemental about their behaviour and learn from it.

• Ethnography offers us the opportunity for a more holistic and detailed understanding of our users.

2: UX research methods

**The UX research & design process**

• There are 4 component stages in this representation of the UX research and design process: discover, define, develop and deliver. N.B. Different people will call these stages different things but all agree that you move from research to analysis to prototyping to service.

• The arrows leading back represent those times in the process when you loop back to conduct further research, iterate and generate ideas for new services or products. [Adapted from ‘The UX design process’: http://www.desiginingcollaboration.com](http://www.desiginingcollaboration.com)

• In this second session we will be exploring the range of techniques you can conduct during the discover phase.
Balancing UX research approaches

- It is important when conducting UX research to strike a balance of behavioural and attitudinal approaches to ensure the data gathered gives a more accurate impression of user experience.

- Some techniques do not fall neatly into either category as they involve a mix of methods. The manner in which techniques are executed can also affect these labels.

### BEHAVIOURAL
- OBSERVATION
- BEHAVIOURAL MAPPING
- USER JOURNEY MAPPING
- USABILITY TESTING
- CONTEXTUAL ENQUIRY
- TOUCHSTONE TOURS

What people are really doing, thinking and feeling

### ATTITUDBINAL
- INTERVIEWS
- COGNITIVE MAPPING
- CARD SORTING
- LOVE/BREAK-UP LETTERS
- PHOTO STUDIES
- GRAFFITI WALLS

What people say they are doing, thinking and feeling

**OBSERVATION**

- In my book, the most important UX research technique of all.

- ‘The hardest thing to see is what is in front of our eyes’ – Goethe

- Remember that our experiences, assumptions and values influence what we see. When observing we need to consider what is objective and what is subjective (remember the park bench photo).

- In library spaces this is about recording objective detailed notes on behaviour in a particular space (people, activities, objects, communication) usually in order to answer a specific research
question. Your subjective assertions and instincts might prove valuable but record them separately to objective.

- In a library spaces you will be observing and recording the following:
  - volume of traffic; duration of stay; study activities; interaction between users;
  - choice of desks; staff assistance; food and drink consumed; devices used; databases used, people looking lost...
  - As patterns and trends emerge you typically record less and less.

- Case Study: Cambridge University – North Reading Room
  - People were using the room for independent quiet study but the room was intended to be a space for groupwork however it was not being used like that. We decided to follow the lead of those already working in the space and make it a better independent study environment.
  - Baselining of initial space for a week (observing and recording without changes)
  - Followed by observation, behavioural mapping, exit interviews and graffiti walls to establish user behavior in, and views on, changes to the space.
  - Prototyping of new layout and furniture was conducted over several weeks until optimum capacity was reached.
  - Changes made: furniture arranged so more back-to-back seating; house plants as sightline blockers; uplighters and task lights; oblong rather than circular desks to make space for all the equipment people tend to have with them today.
  - The most popular layout made better use of the space, had people sat back to back, considered natural light, and had power running under and over the desks.

- Observation log: keeping a record every minute or so of what is going on in the space. Being sure to record subjective assertions separately.

- Privacy: but what about user privacy? Won’t people complain?
  - You will be approached very rarely
  - You will be effectively invisible and ignored.
  - The few users that do ask are satisfied with a simple explanation.
  - Ethics approval not required for observation as no interaction.
  - Also fear of skewing of activity is overstated, people carry on regardless.

**BEHAVIOURAL MAPPING**

- Behavioural mapping: a specific observational UX technique, essentially, watching and recording where people go.

- What can be recorded on a behavioural map?
- Time in and time out in order to calculate duration of stay/transience of the space
- Routes in and out of the space
- Popularity of seats and areas
- Perceived occupancy (looping)
- Movement and use of facilities within the space

* You should amend this approach for a higher use space as you will not be able to keep track of individuals and the routes they take – lose the alphabetical coding and perhaps have 1 line representing 5 users.

* Through behavioural mapping you can build up a picture of occupancy and space preferences as you alter the furniture and amenities in each environment. Prototyping like this is an essential element of the UX process.

* Observing ‘the hidden obvious’
  - Ethnographer Ellen Isaacs says observation is all about identifying ‘the hidden obvious’ in amongst the chaos of human behaviour.
  - These ‘obvious’ things are not obvious until they are pointed out. They are often just common sense, but that doesn’t mean they’ve been noticed, recorded, or acted upon.

* Example: Judge Business School Library
  - A behavioural map showing routes through the space over 1 hour.
  - After 10 hour-long observations, a visual representation of all the maps combined uncovered information on the most popular seats, services and route through the library.
  - The most popular route is the desire line. You should find the desire lines on every floor of your library. You can choose to alter the desire line or go with it. Perhaps you could arrange furniture and equipment around them, remove obstacles, or divert the route so that different spaces and resources are discovered.

