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HCDE 313
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Field Observations Assignment

Approach

I will be observing the lounge/commons area in the Odegaard Undergraduate Library to answer the question of whether MAC or PC is more popular and what factors affect a person in choosing one over the other. I will situate myself in a high traffic area as to experience a greater amount of people, hear the most conversation and to get the most out of each visit. In observing the site, I will locate myself in a spot within the subject's domain, but I will use unobtrusive means in that I will not be talking to them – just observing. There will be no need to have conversations, just studying the subjects' use of technology, their clothing, their dialogue, etc. However, because Odegaard is a very popular study spot, I may encounter my friends and other people that I know. In this case, I will not discuss what I am doing to a great extent, in order to prevent people near me from over hearing and feeling uncomfortable. This will minimize people questioning what I am doing and also minimize my effect on their behavior.

I will do my observations on different days and at different times in order to get a wide range of people. I will go on different days of the week because people who go to the library at certain days have different subjects to study for, different schedules, etc. I will also go at different times throughout the day because then I can capture people with different personalities – for example those who like to go to the library in the morning and in the evening. By choosing varying days and times, it will also randomize the subjects I observe and therefore give me a more accurate and representative set of data. Each observation should take up to an hour including travel time – 45 minutes for an observation and 15 minutes for travel. I will draw a detailed map of my observation location in my notebook as soon as I pick a location to place myself in. This will be used to keep a log of the times people arrive and leave, as well as their flow of movement. After I have done this I will start typing field notes on the computer while simultaneously sketching on the map. After I do my observations I will go home and fill in any details I remember as well. The next times I do observations I will make a simpler map prior to my arrival at Odegaard so that I can go straight into observations and field notes without wasting any time.
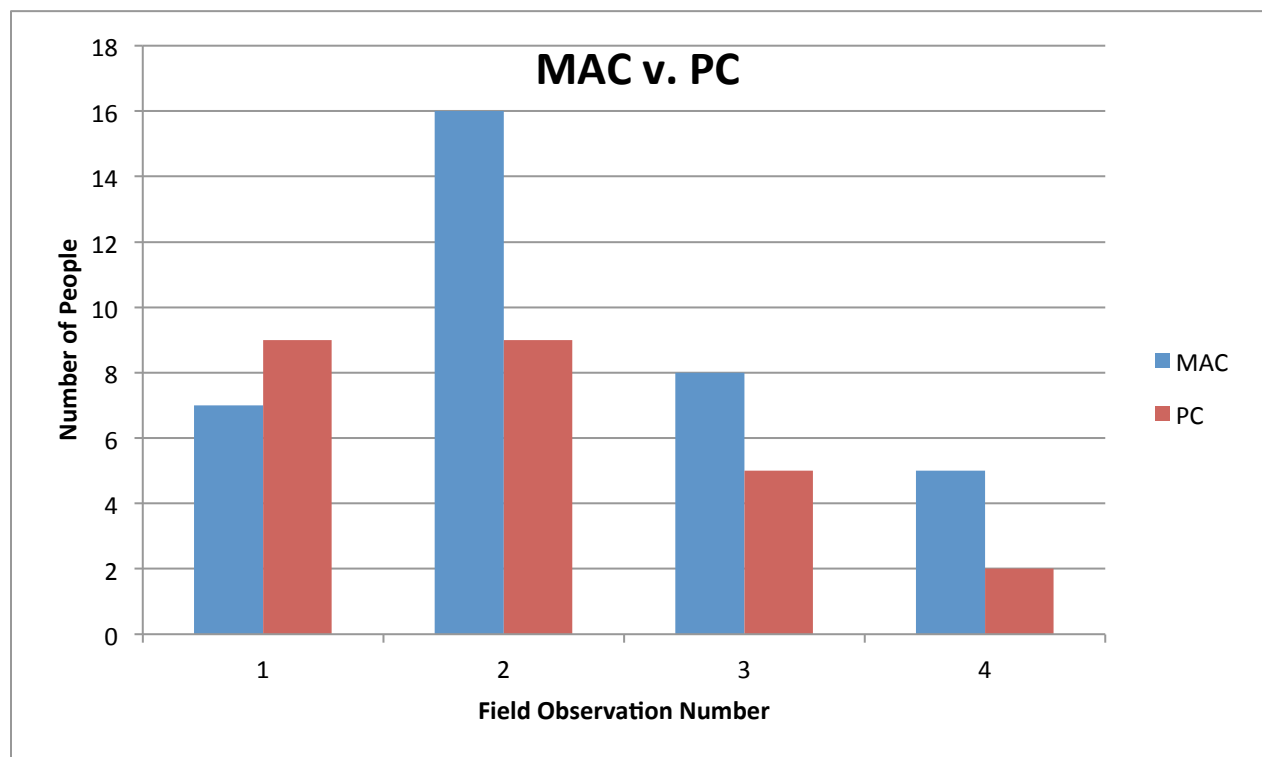
Analysis of the Structure and Hierarchy

