



A Tale of Two Cultures: Explorations in the Meaning of Culture in Ethnographic Research in Information Systems

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Abstract

Ethnography, seen as a way to obtain better information about peoples' interactions with computers and hence as a way to improve system design, has gained appeal. However, the use of ethnography in human-computer interaction (HCI) communities has also been criticized by ethnographers, who argue that ethnography is often seen by system designers as a means of data collection, rather than as a holistic method in which analytic approaches to data play an important role. Material about ethnography sets the context for discussion of the contribution ethnography can make to HCI through a focus on culture, explored here through examples from two ethnographic field studies.

