EPIC *Advancing the Value of Ethnography in Industry*

Berkeley SCHOOL OF INFORMATION

Quant & Qual on Common Ground

Collaboration Among Researchers of All Stripes

Intros

Spend your Day

Quant	Qual
Checking Share Prices	Reading News About Pandemic
Planning Research	Presenting Insights
Socializing Insights	Planning Research
Doing Research	Doing Research

Methods Used

Quant	Qual
Regression	Interviews and Focus Groups
Surveys	Ethnography
A/B Tests	Organizing All This Dang Data
Making Line Graphs	Usability Studies

Research & Knowing: Epistemology

- How do we know something?
- How do empiricists know?
- How do scientists know?
- How do we discharge what we *previously* knew?

Collaboration: Good and Bad Times

BREAKOUT SESSION

Describe a time when your had a **positive** experience collaborating with researchers across qual- and quant.

Describe a time when your had a **challenging** experience collaborating with researchers across qual- and quant.

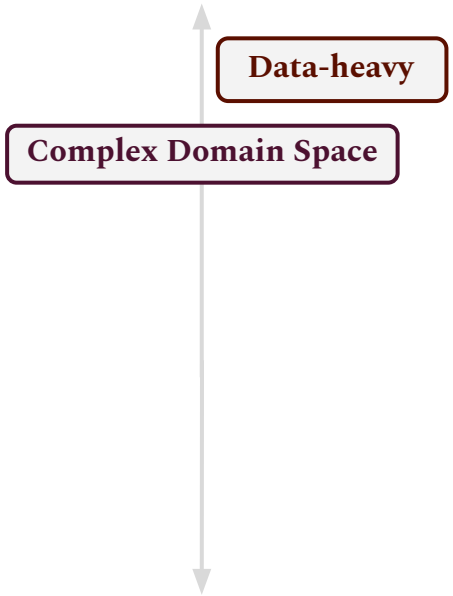
Collaboration: Constraints & Solutions

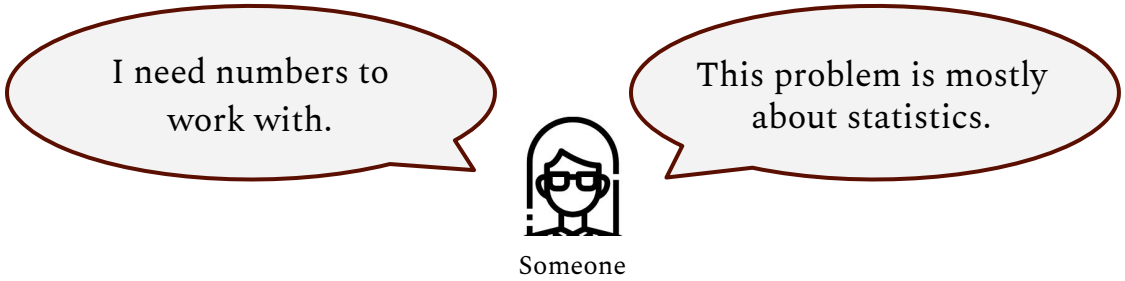
Let's role play some situations we might have heard before...

You

Icons by the Nounproject

Collaboration: Constraints & Solutions





Collaboration: Constraints & Solutions

Data-heavy

Complex Domain Space

I need numbers to work with.

This problem is mostly about statistics.

