Affinity Diagramming and Card Sorting

Slides adapted from Caitlin Kelleher
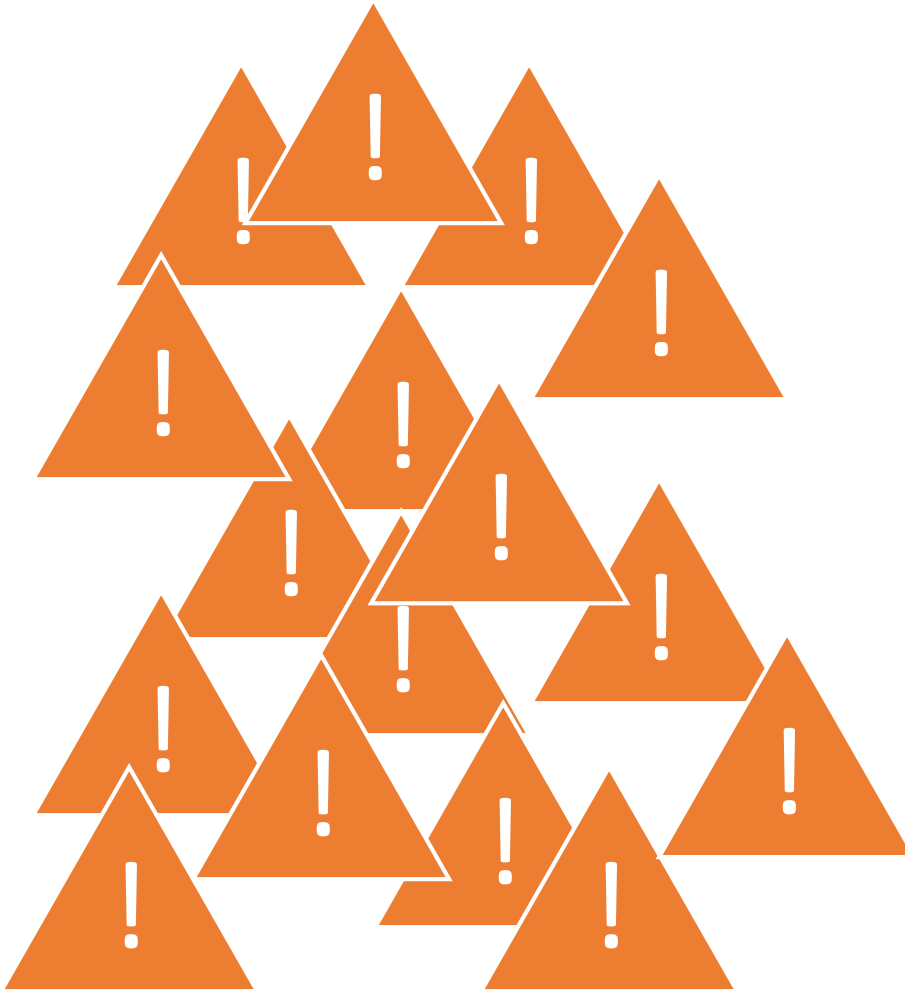
Understanding the Problem Space

- Are there consistent themes?
- Are there common groupings?

Problems of Target Users

Understanding the Problem Space

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Problems of Target Users

# Why not Tasks First?

!

