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# Personal Information Management

Research Seminar in Computer Science  
Spring Semester 2009  
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# Agenda

- Diary studies
  - ^ What are diary studies ?
  - ^ Guidelines
  - ^ Examples
  - ^ Duty
- « How to make a good scientific presentation », Prof. Rolf Ingold

# What are diary studies ?

- Diary studies, as the name suggests, involves the user keeping a **diary record of what they did, how they did it and what they thought** about using a particular system or product, doing specific activities, engaging in certain social behaviours, ...
- open format vs closed format

# Guidelines

- Get a notebook
  - Record events as soon as possible after they occur
  - Also write down comments and feelings
  - Write as openly and honestly as possible
- 
- Do it each day for a few minutes, during 7-15 days.
  - If an interesting PIM activity occurs out of this timeframe, do not hesitate to log it ;-)

# Examples

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	L
1	Time (HH:MM)	Project/Task Description	Application or Device	Priority	What caused the Difficulty?	What docs/data needed to be found?	On Task?	# of Interruptions?	Time completed	Time On Task	
2	5:05 AM	check email	outlook	hi	n/a	lo	n/a	yes	0	8:31 AM	3:26:00
3	5:31 AM	daily task check	outlook tasks	hi	check tasks	lo	n/a	yes	0	5:33 AM	0:02:00
4	5:33 AM	look up phone number	outlook contact	hi	phone call	lo	phone number	yes	0	5:34 AM	0:01:00
5	5:35 AM	client call	outlook contact	hi	phone call	lo	n/a	yes	0	5:39 AM	0:04:00
6	5:40 AM	spreadsheet for client	excel	med	on task list	lo	saved excel spreadsheet	yes	5	11:07 AM	5:27:00
7	5:50 AM	answering email	outlook	hi	n/a	lo	n/a	no	0	6:01 AM	0:11:00
8	6:05 AM	client call	outlook contact	hi	phone call	lo	outlook contact enter data into textbox	no	0	6:07 AM	0:02:00
9	6:11 AM	add task items	outlook tasks	hi	phone call	lo	outlook tasks	no	0	6:15 AM	0:04:00
10	6:17 AM	client call	outlook contact	hi	phone call	lo	outlook contact enter data into textbox	yes	0	6:27 AM	0:10:00
11	6:28 AM	look up phone number	outlook contact	hi	call client	lo	phone number	no	0	6:28 AM	0:00:00
12	6:32 AM	client call	outlook contact	hi	phone call	lo	outlook contact enter data into textbox	no	0	6:40 AM	0:08:00
13	6:44 AM	account number look	outlook contact	hi	needed client ac	lo	account number	yes	0	6:44 AM	0:00:00
14	6:48 AM	client call	outlook contact	hi	phone call	lo	outlook contact enter data into textbox	no	0	6:57 AM	0:09:00
15	7:06 AM	client call	outlook contact	hi	phone call	lo	outlook contact enter data into textbox	no	0	7:20 AM	0:14:00
16	7:30 AM	client call	outlook contact	hi	phone call	lo	outlook contact enter data into textbox	no	0	7:37 AM	0:07:00
17	7:40 AM	client call	outlook contact	hi	phone call	lo	outlook contact enter data into textbox	no	0	7:43 AM	0:03:00
18	7:50 AM	client call	outlook contact	hi	phone call	lo	outlook contact enter data into textbox	no	0	8:00 AM	0:10:00
19	8:15 AM	client call	outlook contact	hi	phone call	lo	outlook contact enter data into textbox	no	0	8:20 AM	0:05:00
20	8:30 AM	client call	outlook contact	hi	phone call	lo	outlook contact enter data into textbox	no	0	8:40 AM	0:10:00
21	8:44 AM	look up email address	outlook contact	hi	client message	lo	new email	no	0	8:45 AM	0:01:00
22	9:01 AM	sending email	outlook	hi	client message	lo	outlook email	no	0	9:03 AM	0:02:00
23	9:11 AM	client call	outlook contact	hi	phone call	lo	outlook contact enter data into textbox	no	0	9:15 AM	0:04:00
24	9:27 AM	client call	outlook contact	hi	phone call	lo	outlook contact enter data into textbox	no	0	9:40 AM	0:13:00
25	9:42 AM	client call	outlook contact	hi	phone call	lo	outlook contact enter data into textbox	no	0	9:50 AM	0:08:00
26	9:57 AM	client call	outlook contact	hi	phone call	lo	outlook contact enter data into textbox	no	0	10:05 AM	0:08:00
27	10:15 AM	client call	outlook contact	hi	phone call	lo	outlook contact enter data into textbox	no	0	10:20 AM	0:05:00
28	10:21 AM	client call	outlook contact	hi	phone call	lo	outlook contact enter data into textbox	no	0	10:25 AM	0:04:00
29	10:27 AM	client call	outlook contact	hi	phone call	lo	outlook contact enter data into textbox	no	0	10:33 AM	0:06:00
30	10:34 AM	client call	outlook contact	hi	phone call	lo	outlook contact enter data into textbox	no	0	10:35 AM	0:01:00
31	10:36 AM	client call	outlook contact	hi	phone call	lo	outlook contact enter data into textbox	no	0	10:37 AM	0:01:00
32	10:37 AM	adding calendar item	outlook calendar	hi	client appointment	lo	outlook calendar	yes	0	10:39 AM	0:02:00
33	10:45 AM	client call	outlook contact	hi	phone call	lo	outlook contact enter data into textbox	no	0	10:50 AM	0:05:00
34	10:55 AM	client call	outlook contact	hi	phone call	lo	outlook contact enter data into textbox	no	0	11:10 AM	0:15:00
35	11:15 AM	client call	outlook contact	hi	phone call	lo	outlook contact enter data into textbox	no	0	11:17 AM	0:02:00