* What was learned at Judge?: Most users were only entering the ground floor to access the 1st floor - – we decided to change the desire line by opening the first floor library
doors; library display screens were in the wrong place; not a browsed collection; self-service more popular than the staff desk.

- Behavioural mapping at TU Delft:
  - users not visiting the book wall very much, but PC and study desks all full
  - desire line in main library
  - use of ‘living room’ area (below) Finding: fewer vending machines more microwave ovens! Or use the waiting time observed to sell library services through promotion. The value of friction in UX.

- Entranceway activity at the State Library of South Australia
  - Library staff horrified by amount of confusion, and by the decision making, of users at the entrance to their library. Called for an immediate wayfinding project.
  - Observing entranceways and how often signage is looked at can be very informative.

- Quiet reading room at Bishan Library, Singapore
  - Behavioural mapping revealed use of the edges of the room and no occupancy of the central seating which presumably people didn’t know how to sit in?!

**SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS**

- Interviewing for user research is often misunderstood and interview planning and priorities are all wrong. In this section we will explore the particular discipline of semi-structured interviews.

- Quotes: ‘Supposing is good. Finding out is better’: Mark Twain; ‘If you have been making a bunch of assumptions based on out-of-date information, maybe it’s time to ask some people some questions’: Nancy Fried Foster.
- How do you conduct a successful user interview? How should you behave? What are the essential components?

- Getting Started:
  - Select the right users: a good balance of age, gender, and frequency of use. Ideally non-users too.
  - Don’t dress too formally.
  - Think about where and how you are sitting.
  - Start with a friendly ‘thank you’ for their time and lots of smiles.
  - Adopt a conversational informal tone to put the interviewee at ease and to reassure them that this is not going to be a difficult experience.
  - Briefly describe the reason for the interview and the fact that there are no right or wrong answers (this is not a test).
  - Gather some scene-setting context first to convey your interest (e.g. ask them what course they are doing and the year they are in) even if you don’t need to know.

- The Body of the Interview:
  - Let your questions stand alone - don’t say too much, or add to the question, or trail off. Ask it and then keep silent.
  - After they answer your question again remain silent. People tend to speak in paragraphs – let them pause and continue to elaborate on their answer.
  - Maintain communication while remaining silent through eye contact, smiles, nods. Silence can be very encouraging if it is handled right.
  - Ask open questions that do not lead the user towards specific answers and do not result in ‘yes’ or ‘no’ responses.
  - If their story is going nowhere and not revealing anything useful, gently bring them back to the interview with a related question.
  - Ask them to go give more detail on interesting things said in passing. Don’t interrupt them there and then – note it and come back to it.
  - Ask for an example rather than saying ‘what do you mean?’
  - Probe what has not been said. Use unplanned additional follow-up questions to dig deeper, clarify what is being said, and ensure you understand.
  - Never correct the interviewee. Go along with it.
  - Be flexible. Don’t try to get through all your questions.
  - In terms of talking time, aim 80% them, 20% you. But YOU are in charge and guiding.
  - Record if possible. Only transcribe interesting bits.

- Case Study: Louis Theroux: plays impossibly naive (comes across as clueless so his subjects open up); builds rapport, shows genuine interest and does not judge; silent 90% of the time; use of ‘And?’, ‘Meaning?’ and ‘Go on’ to probe;
interviews in interviewee’s world; chiefly open questions, but switches to direct when getting to ‘the tough stuff’.

* Practice research question:
  - You are opening a new restaurant nearby. As well as gauging the competition you are exploring the routines and preferences of your potential clientele. You need to find out...
    - Which restaurants they currently go to?
    - When they visit them?
    - What they like about their favourite restaurant
    - What incentive would make them try out a new restaurant

* This exercise was artificial but should still have been helpful practice at asking a limited number of prepared questions, maintaining silence, and making the interview about the interviewee.

* Research biases and skewing: Although we cannot help but encode our own values, preferences and priorities into the research process, we should try to consider how both our own biases and those of our research subjects might affect the data we gather and the conclusions we reach. As we research we should ask ourselves:
  - Are our samples representative/inclusive?
  - Are we ever engaged in confirmation bias? (actively seeking information that confirms our suspicions)
  - Are our questions biased in any way?
  - Are the answers we receive biased in any way?
  - Is our reporting of results representative/objective?

