

Method Template: Social Pairing Exercise



Rationale

The aim of the method is to find pairings between people related to a certain activity or purpose and examine the utility of a future pairing system. It also elicits requirements surrounding the pairing process and social considerations.

Preparation

Find a group of people who do similar activities or roles. Examples include: parents with children in childcare, students commuting to university, or singles looking for dates. If possible, do the study in a natural environment for the activity. A day before the study, have them write down relevant characteristics about themselves. Prepare pairing cards that list up to three pairings for each person and a rating system for each one. If possible, place individual audio recorders on several participants.

Activity

Give each participant a card showing pairings between themselves and others in the group. Ask them to spend 5 or 10 minutes talking with each of their assigned pairs and rate the pairing after each one. An observer can skip between pairs, listening in.

What To Look For

Very low or very high ratings on utility for a pairing are interesting. Anything that sparks emotion is worth noting.

Afterwards

Lead a short discussion about what people rated as high or low and why. Ask about why people would want to be paired, and if other types of pairings would be useful. Ask for circumstances where pairings would be appropriate. If possible record this on video.