After doing four field observations at the Odegaard Undergraduate Library, an apparent structure and hierarchy of my object of study emerged. First, the layout of Odegaard shows different layers of power. Close to the main entrance of the library holds the most power. This is where the information desk is which is where the student employees sit to check student ID for entrance to the library after 8 PM. These people are the gatekeepers, they control who can come in and they also have the power to kick people out. Because I am a student at the University of

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Washington, I do not have to worry about this. However, if a person came into the library after 8 PM they would not be allowed access because of this rule.

Second, the middle commons area of Odegaard is structured to give individuals space in-between each other. The chairs are big and bulky which, physically, does not allow them to be too close to one another. Most people that come here come by themselves or in pairs and they rarely come with more people than this. There were no big group relationships. In general, people who sit in this area are on their laptops, on their phones, or quietly reading a book/taking notes. Therefore, all the people in this area of the library are equals. However, in the area surrounding this commons area there are numerous large tables for groups of people, big white boards and large screen TVs which all encourage group work and collaboration. In this area, each individual group will have their unique hierarchy and roles in their group project.

Analysis of Themes in MAC and PC Owners

Through my observations I have seen an overall trend of more MAC users than PC users. The data I gathered from my observations are shown below.

While I collected the data to get this chart, I also observed each person with a MAC or PC to see if I could discover a theme in the types of people that choose MAC and the people that choose PC. I found that there was a theme in laptop design and accessories. In my observations, I saw that the majority of people who own MACs accessorize their laptops in comparison to those who own PCs. In general, females would accessorize their MACs with laptop covers and matching keyboard covers. Some females and males would decorate their MACs with stickers that are

probably bought and not just given to them for free. Most males would keep their MAC clean, without any accessories. For example, female subject 9 in field notes 2 had a mint laptop cover and a matching mint keyboard cover. She also had a blue laptop case and a blue cell phone case. It was more common to see this occurrence in females that had MACs than in any other situation. Also, male subjects 12 and 8 in field notes 2 put black silhouette stickers on their laptop covers. In my experience, these types of stickers are common for MAC users and are usually bought online for an average of ten dollars. On the other hand, people with PCs generally did not accessorize their laptops. If they did, they accessorized it with commonly found stickers. For example, male subject 3 in field notes 3 had a CEP sticker and a green tree sticker on his PC. Both stickers seemed to have been placed randomly on the cover. CEP stands for Community, Environment and Planning, a major at the UW and the green tree sticker probably symbolizes sustainability to pair with the CEP sticker. Both of these stickers are most likely obtained for free from his major department. Also, female subject 3 from field notes 2 had a colorful Hello Kitty sticker on her laptop cover. I did not see any PC owners who put a cover or keyboard cover on their laptops.

Generalizing from my observations, people with PCs are more likely to put accessories on their laptops that are less expensive and obtained for free or no accessories at all. I see a pattern that most PC users do not seem to care about the decorations and accessories to their laptops. Because more MACs had laptop covers than PCs, I believe that the cover is not necessarily used to protect the laptop, but more so to enhance its beauty. Like this, MAC users are influenced by the design of the laptop. They are the people who like to have an aesthetically pleasing laptop which they either keep clean to maintain the MAC's sleek and minimal design, or they accessorize it with cases, covers and stickers that they buy online to enhance its attractiveness and to add their own personality.

Reflection

My initial plan worked well. I followed the structure as I originally intended and stuck to one observation site but visited it on different days and at different times throughout each day. I think that this was important to do in order to avoid any kind of bias. Next time I would improve on the structure by doing an additional field observation late at night as the latest I observed was up until 6:35 PM. In doing so, I would get the most data possible from a wide variety of people.