* Common Question biases
  - Leading questions (seeking a specific answer)
  - Unanswerable questions (respondent doesn’t have sufficient experience)
  - Question order (suggesting priority and significance)

* Common Answer biases
  - Dominant respondent (influencing and dominating in a group)
  - Sensitivity bias (giving false answers as the subject matter may be sensitive)
  - Social acceptance (providing socially acceptable answers)
  - Overstatement bias (overstating intentions or opinions)
  - Moderator acceptance bias (answering to please the researcher)
  - Error bias (not recalling experiences accurately)

* “You must listen, you must be open to what they have to say, you must consider bias, and you must go beyond what they initially tell you. If you don’t dig deep enough you may as well just do a survey.” Andy Priestner

**CONTEXTUAL INQUIRY**

* What is it? A specific form of user research interview that focuses more on the context of the users work. Involves observation as well as questioning to better understand needs and behaviours.
Example: Asking to sit in with a researcher as they work on a literature review or research a topic.

Discover: process they follow; databases they use; search options/techniques they use; obstacles in their way; misunderstandings around access and availability.

Format:
- move from standard interview to a master-apprentice relationship;
- tell the user that you want to learn from them by watching and occasionally interrupting to ask questions and understand their choices;
- summarise what they did/you observed, so you can understand the process better;
- identify specific opportunities for: enhanced instruction; support; more seamless access etc.

Read: Interviewing Users by Steve Portigal: Interviewing for UX/ethnography/design research; case studies; tips and tricks

COGNITIVE MAPPING

What is it? A technique for uncovering information about user priorities, preferences and routines through a simple drawing or doodle. Concept of a cognitive map was first introduced by behaviourist Edward Tolman, better known for his tests on rats in mazes. He postulated that individuals acquire cues from the world around them and can use these to build a mental image of an environment.

See the ERIAL Project for the first significant use of cognitive mapping in libraries. They used cognitive mapping in order to quantitatively count what people drew: chairs, staff members etc. http://www.erialproject.org

What people draw is just as important as what they don’t draw. e.g. periodicals at Illinois.

What should the map include? What rules are there?
- Your map can take whatever form you want and can include: shapes, buildings, objects, people, animals, scribbles, or whatever
- This is not a test of your artistic ability
- Could be a geographical map or completely abstract
- Could be lots of little images or one large image
- No text, just pictorial

Draw a map that depicts either:
- ‘Why I am in libraries’
- ‘Opportunities for the library service I work for’
- ‘This is me!’

Method:
- Choose 3 different coloured pens
- You will have 2 minutes to draw with each pen and 6 minutes in all
- Each time you use a new pen, write the order in which you used the colours on your sheet.

- Cognitive maps offer almost instant access to the world of the user. Their focus is on the map not on you.

- Change of colours is to help the researcher determine user priorities and preferences.

- Map 1: the black lines and the spaces between them represented the tasks and operational activities of library staff; spaces coloured blue represented those staff activities that were moderately useful to library users; spaces coloured green represented those staff activities that were very useful to library users; spaces left white represented staff activities that had little or no impact on, or value to, library users.

- Map 2: the artist worked in IT support in a large medical research institute. He built castle-like walls around himself to protect him from the onslaught of IT requests which came to him constantly in person and via his desktop.

- Example: PhD student studying English Literature. Drawing helped him to open up about the challenges of studying for a PhD, the library’s support role and his information needs.

- Cognitive maps are a great way into an interview.

- Keep the question broad so they are free to respond in whatever way they feel. Remember that you want to find out about their wider experience.
  - ‘What does the library mean to you?’
  - ‘Draw the strengths and weaknesses of the library’
  - ‘How does the library fit into your life at University?’

**USER JOURNEY MAPPING**

- What is it?: Essentially plotting a process or task that a user completes and identifying what they do, think and feel along the way.

- Below: A simple ‘pain and gain line’. The pain points, or failing touchpoints are what you are chiefly looking for so that you can work out how to solve them or provide services that fulfil unmet needs.

- Often the journey being mapped is navigation of a digital interface so the maps can become quite complex given the different routes and choices available, especially if you are collating different user experiences onto one map.
• Example 1: A user journey map of a day in the life of a researcher at the University of Cambridge.

• Example 2: Experience of attending the UXLibs conference with ‘Do, Touchpoints, Gain, Pain’ categories. For each failing touchpoint, mappers were asked to suggest an improvement.

• Example 3: The Tracker Project
  - Shadowing a user completing a specific task (e.g. finding a book, placing a reservation, booking a room)
  - What obstacles are in their way? What is confusing? What don’t they understand? Do they give up?
  - Finding a book with just the title/author while wearing eyetracking glasses so we could see exactly where users looked
  - Signs ignored, owning of library processes, giving up
  - Participants did not criticise the library process or the library staff. Instead they found themselves at fault: ‘This is because I’m rubbish at libraries’; ‘I should be able to do this my dad’s a librarian’; ‘I’m no good at libraries’. Incidentally this is why I think many students will not complain about library services via surveys. They think they just ‘can’t library’.
  - Scientists browsed as if in a bookshop, Arts students used the catalogue and were more systematic.
  - Average times to find a book: Sci: 23 mins/Arts: 7 mins
  - Introduced coloured signage and reduced times in half.