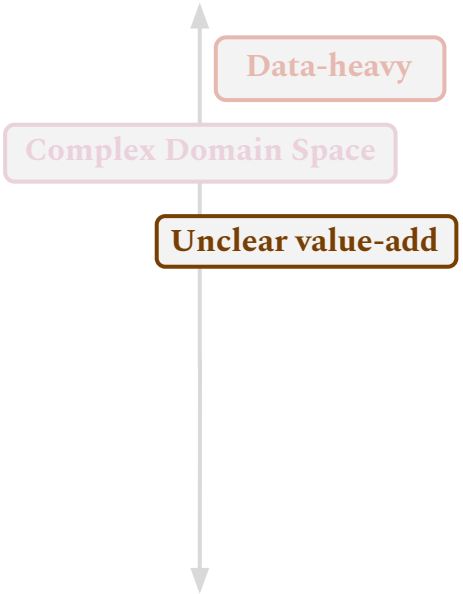
Someone

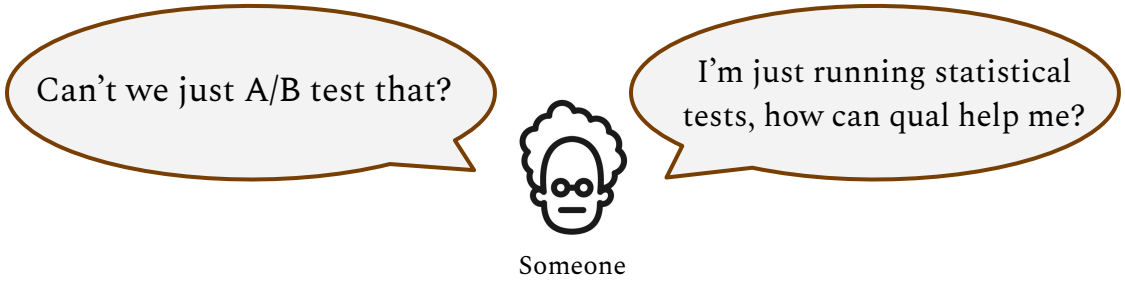
What aspects about the user is your data trying to describe?

How can I guide you to define the problem in a user-centric way?

You

Collaboration: Constraints & Solutions





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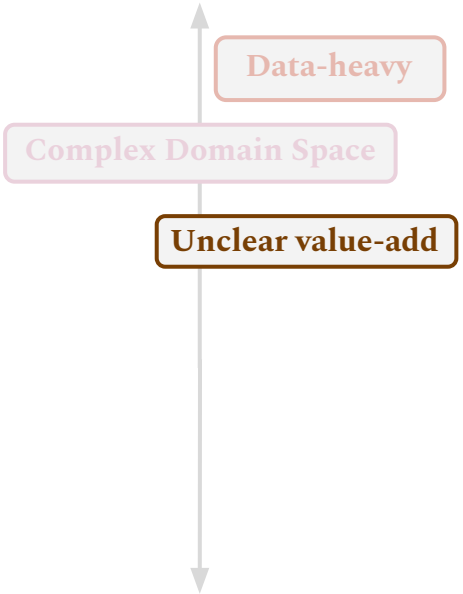

Can't we just A/B test that?

I'm just running statistical tests, how can qual help me?

Someone

Great, why don't we think about what to A/B test together?

I can help you narrow the search space and guide what hypotheses to test that might impact user behavior.

You

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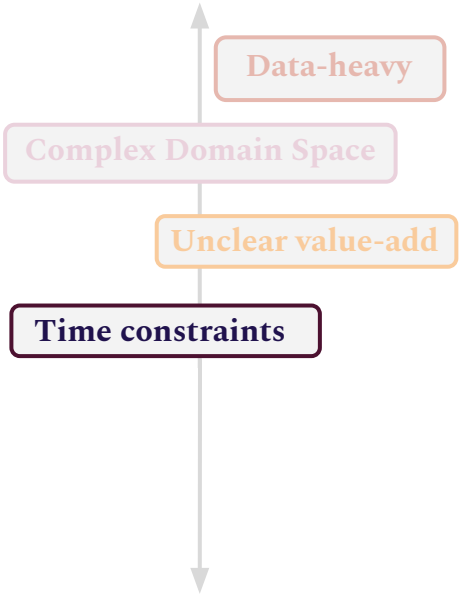

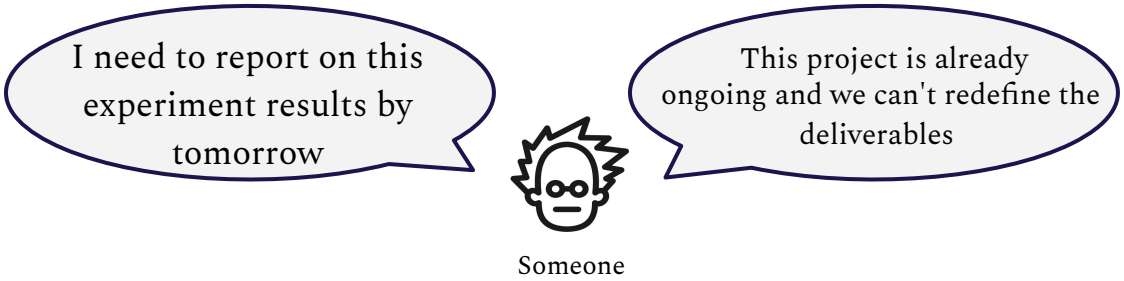

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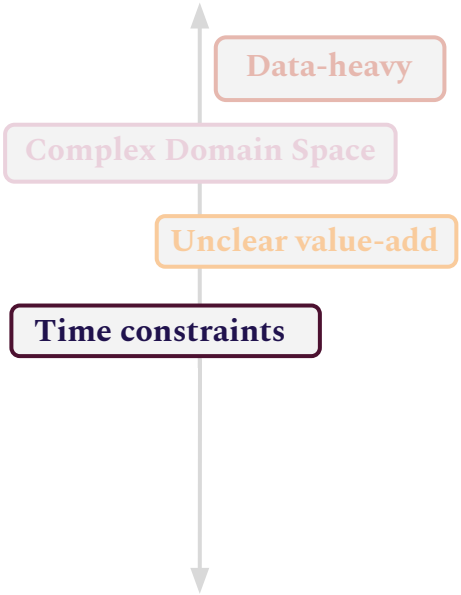

