

ethnography in HCI

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interLiving
Designing
interactive, Intergenerational
Interfaces for Living Together
<http://interliving.kth.se/>

the tradition of ethnology in Sweden

collecting national folklore; hammers
and sickles, houses, songs, traditions

Arthur Hazelius – Skansen
P. A. Säve – Fornsalen

What is ethnography?

ethnography, ethnology,
anthropology

ethnos = people, cultural group
graphie = write, carve
anthropos = human being
logos = science

study the human as a cultural and
social being in any context

people: designers, students, ...
context: Electrolux, school, ...
activity: design process, learning, ...

field studies (in archives) and real life
methods
theories
reflection, the visible researcher
language as tool
the written text

ethnography as process and product

...“doing ethnography” is a proclamation
of intent”

Harry F Wolcott, 1990

Why ethnography in HCI?

industrial designers
interest in activity
field studies
prototypes
product
materials as tool

in a design process there is no explicit
need for an ethnographer
field studies can be made by the
designers
ethnographies takes too long to write

Is there a need for ethnography and
ethnographers in design process?

focus on the human
another pair of eyes
shared understanding
writing