Overview of Research Activity

Summer School on Computing for Socio-Economic Development

June 21, 2010

Crafting a Research Proposal

- **Working in groups of six, your goal is to formulate:**
  1. A novel and meaningful ICTD research question
  2. A research proposal for answering that question

- **Your proposal can involve any combination of:**
  - Social science, computer science, or other sciences
  - Invention or evaluation
  - Intervention or observation
  - Quantitative or qualitative methods

- **One member of your group will give a 5-minute PowerPoint presentation on Saturday**
  - There will also be 5 minutes of questions and answers
  - Aim for a polished and professional presentation

Criteria for the Research Problem

- **Novelty and significance**

- **Draw on your interviews for motivation & inspiration**
  - What were challenges faced by those you interviewed?
  - Is there any role for ICTs in addressing their needs/desires?

- **Aim for something unrelated to group members' current research**
  - There is a different session for those ideas!

- **Also aim to differentiate from prior work in the field**
  - Talk to faculty and TEM members
  - Search Internet for related work (to the extent possible)

- **See Toyama & Bussell paper for more criteria**

Your Presentation

Aim for a brief Ph.D. thesis proposal

UPDATE (Tue 6/22): You can optionally reduce the scope of the proposal to a single conference paper (e.g., for ICTD) rather than a Ph.D. thesis

Your Presentation

- **Succinctly describe the research question and the approach taken**
  - Action research?
  - Qualitative / quantitative methods?
  - New technical innovation?

- **Briefly situate the question relative to prior work**

- **Outline your approach or solution**

- **All projects should include an evaluation plan**
  - What specific outcome metric would you measure?
  - Example: if you propose a new SMS service, then describe how you will evaluate that service against the desired goals

- **Include a rough timeline**
  - What resources are needed to implement the research?

Timeline

- **Preparation**
  - Today, 4pm – 6pm
  - Wed, 4pm – 6pm
  - Fri, 4pm – 6pm

- **Presentation**
  - Sat, 11am-12:30pm and 2pm-3:30pm