

# Appendix A: Interview Protocol

## Introductory Statement

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study!

So, just to frame our conversation today, I want to tell you a little bit about my goals for this research project. I'm a librarian at Cal Maritime. I am the liaison to the School of Engineering, and I teach information literacy to engineering students. To improve my instruction, I want to know more about how engineers use information in the workplace.

This is an exploratory study that will identify the range of information tasks that marine engineers encounter and the strategies that they use to complete them. I'm conducting interviews because it will allow me to talk in depth with engineers with a variety of job responsibilities and experience levels. By taking into account the experiences and perspectives of all of the participants, it will give me a better understanding of the role of information use in the context of marine engineering. I will then be able to share these results, so that maritime educators will be able to start examining their curriculum to see how well it prepares students for information use in their future careers.

Your answers are very important. I want to learn about **your** experiences on the job. I appreciate your honest and candid responses to my questions. Please don't worry about giving me the right answer or what you think I want to hear. This is an exploratory study, and I'm not comparing your answers to anyone else's.

## Questions

1. To get started, would you please describe a typical workday.
  - What settings do you work in?
  - Who do you work with?
  - What are the major tasks you perform?
2. And now to start thinking about information use. There are many ways to describe what exactly information is. One definition is “knowledge obtained from investigation, study, or instruction” but it can also include facts or data or even more broadly “something that that brings about a change in your take on the world.” Can you think of some examples of things you would call information?
3. To be more specific, can you think of different types of information that you use on the job?
4. So now, I’d like to ask you to talk me through a couple of specific situations that you have recently had on the job. Can you think of a recent situation where you needed information? [Pause]
  - a. How did you know you needed information?
  - b. How did you look for the information?
  - c. Where did you find the information?
  - d. How did you determine if the information was reliable or correct?
  - e. How did you use the information?
  - f. Would you consider this process a success?
  - g. How important was the outcome of this task?

- h. How often does this type of task happen? Is it representative of the types of information needs and uses you typically encounter in the workplace?
5. Thank you for sharing that with me. Now I would like it if you can think of a *less/more typical* situation where you needed information?
  - a. How did you know you needed information?
  - b. How did you look for the information?
  - c. Where did you find the information?
  - d. How did you determine if the information was reliable or correct?
  - e. How did you use the information?
  - f. Would you consider this process a success?
  - g. How important was the outcome of this task?
  - h. How often does this type of task happen? Is it representative of the types of information needs and uses you typically encounter in the workplace?
6. Thank you so much for answering my questions. Do you have anything else you would like to share about your use of information as an engineer?

## Concluding Statements

Thank you for sharing your experiences with me! If you think of anything else, please feel free to email me.

## Probing Questions

- Could you explain further?
- Could you tell me more about that?
- Could you give me an example?

- What did you do next?
- Why did you do/choose that?
- How long did that take?