I need to report on this experiment results by tomorrow

This project is already ongoing and we can't redefine the deliverables

Someone

I would love to read your experiment results as I just completed some work on the same topic.

Perhaps I can lay the foundation by understanding their work

You

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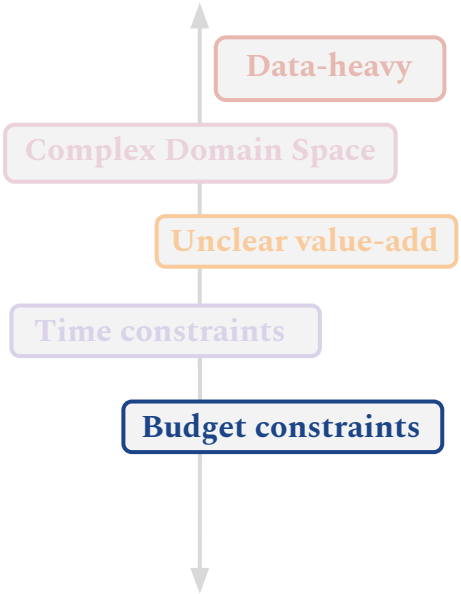

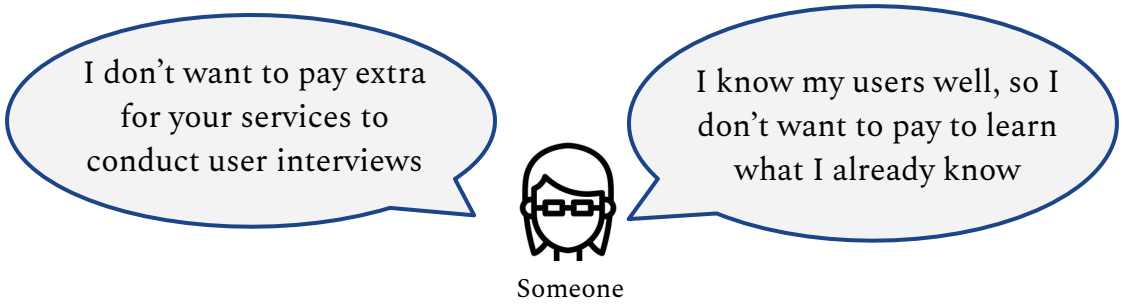

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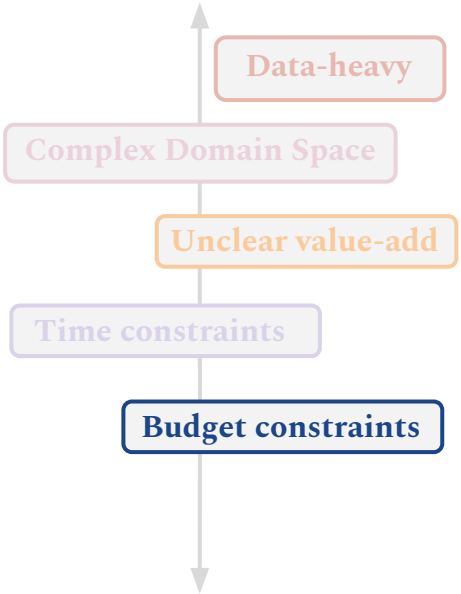

I don't want to pay extra for your services to conduct user interviews

I know my users well, so I don't want to pay to learn what I already know

Someone

We'll end up saving money and time if we have a better understanding of what to ask and who to focus on

How can I make them understand that it's a holistic approach?

