

Systems Analysis and Design

14 Fact Finding

Terry Marris December 2007

We use document sampling, questionnaires, interviews, background reading and observation (SQIRO) to discover facts about an existing system.

14.1 SQIRO

Technique	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
Reading	We aim to understand the business. We look at reports, manuals, job descriptions, catalogues, Internet, stocks and shares, ...	1. helps us to understand the business before we interview employees and start designing new systems	1. written documents may be out of date or not reflect what actually happens
Interviewing	We try to understand what actually happens from the managers, the users and the customers point of view	1. personal contact can allow us deeper insight into what actually happens	1. can be time consuming and costly 2. the people being interviewed may feel uncomfortable and un-cooperative 3. interview notes need writing up immediately after the event 4. requires skill and expertise
Observation	We see with our own eyes what actually happens	1. we get first-hand experience of how the system works 2. we can compare what we see with what we have been told	1. people do not like being watched and may change their behaviour from what they normally do 2. we may not be allowed to see personal data
Sampling	We look at forms, reports, screens, records, ...	1. we can see what data is involved, and how much	
Questionnaires	We reach people we could not interview	1. we can get information from a large number of people for the least possible cost 2. results can be read by machine and therefore easy to analyse	1. good questionnaires are hard to design 2. people often do not tell the truth or do not bother returning the questionnaire

14.2 Interview Guidelines

- obtain permission from the person's manager
- make an appointment with the person you wish to interview
- use a pre-prepared list of questions with space for answers

- be well mannered :
 - introduce yourself
 - explain the purpose of the interview
 - thank the person for their time at the end of the interview
- take notes
- check information obtained with your interviewee

- document findings immediately after the interview, before you forget
- send a copy of your findings to the person you interviewed
- remain fresh - do not interview more than three people in a day

14.3 Questionnaire Guidelines

- try out the questionnaire with friends who can find mistakes
- use a descriptive title
- include a deadline for completion and return of questionnaire
- provide alternative answers to questions
- provide space for comments
- make it easy for the questionnaire to be returned
- thank people for their help

Bibliography

ZHANG D http://www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/~dell/teaching/isc/dell_isc6a.ppt accessed 23 Dec 2007