Finding My Research Home: Being Free to do Research My Way
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Quantitative Research
- Statistics
- Analysis
- Lots of data

Qualitative Research
- Ethnography
- Interviews

Teaching
- UrbanSim

Practice
- Atttenex

What is software design?

How can software design be taught?

How does sustainability relate to software?

How can we create breakthrough innovations?

Is software design different?

Is designing software different from designing other things?

Design is to design a design for a design.

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<th>Noun 1</th>
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July 19, 2004 – end of day 2 of ISEE workshop

I am unhappy. My mood had been sinking for two days. I don’t want to do the qualitative research methods being taught here. “Why am I here” I wonder. “Was joining ISEE a mistake?” I find Robin Adams and express my concerns. She listens. “Well,” she said, “show me what you are doing.”

That’s easy. I open my journal. It’s full of notes, diagrams, questions from many conversations and readings about software design. From doing and teaching software design.

“That’s your research,” says Robin.

“Where?”, I reply. I don’t see any data sets. No rigorously planned and analyzed experiments or interviews.

“Right there,” she says, “in your journal. Those conversations are your research.”

Oh…!

That’s when it dawned on me that I was already doing my research. And had been for years. Suddenly I was free to continue doing what I was doing well. What a relief!

Before this day, I would tell people that “I am not a researcher.” Now I know differently. I do applied design research. It is more synthetic than analytical. More discursive than experimental. More intuitive than planned. And it is research.

This was ISEE’s gift to me.

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Practice

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