Getting Carded: Incorporating Card Sorts into Cognitive Interviews

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2018 American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR)
Annual Conference
Denver, CO

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Card Sorts

- Technique for learning how people think about and categorize information

- Commonly used in user experience research to create website's hierarchical navigation

- This talk: two examples of how card sorts can be used in cognitive testing and things to consider when using them in this setting
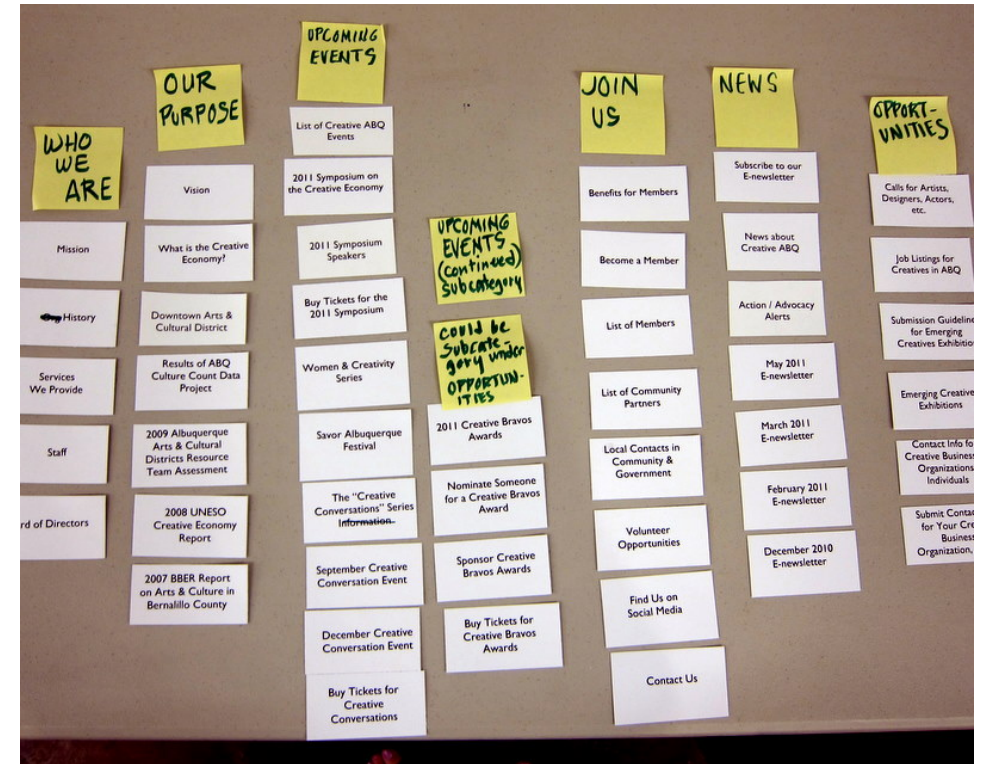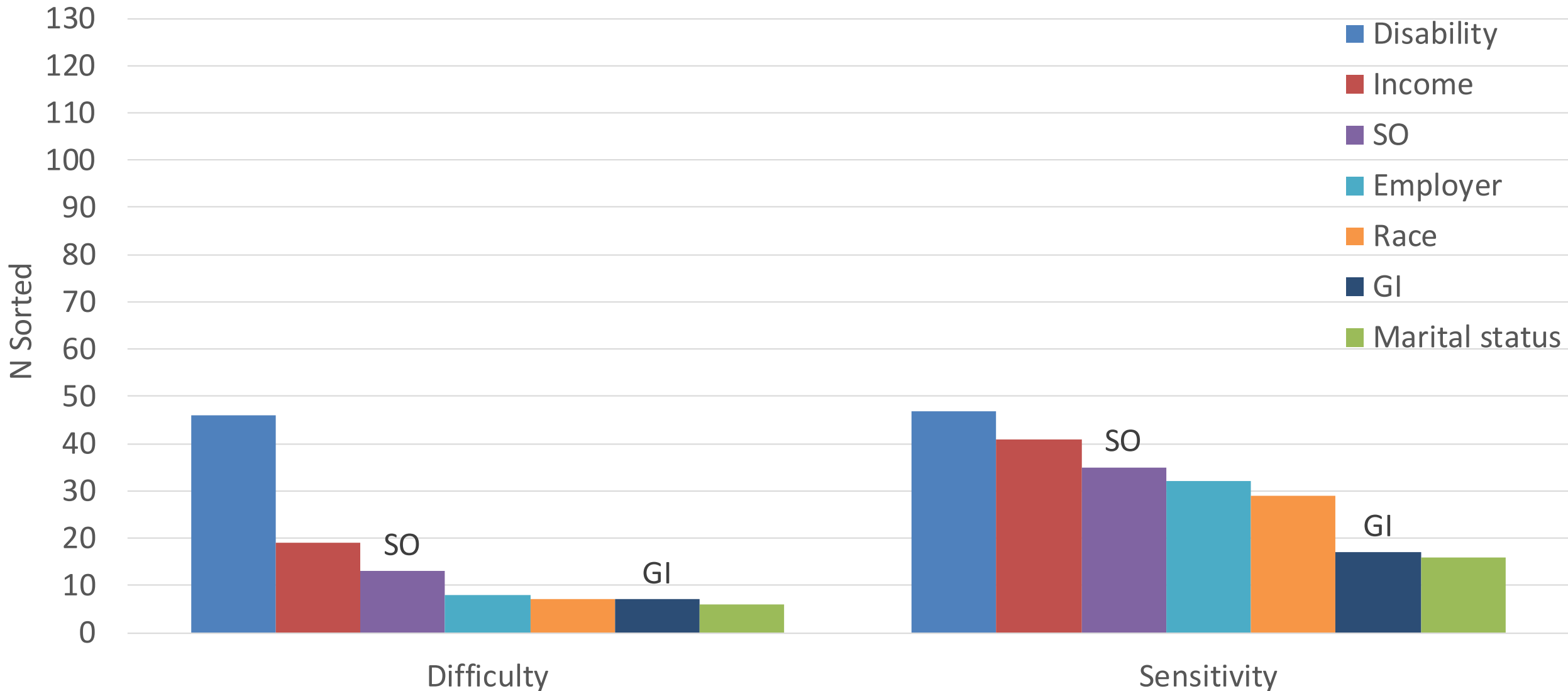

