Chapter XVIII
Case Study in Research

Research is seen as a bad word, more work and lots more money. However, research is a good thing to do and engage in before, during and after product development. Researching products or services can actually save money and time. Businesses usually refer to this as front end marketing (Weisman, 2007). There needs to be more research before the development of products and a stronger focus on meeting the needs of target audiences.

A diagnostic evaluation serves as a meter for researching information in ICTs. There are two ways to use CBM for diagnostic evaluations. The first is to use CBM to research design specifications, and the second is to use CBM as an ethnographic instrument. There may be other ways to use CBM as a diagnostic tool; however these two methods are offered in this chapter.

EXAMPLE 1: RESEARCH DESIGN SPECIFICATIONS

Project goal: Diagnostic evaluation of an e-learning Web site
Design goal: Obtain an overview of the Library of Congress main Web page as a portal for the Web site

Target audience: General public, any age, generic
Production stage: Postproduction

This is a diagnostic evaluation conducted to determine the design specifications in an existing e-learning Web site.

Step 1: *Determine the areas of the ID-TABLET that will be used for the project. In any area where the answer is yes, that area of CBM should be considered.*

- **Inquiry: Does the project need monitoring for design and development issues?** In determining the answer to this question, review the Inquiry area. Review the Genre questions: I1a. *What ICTs are being used and why?* and I1b. *Which ICTs are more effective given the content?* These questions are "not" applicable to a diagnostic evaluation of an existing e-learning Web site. However, the last question is applicable: I1d. *How have ICTs influenced the design of the product?* Also, Genre only covers preproduction and production, and the analysis of a pre-existing Web site is postproduction. Briefly review the next set of questions under Framing: I2a. *Who is the target audience?* and I2b. *How is the content presented to the target audience?* These questions will need to be asked and answered as part of the diagnostic evaluation. Framing is also listed as something done in postproduction. Next, read the questions under I3. Omission: I3a. *What has been intentionally omitted and why?* These Omission questions are important to the analysis of this e-learning Web site. Omission is also listed as something performed in postproduction. Review the Backgrounding questions: I4a. *What has been backgrounded?* This question is useful because whatever is hidden in the design of the e-learning Web site is important in determining whether bias exists. Backgrounding is also listed as being performed in postproduction. Review the Foregrounding questions: I5a. *What is emphasized and why?* This is definitely a question needed for a diagnostic evaluation of an ICT because it addresses what exists on the Web page. Foregrounding is also listed as something performed in postproduction. Last, review the Visual Representations questions: I6a. *How do the visual representations frame the product?* Given that the Internet is a visual medium, this question seems a relevant question to this evaluation. Visual Representations are also listed as being performed in postproduction. From this review of CBM Inquiry, it is apparent that a quick way to use the Inquiry questions is to determine the project's stage of production. Then select those design factors relevant to preproduction, production, or postproduction.

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