You

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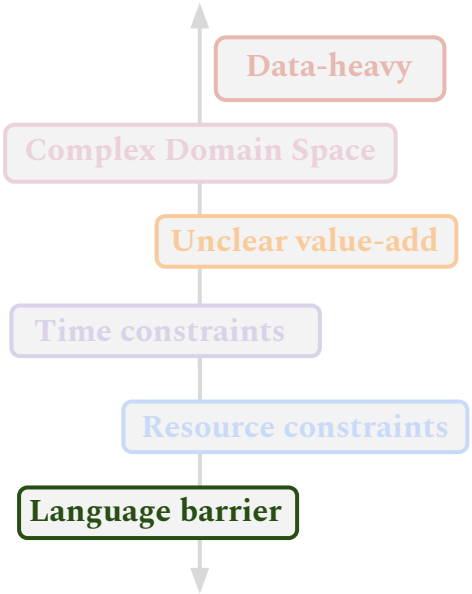

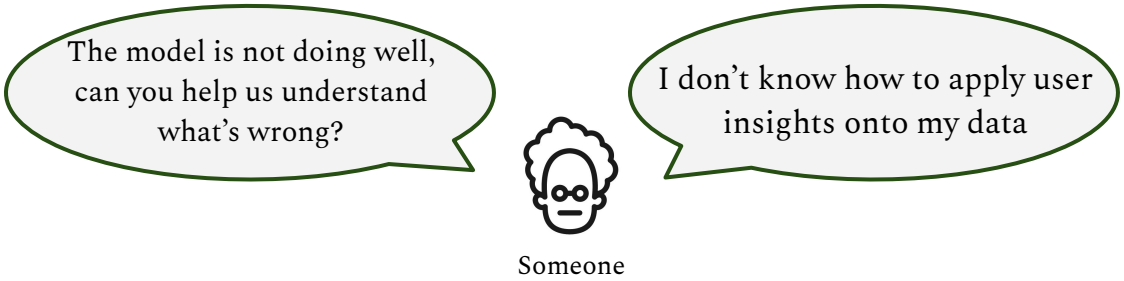

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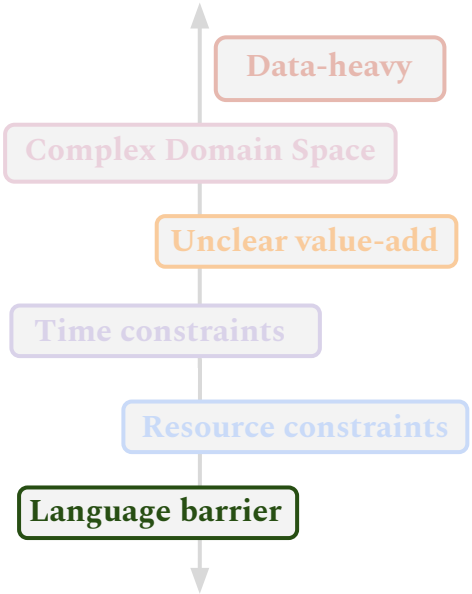

The model is not doing well, can you help us understand what's wrong?

I don't know how to apply user insights onto my data

Someone

Why did you choose this model? What assumptions are we making? If it was working before, maybe the data is different.

I need to get to the meat of it. What are we describing / measuring / predicting?

You

Positive Contributions to ~~Quant~~ ~~Qual~~ Research

- Get **better** data
- Align key metrics with business goals
- Identify assumptions
- Understand users (population of study)
- Have conversational thought-partners

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Design collection systems to get the data we really want, not the one we just happen have.

- → *What would be the ideal measurement for this user behavior?*
- → *What are the limitations in the data we are using?*

- → ***Ask:** What do we want to learn from this? How do we want to use this knowledge?*

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Business relies on metrics to make decisions and track progress over time.

- → *Most metrics are "proxies" for the real underlying question.*
- → *Over time, all metrics break down.*
- → *Myopic metric optimization can dilute the overall goal, and lead a company to undesired outcomes.*

- → ***Ask:** What are we trying to accomplish or measure? How do we know this measurement captures our goal?*

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Inquiry is pizza dough, not sourdough:
Poke at it!

- → ***Ask:*** *What assumptions are we making about the users?*
- → ***Ask:*** *How do we think users are going to respond to this product change? How does this fit with the broader experience of the full product/service?*

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What is the population of study?

- *Comparability and selection bias*
- *Look at the population distribution*

- ***Ask:*** *Who is going to receive this [feature]? Why do we think they are similar to this test group?*

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Have conversations about the research ideas:

- *Everything that any researcher is trying to do is (1) describe; (2) predict; (3) explain; (4) ~~verify~~ evaluate some concept.*
- *Try to strip away algorithm/compute jargon to find which of these tasks they're pursuing. Then, you're having a conversation.*

- ***Just ask.***

Positive Contributions to ~~Quant~~ ~~Qual~~ Research

Understand users and population of study

Conversational Thought-Partners

Clarify Assumptions

Get Better Data

Align Key Metrics with Business Goals

Join our tutorial!

Beyond "Quant-vs-Qual": Creating Collaborative Inquiry

October 19th -*or*- October 21st

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Thank you!