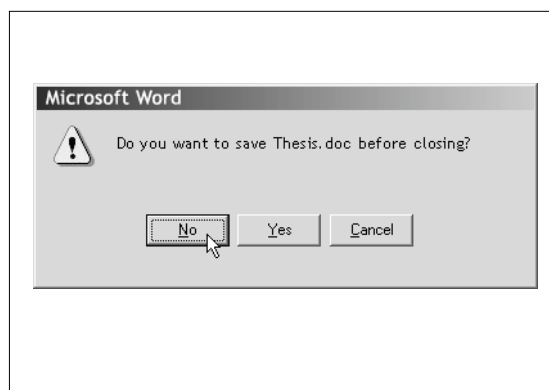


CONTEXT, PHOTOCOPIERS, AND LUCY SUCHMAN

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A DESIGN EXAMPLE



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A DESIGN EXAMPLE



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CONTEXT...

There are a lot of ways of explaining an action

- o genes
- o personality
- o upbringing
- o ...
- o context
- o situation

Q: Do you want to see a film with me later?

A: I have to eat popcorn tonight.

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LUCY SUCHMAN AND PHOTOCOPIERS



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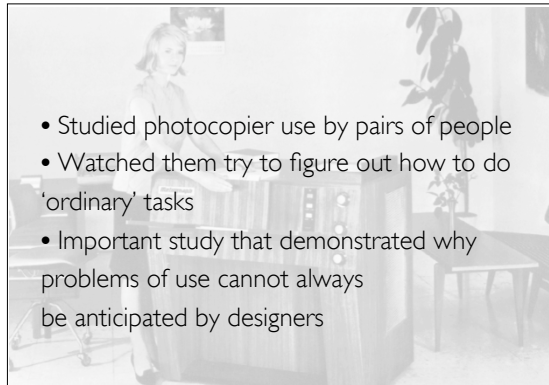
LUCY SUCHMAN AND PHOTOCOPIERS



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LUCY SUCHMAN AND PHOTOCOPIERS



- Studied photocopier use by pairs of people
- Watched them try to figure out how to do 'ordinary' tasks
- Important study that demonstrated why problems of use cannot always be anticipated by designers

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EXAMPLES

- Two people working together, trying to make 5 double-sided copies of a chapter in a book.

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LOCAL HISTORY IS IMPORTANT

- The pair followed the machine's instructions perfectly; but the page order got mixed up...



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/alancleaver/4446487390/>

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INSTRUCTIONS

- Some general problems with instructions...

*OPEN THE BOUND DOCUMENT AID
SLIDE THE DOCUMENT COVER LEFT OVER YOUR ORIGINAL SO IT LATCHES
OPEN THE BOUND DOCUMENT AID*

- **Sequence, timing and history.** They matter.

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SEQUENCE, TIMING & HISTORY

- these are not properties of people
- they are properties of settings, of context
- they can be used to make sense of behaviour
- they are observable
- they are describable

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THREE CONSEQUENCES

- meaning depends on circumstances
- particular actions are *occasioned*
- there can be multiple interpretations; 'actual' meaning may only be decidable in light of what happens *next*

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A nice young lady comes up to you. You want to create a good impression, you don't want to look a fool, do you? So she starts asking you some questions:

- *Are you worried about the number of young people without jobs?*
- *Are you worried about the rise in crime among teenagers?*
- *Do you think there is a lack of discipline in our schools?*
- *Do you think young people welcome some authority and leadership in their lives?*
- *Do you think they respond to a challenge?*
- *Would you be in favour of reintroducing National Service?*

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- *Are you worried about the danger of war?*
- *Are you worried about the growth of military arms?*
- *Do you think there is a danger in giving young people guns and teaching them how to kill?*
- *Do you think it is wrong to force people to take up arms against their will?*
- *Would you oppose the reintroduction of National Service?*

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HOW TO USE 'SITUATED ACTION'

- put every user action into a context: what just happened before? what happens next?
- every action creates a context for a next action; every next action gives a new sense to the previous action
- identify the resources that are used to make sense of this action (or to identify this action)

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HOW TO USE 'SITUATED ACTION'

- instructions will only be interpreted in particular contexts that will determine what they 'really mean'; what are some of those contexts? (use scenarios help us here)
- distinguish between what is 'available to the user' vs. what is 'available to the machine'

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