As I did more observations, the better and faster I got at taking notes and observing multiple people at once. My notes also became more elaborate and I noted more details of every individual. These details that I did not include in my first field observation were actually crucial to my analysis. For example, in my first observation I did not take note of any accessories people had on their electronics. However, this was a vital part of my analysis. I learned to write everything down, even if I am not sure what it is or what it means. For instance, subject 3 in field notes 3 had a CEP sticker on his PC. I did not know what this sticker meant, but I noted it and when I got home I looked it up. After finding out that it stood for his major at the UW, I found that this sticker tells me a lot about this person's interest and personality.

Next time I would stay at each site for an hour. During these observations of 30-45 minutes I sometimes found myself with not enough people to write about because there was not enough traffic of people. For example, in the morning there were not that many people to observe. In contrast, sometimes there were too many people to write about that I ran out of time. I think that it is important not to skip observations at certain times of the day, therefore by staying for a longer period of time this problem could be eliminated.

I would also more closely analyze other possible explanatory variables for why a user would choose MAC or PC besides focusing on just the accessories, what people are wearing, or any other aspect that I can only obtain through observation. I could do this by integrating interviews into my research. By interviewing people, I can get a deeper understanding of their personality, interests and learn about them on a personal level. I can learn about the programs they most frequently use on their laptops, whether they are gaming programs, coding programs, designing programs or any other kinds of programs. I would be able to be more aware of the other variables that could impact a person's decision. For example, maybe socio-economic status has an impact. Maybe then I could find out holistically what influences a person in their decision of MAC or PC.

Ethics

As I was doing my research, I came across the feeling of overpassing a person's personal space. I tried to overhear people's conversations in order to note key phrases and tried to look on their laptop screens to see what they were doing. This is a possible ethical dilemma because it can be seen as an invasion of privacy.

For future research, I would include interviews in my study. Therefore I will be able to get their consent before talking to them, which will also help in gaining more knowledge about each person. Therefore they will also be aware that I am a researcher and not feel as uncomfortable while I take notes. Although this may affect my research in that people may act differently, this would eliminate the problem of crossing ethical borders.

Appendices

All coding done on my field notes are on the hard copy. Also, see the hard copy of my diagrams for flow of movement and positions of people.

Field Notes 1

January 28, 2014
8:15 – 9:00 AM
Odegaard Library

I am located on the ground floor in the center to left of the stairs when looking at the entrance from inside – refer to diagram. I will be observing only the people sitting at the orange floors and couches – the people in my view.
Coding will be done in square brackets.

Layout
- 5 tall lamps with a white cloth shade coming out of the tables
  - There are also two similar lights hanging from the ceiling at the entrance
- 3 long gray tables situated at different angles with an orange padding on one side for sitting/ putting your feet up
  - One table is directly below the stairs
- 5 little circular tables are placed around the area as well, 2 to the left of the stairs looking at the entrance from the inside and three under the stairs
- Stripe patterned carpeting with big patches of orange carpeting at each section of tabling
- Modern minimalistic style
- Stairs are a light wood with metal
  - The wood used for the stairs is also used in the ceiling above the lounge area, long pieces of wood spaced apart in a design for aesthetics but also to let light in. They are more spread apart in the center of the ceiling
- This lounge/commons area is out in the open and can be seen from any floor
- Chairs are big, gray and a "lazy" style and about 12 chairs per long table (keeps the distance between each person, doesn't allow people to sit too close to one another)
- One bookshelf with not many books (probably used to display certain books and also decoration)
  - No one looked at the books on the bookshelf during my time of observation
- One shelf behind me for DVD display
  - No one looked at the DVDs during my time of observation
- The renovation of the library gives Odegaard a mixed modern and traditional look
- Information desk at the front with one person sitting down at the table
- Area surrounding all sides of the commons area have tables for group work, big white boards and large screen TVs
- (Atmosphere is very collaborative surrounding the commons area to encourage group work and conversation. The middle area is more for individuals to sit and wait for people to arrive, or work on things by themselves.)

Computer Usage
- MAC: 7 – 4 male, 3 female
- PC: 9 – 5 male, 4 female

Activities
- Many people on laptops with headphones on (Possibly listening to music, watching videos, watching/listening to lectures),
- A couple people reading and taking notes/highlighting
- One person is reading a packet, taking notes, while listening to something on his laptop
- A girl is on their phone (Possibly waiting for class to start or for a friend to arrive)
- Another girl is standing around and on her phone (Maybe waiting for someone to arrive)
- One girl is on her tablet (Why is she using a tablet and not a laptop?)
- None of these people are talking to each other (Maybe this could be due to the time of day?)
- Around my site of observation, people are filtering in and out

*See diagram clothing

Body Language
- Legs up on the couch/table
- Legs straight on couch/table
- Legs crossed
- Hunched over onto the short table/couch
- (Each could possibly infer the person's amount of stress/relaxation)

Reflections
Not that many people are at Odegaard in the morning and there is not as much collaboration. It would be a good idea to do observations during different times of the day. Next time I should also note in more detail what people are wearing, what they are talking about and their accessories as these can tell me more about themselves. Then it would be easier to analyze their choices in choosing MAC or PC.