Problem to Solve

User Task

Task Describing Problem

- Reasonable interviewing produces many problems, often scattered and contradictory
- Pare down, let themes emerge
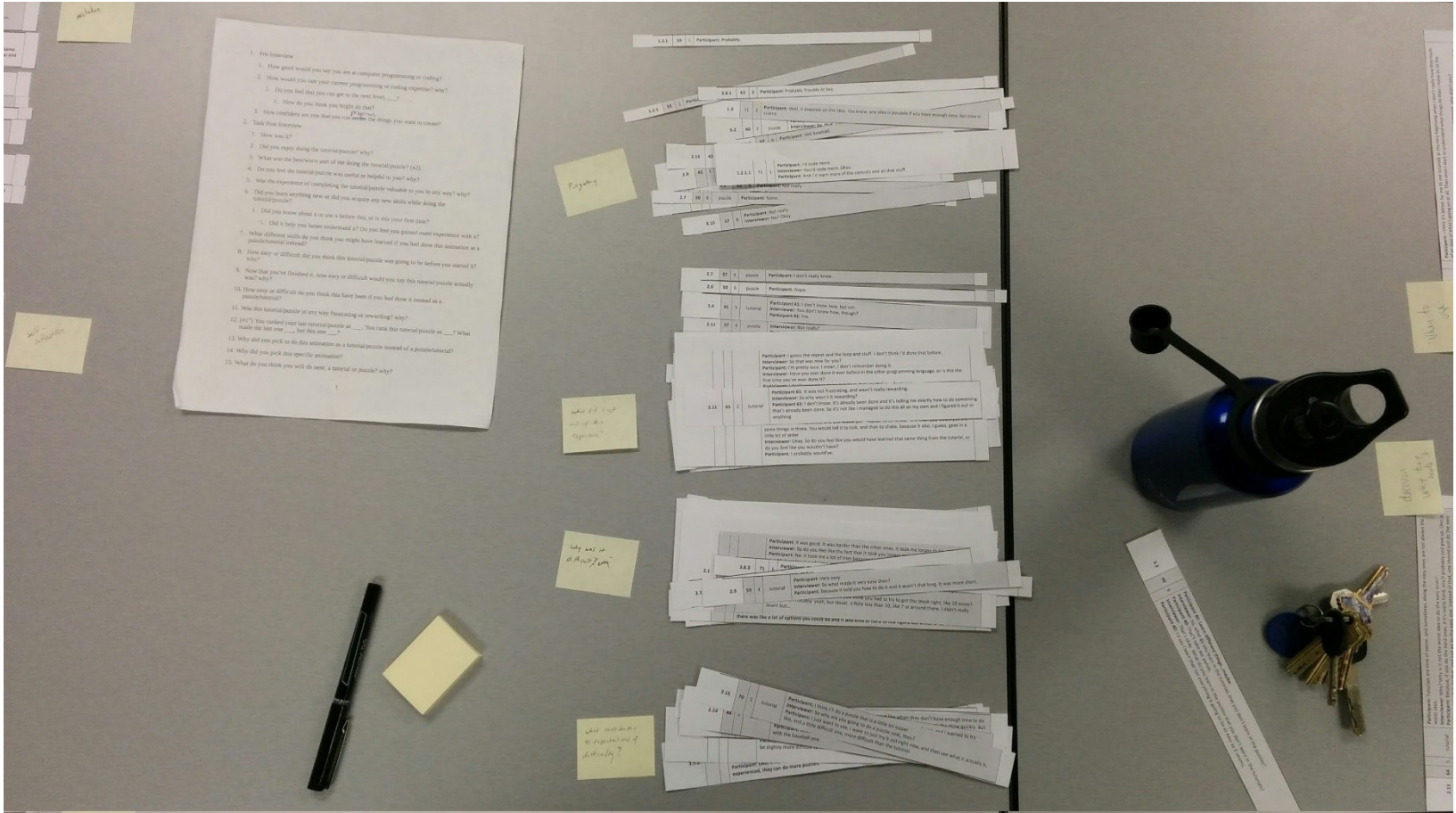- Themes can be focal point, provide direction