# Examples

## ■ Example 1

- ^ **When**: returning from coffee break, noticed an unreplied email received 3 days ago
- ^ **What**: replied to it and classified it
- ^ **Additional details**: email from a friend, replied in 1 minute
- ^ **Relevance to my strategy**: Exceptional behaviour: I use to reply to friend's emails in short delays, especially if replying does not take much time
- ^ **Follows-up**: nothing

# Examples

## ■ Example 2

- ^ **Description**: I am looking for the submission index of an article I submitted to a conference. Someone else submitted the article. I think he sent me this index by email. I use a desktop search engine and type in the name of this person and the article's title. I filter out by type to keep emails only, then by sender. I cannot find the submission index. I remove the type filter. I can see the article's final version in the results list. Looking more closely, I notice the filename has a number appended to it : this is the submission index I was looking for.
- ^ **Comments** : maybe I deleted the email (I normally don't do that), maybe the search engine did not find it. My strategy of going through emails first to re-find information failed. I was lucky the filename contained my desired piece of information.

# Examples

## ■ Example 3

- ^ **Context:** my email quota is reached, I have to clean up my mailbox.
- ^ **Task:** I delete all the « sent emails »
- ^ **Consistency with my strategy:** ok (I use to put my own address as cc when I want to keep a trace of my reply)
- ^ **Comments:** nothing



# Examples

## ■ Example 4

- ^ **Task triggered by:** old PC down, need to recover personal data on hard disks
- ^ **Normal action according to my strategy:** go through personal documents, re-classify them according to my current strategy and put them along my current collection of documents
- ^ **Problem encountered if any:** would take too much time, it is unlikely I will need this data again often in the future
- ^ **Action taken:** took everything « as is » and put it in an archive folder along my current collection of personal documents
- ^ **Comments:** consider redefining archiving strategy

# Duty

- Do the diary study during 7-15 days
- Write a 2-page synthesis
  - △ Focus on your PIM strategy
    - Do you follow it ? Why are there exceptions ?
    - Evaluate its efficiency
    - What makes you criticize your PIM strategy ?
    - ...
  - △ But maybe also other patterns of behaviour you find interesting
  - △ You can add your diary study as an appendix

# References

- Graham Hall, An ethnographic diary study, *ELT Journal* 2008 62(2):113-122, 2007.
- Louise Corti, Using diaries in social research, in *Social Research Update*, Department of Sociology, University of Surrey, England, 1993
- Czerwinski, M., Horvitz, E., and Wilhite, S. 2004. A diary study of task switching and interruptions. In *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (Vienna, Austria, April 24 - 29, 2004). CHI '04. ACM, New York, NY, 175-182.