Field Notes 2

January 29, 2014
3:25 PM – 4:15 PM
Odegaard Library

I am located in the same location as the day before. I will be observing the people sitting at the orange floors and couches again, but will include the people on the balcony since they are in my line of sight. See diagram for subject locations.

Laptop Usage
- MAC: 16 – 9 male, 7 female
- PC: 9 – 7 male, 2 female

Activities
- Many people are on their laptops
  - MAC
    - Subject 8: Male
      - He started off with Beats headphones on and looking at his laptop and phone, then later took the headphones off and was just staring at his laptop screen (possibly reading)
      - Sticker on his laptop (can't tell what it is, but it's the black silhouette kind)
      - (Probably distracted from school work, then got to work)
    - Subject 7: Male
      - Blogging and talking to the girl next to him (Subject 15) quite loudly (possibly flirting). The girl does not have anything out; she is just sitting there and talking to him.
      - Left at 4:07 PM with Subject 15
    - Subject 37: Female

- Blogging, typing an essay, on YouTube
- Her laptop is accessorized with purple cover, purple keyboard cover
- When subject 32 leaves, she takes his chair and brings it closer to hers and saves it for her friend that arrives at 4:05 PM, they then work on their essays together. They do not stay completely focused; they are often on blogs, YouTube and talking.
  - Subject 9: Female
    - Her laptop is open as well as her JAVA book. She has her phone nearby as well.
    - Her laptop is accessorized with mint cover and mint key board cover, her laptop sleeve is blue and her phone case is blue as well (She likes to match her belongings with the same color and to accessorize)
  - Subject 12: Male
    - Just on his laptop. There are books on the table in front of him, but he is not looking at them
    - Accessorized with a sticker (too far to tell what it is, but also black silhouette kind)
  - Subject 11: Female
    - Arrives at 3:52 PM
    - Looking at something on her laptop
    - Accessorized with a green cover
  - Subject 10: Female
    - Studying with other two girls (subjects 20 and 21) who only have books while she is studying using her laptop
    - Accessorized with a W sticker, laptop sleeve is from Pink and says "LOVE PINK"
    - Leaves at 4:02 PM with subject 21. Then she comes back by herself at 4:07 but sits in a different seat.
- o PC
  - Subject 1: Male
  - Subject 2: Female
    - Also on her phone
    - Working on her chemistry lab report in the lab book
    - (Looks as though she is confused on how to do her homework)
  - Subject 3: Female
    - At first was just reading her chemistry book and taking notes. Later at 3:40 PM she took out her laptop
    - Paisley laptop case, colorful Hello Kitty sticker placed in center
    - Left at 3:42 PM
  - Subject 4: Male
    - Arrived at 3:52 PM
    - Immediately threw his backpack on the ground after taking his laptop out. Also threw his jacket on the ground and then proceeded

to take off his shoes. He put his feet up on the couch/table and was doing something on his laptop. Then he put his feet on the chair with one knee up.
- (He looked distraught and stressed)
  - Subject 5: Male
  - Subject 6: Male
  - Subject 13: Male
    - Listening to something with his headphones on while on his laptop
    - Left at 3:46 PM

*See diagram for clothing

Reflections

I think that the spot I chose is a good location because there is a lot of traffic. It is a good location to get data from many different people within my time of field observation. People who come and sit here do not stay for too long. Therefore I can observe a wider range of people and observe what type of laptop they use. Maybe half way through my time observing I could move to a different seat in this area of the library, then I can more closely observe what other people are doing and what kinds of conversation they are having.

Field Notes 3

February 1, 2014
1:35 – 2:30 PM
Odegaard Library

I am located on the ground floor in the center to left of the stairs when looking at the entrance from inside – refer to diagram. I will be observing only the people sitting at the orange floors and couches – the people in my view.

