

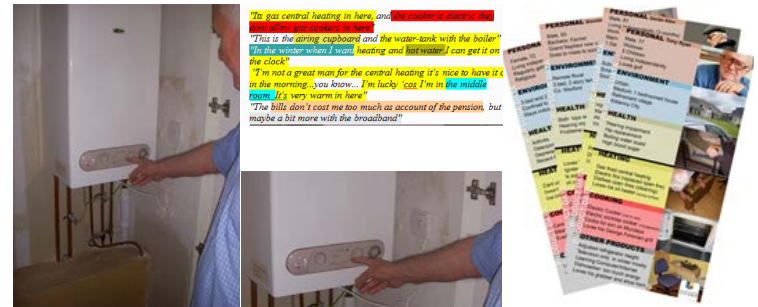
Ethnography in Designing for Older People

Keywords: Design for older people, Ethnography, Design Methodology

As the global population rapidly gets older, designers are continually seeking means to gaining understanding and eliciting true user insights into older people's design and wellbeing needs. Comprehensive field studies that are both empathic and sensitive are cited as essential in this regard, with ethnographies predominantly heralded for achieving this (Seidel, 2009, Newell et al., 2010). However, it has been identified that Ethnography, because of its roots in Anthropology, has not been fully elucidated for the purposes of designing, particularly for older people (White, 2013).

Following the results of a yearlong design ethnographic field study into domestic product design requirement, this paper discusses and outlines the process of Design Ethnography specific to older people. It will reflect on the role of the design ethnographer and inform future practice; detailing the key stages and considerations of the process.

This paper will firstly outline the early stages of design ethnography prior to fieldwork; noting ethical considerations required. Further to this it will detail how to construct an "information rich" (Patton, 2002, p.242) sample of participants. Secondly it will describe fieldwork data collection methodologies (Fig. 1) through Interviewing, Observation, and Participatory Techniques. Thirdly, it will outline techniques of analysing Ethnographic data for the purposes of designing through colour coding (Fig. 2) and developing personas (Fig. 3). Finally the practical output of a design ethnographic study will be discussed, illustrating the critical nature of conceptual output.



"No gas central heating in here, and the cooker is electric, the
 and also gas cooker, or two"
 "The water-tank with the boiler"
 "The water-tank with the boiler, heating and the water tank can get it on
 the clock"
 "I'm not a great man for the central heating it's nice to have it a
 in the morning, you know... I'm lucky, cos I'm in the middle
 room. It's very warm in here"
 "The bills don't cost me too much as account of the pension, but
 maybe a bit more with the broadband!"



Figure 1: Fieldwork Data Collection Figure 2: Colour Coding Analysis

Figure 3: Personas

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