• Example: Sticky note journey map:

![User Journey Mapping Example: Researcher finding the full-text of a journal article](image-url)

- **User Journey Mapping exercise:**
  - Map a library process/journey that can be improved
  - Purpose is to identify opportunities and gaps
  - Try to project user experience (put yourself in the shoes of the user)
  - Timeline runs along the top, and then rows as follows:
    - **DO:** Task that requires assistance (the requests you receive)
    - **THINK & SAY:** What they might say or think at each stage.
    - **FEEL:** How they might feel at each stage.
    - **OPPORTUNITIES:** Opportunities to improve the process at each stage
CARD SORTING

- What is it? Filling out and arranging sticky notes in response to a research question to uncover user priorities and preferences.
- Example research questions:
  o What are the strengths and weaknesses of the library service?
  o What is the role of libraries?
  o What do you think of the library website?
- When to use it? When you want to quickly (and anonymously) establish what a roomful of people think about a topic. But remember, this is an attitudinal method so contributors will not always relate what they actually do or use. It may not offer an entirely true picture of use, but is still a great way into a conversation.
- Exercise:
  o 1. What are the strengths of the library service you work for?
  o 2. Write as many sticky notes as you can (with one idea per note)
  o Important! Don’t think too hard. These should be your first thoughts.
  o 2. What are the weaknesses of the library service you work for?

  * Library staff are terrible at card sorting. It’s like they’ve never indexed or used a thesaurus before!
  * You absolutely need to staff a card sort wall (either yourself or nominate others) and aggressively re-categorise as it grows.

AFFINITY MAPPING

- Affinity mapping is a close cousin of card sorting.
- This is a way of arranging the UX/ethnographic data that you gather by theme on sticky notes on a wall.
- Once themed you should hold an idea generation session in response to the themed data.
- I don’t use NVIVO to theme and count qualitative data I only ever theme visually on sticky notes – the data comes alive and is easier to manipulate.

LOVE AND BREAK-UP LETTERS

- What is it? Asking a user to write a love or break-up letter to a product or service (rather than a person) detailing why they will keep using it or have stopped using it. A fun attitudinal approach for gathering information on people’s likes and dislikes. Respondents can choose to read out their letters or just hand them in.
- Exercise: Write a love or break-up letter to a product or service. You can choose something from your working or personal life, but it must not be a person!
• Respondents tend to write a great deal. Why does it work?
  o Captures an emotional and honest response.
  o Anthropomorphises the product or service, offering a new perspective.
  o Has respondents thinking in a different way thereby accessing more information.
  o If writing about your service/products you need to encourage people to be honest
    and reassure them that you cannot be offended.
  o You will learn more from break-up letters.
  o Useful and persuasive artefact.

OTHER TECHNIQUES
• Touchstone Tours: the user gives you a tour of the library thereby revealing their behavior in the
  library, where they go, what they call things and what problems exist.
• Photo Studies: Having the user take photos of the library environment or respond to pre-taken
  photographs of the library space
• Usability Testing: Observing how a user navigates, and completes tasks on a digital platform
• Guerrilla Interviews: Quick interviews with users, usually in the library space
• Graffiti Walls: Offering users a physical space on which to feedback informally and freely.
• Cultural Probes: A deep dive into user routines and behaviours through their completion of a
  series of tasks completed over a period of weeks.

THE UX RESEARCH METHODS LANDSCAPE
• When using UX research methods you will need to balance two different approaches: behavioural
  and attitudinal research (what people do and what people say) and data that describes activity
  (qualitative) and data that defines (or counts) activity (quantitative)
• UX research is all about accepting that we need to take a more holistic view of our users and
  expend efforts to understand their whole experience not just what they self-report which is only
  a small part of the story.
• This is my own model of the UX research methods landscape which shows where many of the
  different methods sit.

UX RESEARCH METHODS LANDSCAPE (adapted from Christian Rohrer)
3: Further reading

- Useful, Usable, Desirable: applying user experience design to your library, by Aaron Schmidt and Amanda Etches, ALA. http://www.alastore.ala.org
- Don’t Make Me Think Revisited: A Common Sense Approach to Web Usability by Steve Krug. Published by New Riders.
- The Designing Better Libraries blog has been reflecting on ethnography in libraries since 2006. http://dbl.lishost.org/blog/