Computer Usage
- MAC: 8 – 4 male, 4 female
- PC: 5 – 3 male, 2 female

Activities
- MAC
  - Subject 4: Female
    - White and black stripped long sleeve, jeans, boots
    - Book opened as well as notebooks – doing hw with the guy next to her, Subject 10. They are talking to each other (Probably comparing or discussing homework)
      - The guy hunches over to the girls laptop as they both look at something
  - Subject 11: Male
    - Black T shirt, jeans
    - Purple water bottle
    - Laid back in his chair looking at something on his laptop

- Subject 5: Male
  - Blue long sleeve
  - Coffee on the table
  - Laid back with his legs up on the couch/table and looking at his laptop
- Subject 12: Female
  - Arrives at 2:03 PM with only her phone out as she sits down. She does not sit for long, at 2:07 PM her male friend comes to meet her and sits down next to her for a brief moment. They then get up and exit towards the back at 2:09 PM. The female bumps into my chair as she passes by and says sorry.
  - Coral American Apparel hoodie, headband with hair in a big high bun, leggings, running shoes, black North Face jacket, purple backpack
- Subject 14: Female
  - Comes in at 2:10 PM with subject 15
    - (They seem to be working on homework, but they are conversing as well. They seem to be close friends.)
  - Black sweatshirt, hair up, leggings
  - iPhone – texting
  - coffee cup and purple water bottle
  - Purple case
- Subject 15: Female
  - Orange t shirt, leggings, converse
  - Coffee cup
- Subject 16: Male
  - Blue see-through case
  - headphones
  - iPhone as well
  - gray T-shirt, jeans
- Subject 17: Male
  - Arrives at 2:22 PM
  - Green long sleeve, blue backpack, jeans
  - Coffee cup

- PC
  - Subject 3: Male
    - Jeans, blue square pattern backpack, gray and green rain jacket
    - Newspaper on the table
    - "CEP" sticker (wonder what this stands for – I looked it up and it stands for Comminuty, Environment and Planning, a major at the UW. Now this makes sense why he also had a green tree sticker.) and a green tree sticker (maybe for recyclying)
    - Leaves at 1:50 PM
  - Subject 9: Female
    - Purple UW hoodie, hair up, glasses, jeans
    - (I think she's in my HCDE class, she is looking around and observing people)
      - She turns her chair to face the entrance

- Starts drawing in her
    - Leaves at 1:51 PM to go to the bathroom, comes back and sits in the same spot at 1:55 PM
  - Subject 6: Male
    - Black rain jacket over his chair, glasses, green wolf lodge t shirt
    - Leaned back and puts arm over his head once in a while (relaxed)
    - Doing ALEKS, searching on Google (Maybe on help with his ALEKS problems)
    - Carrying a lunch box
    - Leaves at 2:00 PM
  - Subject 10 : Male
    - Glasses, red hoodie, Nike baseball cap, thick rim glasses
    - Books open
    - Doing homework with subject 4
  - Subject 13: Female
    - Head band, hair up
    - Vest, black hoodie, jeans
    - Legs up on the chair next to her, facing parallel to the tables
- iPad
  - Subject 2
    - study spot
    - White sweater, jeans
    - Feet up and crossed
    - Scrolling through iPad on his lap
    - Leaves at 2:05 PM when friend meets with him, they go to a different
  - Subject 7
    - Green long sleeve, glasses, jeans
    - Green water bottle, headphones
    - At first had iPad on lap and scrolling through it. Then put the iPad on the table and looking at it (maybe watching something or reading something)
- iPhones
  - Subject 18
    - Green and gray rain jacket, tan pants
    - Charging phone, headphones
    - Leaned over looking at his phone, texting and reading
  - Subject 15
    - Purple rain jacket, blue hair tie and scarf, tights and flats
    - (Looks like she's waiting for someone to arrive)
    - She smiles are her phone and gets up at 2:13 PM and waves at someone, then sits back in her seat. He comes over and sits next to her and they start talking. They are both from different ethnic backgrounds. (Maybe they are old friends catching up, or maybe they are working on a project together?)
      - They are both engaged in quiet conversation, both talking in equal amounts

Reflections
Not that many people come to Odegaard on Saturday. There are not many people to observe in my area. So far, there is slightly higher preference for MAC over PC according to the data I have collected. I have also seen that more MAC users accessorize their laptops compared to PC owners (stickers, cases, keyboard covers, etc.).

Field Notes 4

February 2, 2014
5:40 – 6:35 PM
Odegaard Library

I am located on the ground floor in the center to left of the stairs when looking at the entrance from inside – refer to diagram. I will be observing only the people sitting at the orange floors and couches – the people in my view.