Source: http://www.fostermilo.com/articles/card-sorting-with-creative-albuquerque

Current Population Survey (CPS) Card Sort (n = 132)

Purpose	Do respondents find questions about sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) difficult or sensitive to answer, and how does this compare to existing CPS items?
Cards (18)	• 15 questions from CPS questionnaire (e.g., work, demographics) • 3 SOGI questions
Categories	• Card Sort #1: Sensitive and Not Sensitive (2 piles) • Card Sort #2: Difficult and Not Difficult (2 piles)
Ranking	Most Sensitive / Most Difficult
Order of card sorts	Consistent across interviews

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Is SOGI difficult/sensitive to answer, and how does this compare to existing CPS items? (n = 132)

CPS Card Sort (cont.)

+	+ / −	−
• Easy to quantify and compare • Fast • Way to probe indirectly	• Not reliant on respondent recall	• May encourage over-reports?

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American Community Survey (ACS) Card Sort (n = 37)

Purpose	How do perceptions of ACS's burden compare to those of other activities, and does this differ between the words "hassle" and "burdensome"?
Cards (21)	• 20 everyday activities (e.g., eating, paying bills) • 1 card with the ACS
Categories	• Card Sort #1: Not at all / a little bit of / somewhat of / very much "a hassle" (4 piles) • Card Sort #2: Not at all / a little / somewhat / very "burdensome" (4 piles)
Ranking	Full, within categories
Order of card sorts	Randomly assigned

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How do perceptions of burden differ between the words "burdensome" and "hassle"? (n = 37)

Item	Not at all		A little		Somewhat		Very	
	Burd.	Hass.	Burd.	Hass.	Burd.	Hass.	Burd.	Hass.

How do perceptions of burden differ between the words "burdensome" and "hassle"? (n = 37)

Item	Not at all		A little		Somewhat		Very	
	Burd.	Hass.	Burd.	Hass.	Burd.	Hass.	Burd.	Hass.
ACS	15	15	19	19	2	3	1	0

How do perceptions of burden differ between the words "burdensome" and "hassle"? (n = 37)

Item	Not at all		A little		Somewhat		Very	
	Burd.	Hass.	Burd.	Hass.	Burd.	Hass.	Burd.	Hass.
ACS	15	15	19	19	2	3	1	0
Taxes	6	5	6	6	7	9	18	17
Moving	1	1	2	3	9	6	25	27
Health insurance	2	2	11	10	11	9	13	16
Bills	15	10	10	17	9	5	3	5
Cleaning	12	15	12	14	10	7	3	1
Voting	22	20	11	8	2	5	2	4
Doctor's forms	8	6	13	13	12	12	4	6

ACS Card Sort (cont.)

+	−
• Method for exploratory research • Easy to quantify	• Somewhat time-consuming

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Overall

+	+ / −	−
• Easy to quantify • Compare a lot of things quickly • Method for exploratory research • Interesting for respondents • Choose your own adventure	• Validity? (see Jennifer Edgar's presentation)	• Better for IDing some cognitive problems than others? • Usually small n • Data can be noisy → sometimes difficult to interpret

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Recommendations

- Design cautiously
- Use in conjunction with other methods
- Interpret with a qualitative lens

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