<u>DDS: Focus group preparation check list</u>

This list is meant to be reassuring, rather than scary! Running a focus group is a big job, and this list is meant to help groups ensure that they are as prepared as possible, and will be able to deal with any practical problems that arise.

Prior to the day of the focus group

- **Identify clear goals:** what does the group want to find out from the focus group?
- **Agreeing roles:** who will do what?
- **Create questions** that will help you to meet your goals, including "follow up" questions to probe for more information
- **Introductory material:** how will you introduce the project and the current topic? How will you explain the planned data use?
  - Advised to write down a few bullet points for moderator to say
  - Practice saying these out loud. Are they short, and will someone else understand
- **Paperwork**
  - Information forms for all participants—check with someone outside your group to make sure these are understandable!
  - Consent forms for all participants (2 copies—1 for them to keep, 1 for you to keep)
  - Anything else you need?
- **Contingency planning: what do we do if...**
  - Someone doesn't show up?
  - A piece of equipment fails?
  - Someone doesn't want to be videoed?
  - *Lots of things... think about what might go wrong!*
- **Check room**, if unfamiliar. Go see what it is like, how big, lighting, sockets, etc.
- **Equipment needs:** Figure out what equipment you might need, and arrange to get it
  - Technical equipment
  - Stuff for note-taking
  - Participant name tags?
  - Anything else? Think what you might need.
- **Test equipment** (audio, video, tripods, computers...) *especially* if borrowed!
  - Is anything missing?
  - Is at least one person confident to operate these?
  - Do you know what settings to use?
  - Need extension cords? Memory cards? Anything else?
  - Testing includes checking that you can later get files OFF the device, memory card, etc.

Equipment: Video cameras, tripods and audio recording equipment can be borrowed free of charge from the university's Learning Spaces Technology. To make a booking, you will need to send email to learningspacestechnology@ed.ac.uk. In your email, please specify that you are borrowing the equipment as part of the *Data, Design and Society* course.

On the day of the focus group

- Review focus group goals: what are we trying to do today?
- Review group roles: does everyone feel sure what they need to do?
- Review the schedule, and make sure you have something with which to keep time
- Review your contingency planning
- Make sure you have paperwork-- always have extra copies, and pens!
- Test your equipment AGAIN in the room, on the day, to make sure you have appropriate settings, position in room, volume...
- Charge anything with batteries!
- Make sure any memory cards are actually IN the camera or recorders
- Make sure note-takers are ready to take notes ON PAPER (laptops distracting, also create a physical barrier between you and the group).

Data protection and ethics:

Remember that paper consent forms and video/photo are *personal information.* You need to plan how to store these *before* you collect the information.

Written notes *may include* personal information. One way to get around this is to refer to each participant by a number or letter, not by name.