Computer Usage
- MAC: 5 – 4 male, 1 female
- PC: 2 – 2 male, 0 female

Activities
- MAC
    o Subject 3: Male
        ▪ Blue puffy jacket, jeans, curly/ruffled hair, Caucasian
        ▪ Reading a book while doing something on his laptop
        ▪ Leaves at 6:01 PM to the back of the library, but then comes back to the front and goes up the stairs. He holds the book in one hand while he walks.
    o Subject 8: Male
        ▪ Headphones
        ▪ Red and gray jacket, Asian, very short hair
    o Subject 9: Male
        ▪ Very short hair, black rain jacket, tan pants
        ▪ Has headphones on and watching something on his laptop
        ▪ Legs are crossed and up on the couch/table
        ▪ Leaves at 6:23 PM and goes to the back of the library
            • He holds his backpack in his hand by the top handle and his laptop is clutching in his other arm (Probably just relocating)
    o Subject 12: Male
        ▪ Arrives at 6:13 PM
        ▪ Caucasian, short hair
        ▪ Orange backpack on the ground, blue jacket, jeans
        ▪ Laptop is on his lap and he is typing something
        ▪ Leaves at 6:20 PM (Why did he only sit there for 7 minutes?)
    o Subject 13: Female
        ▪ Arrives at 6:31 PM

- - - Legs up on the couch/table, watching something on her laptop (a show, but I cannot tell what it is)
      - Zip-up hoodie, jeans, long black hair, Asian
- PC
  - Subject 1: Male
    - Dark green long sleeve, jeans, black jacket on the back of his chair
    - Hair is clean cut, no facial hair
    - Headphones
    - Steel water bottle on the couch/table
    - Laptop on lap and one arm up on his chin, looking down (maybe reading something)
  - Subject: 2 Male
    - Glasses, hair is very short and clean cut
    - Reading a paper
    - Alternates from feet up and crossed to straight and down
- iPhones
  - Subject 4: Female
    - Jeans, blue hoodie, boots, Asian, long black hair with bangs
    - One legs on couch/table and crossed, looking at her phone and scrolling through it
    - Backpack is dark blue with small stuffed animal key chain attached and lunch box is on top of the couch/table
    - Leaves at 5:58 PM
  - Subject 5: Male
    - Came in at 5:57 PM looking at his phone and sits down without taking anything off
    - Gets up at 5:58 PM still looking down at his phone, pauses at the door, then leaves
  - Subject 6: Female
    - Came into the building while talking on her phone and sits down at 5:53 PM
    - Swirling around in her chair and smiling (boyfriend?)
    - Black crew neck and yoga pants
    - Coffee cup in her hand and she is holding it very close to her face, but not taking any sips
    - Asian, long black hair with bangs, puffy black jacket, jeans
    - Leaves at 5:59 PM and goes to a different part of the library
  - Subject 7: Male
    - Comes in at 5:58 PM looking down at his phone and typing something, he just stands next to one of the chairs for about 20 seconds then sits down on the chair still fixated on his phone (I wonder what he is dong on his phone/who he is talking to)
    - Mohawk, Asian, black puffy jacket, jeans, brown comfy indoor shoes, plaid backpack
    - Gets up at 6:04 PM and takes a picture of the seat he was just sitting in. Then starts texting again while standing up next to his chair. (Why did he

take a picture of the area he was sitting at? Why does he keep standing there? Why doesn't he sit back down?). He sits back down at 6:08 PM.
- Leaves at 6:19 PM
- Comes back at 6:25 PM, still just on his phone
- No electronics
  - Subject 10: Female
    - Arrives at 6:07 PM with subject 11 and they are just talking. Their chairs are facing each other. They are very into the conversation and it looks like they are having a good time (it seems like they haven't seen each other in a long time and are catching up).
    - Legs up and on the table, jacket on table
    - Moccasins, black hair, purple American apparel hoodie, jeans, North Face jacket
    - When subject 11 leaves, she takes her seat
  - Subject 11: Female
    - Caucasian, green scarf, dark blue pea coat, high boots
    - Eating, lunch box, combat boots
    - Legs crossed
    - Later takes out her Galaxy phone
    - Leaves at 6:31 PM through the back

Reflections

Not that many people come to Odegaard on Sunday. This could be due to the Super Bowl as well. It seemed like a lot of the people who came in were just waiting for someone to arrive or to pass spare time they had.