Affinity Diagramming

Image Source: http://www.adamatorres.com/gallery-project/?page_id=106

Affinity Diagramming: Example

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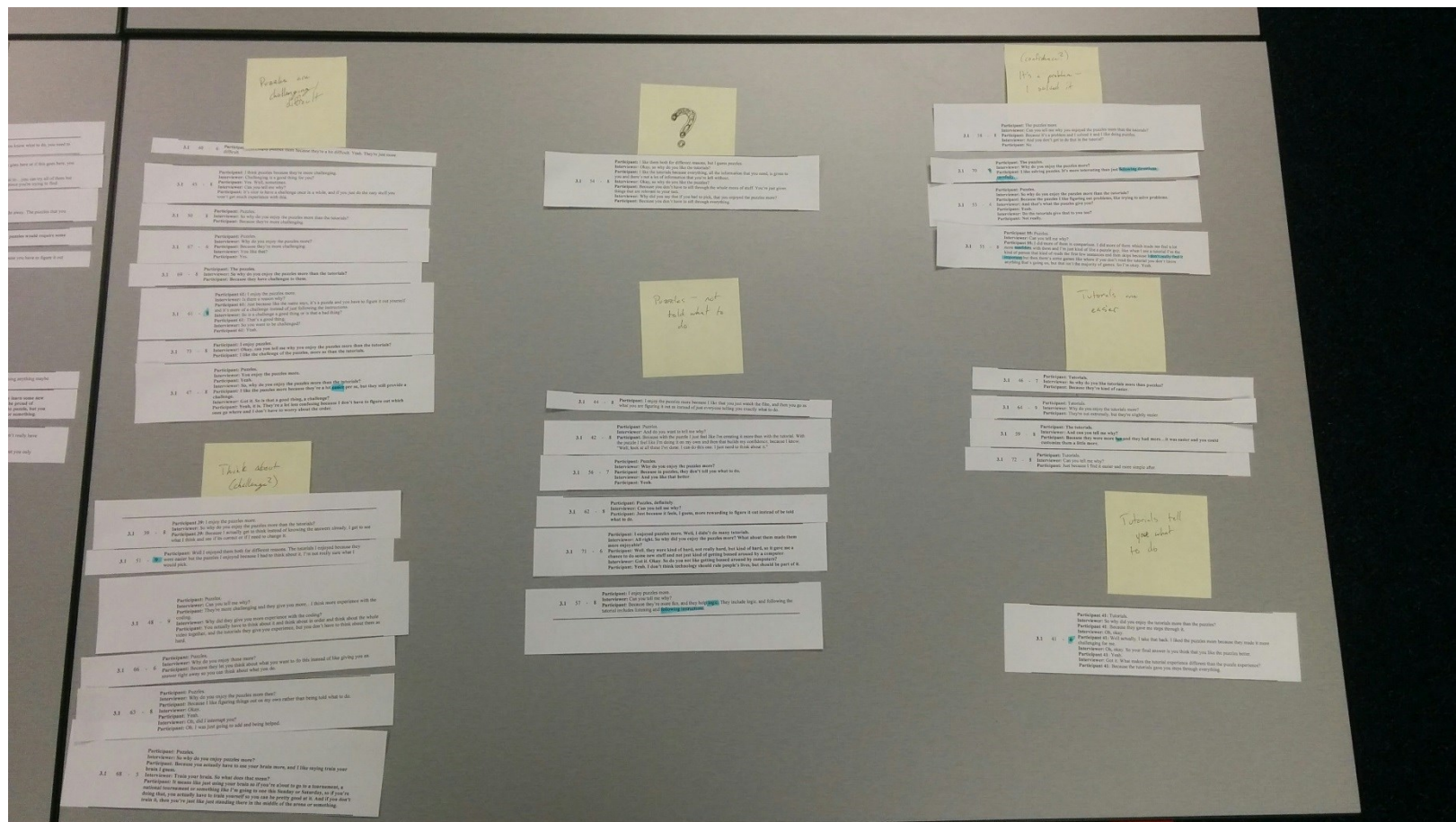
Affinity Diagramming: Example

Affinity Diagramming

- Team-based method for organizing facts into related themes

- Observed facts are data for making decisions
- Team reduces potential bias of your intuition

- "Shows in once place the common issues, themes, and scope of the customers problems and needs"

Affinity Diagramming Uses

- Typically most useful organizing preliminary information and brainstorming ideas
- Also used to identify how users organize data in an information space

Affinity Diagramming in Practice

- Build notes into columns based on observational relationships
- Eventually label columns into groups

- There is no "right" affinity
- Anyone can move a note, no ownership
- Some groups impose silence rule

- Spatial locality can be important

Process

1. Generate Ideas - capture facts from our interviews; go for at least 20 facts from each interview.

2. Display Ideas – Get together with others; lay out all of the facts.

3. Sort them into groups – find two related ideas, put them together, look for others. Repeat. Anyone can move something if they disagree.

4. Create header cards that summarize the idea captured by each group.

Activity

Discussion

- What are the important themes?

- Where can you see believable roles for a new technology?

- What do the interviews suggest are the biggest problems?

- if there's more time you can ask them to start envisioning a specific technology that addresses some part of the interview data

Card Sorting

- Method to identify latent structure in ideas by having users sort statements into groups of their choosing
  - Can also have set groups

- How users want information organized, how they expect it to be organized

Card Sorting

Image Source: http://lydiafelicia.wordpress.com/2012/08/23/23082012-card-sorting/

Card Sorting Utility

- Need to know **how** to best organize a lot of (known) information.
  - Choosing menu headings and items for website navigation
- Important information is
  - The groups/clusters people create
  - **WHY**