



**Fall 2014  
SEI Research Review  
Eliciting Unstated  
Requirements at Scale (EURS)**

Software Engineering Institute  
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October 28, 2014



# Report Documentation Page

*Form Approved  
OMB No. 0704-0188*

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1. REPORT DATE <b>18 OCT 2014</b>	2. REPORT TYPE <b>N/A</b>	3. DATES COVERED	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE <b>Fall 2014 SEI Research Review Eliciting Unstated Requirements at Scale (EURS)</b>		5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
		5b. GRANT NUMBER	
		5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) <b>Michael Konrad Bob Stoddard /Nancy Mead, Mary Beth Chrissis</b>		5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
		5e. TASK NUMBER	
		5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) <b>Software Engineering Institute Carnegie Mellon University Pittsburgh, PA 15213</b>		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)		10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
		11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT <b>Approved for public release, distribution unlimited.</b>			
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES <b>The original document contains color images.</b>			
14. ABSTRACT			
15. SUBJECT TERMS			
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT <b>SAR</b>
a. REPORT <b>unclassified</b>	b. ABSTRACT <b>unclassified</b>	c. THIS PAGE <b>unclassified</b>	
19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON			

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This material is based upon work funded and supported by the Department of Defense under Contract No. FA8721-05-C-0003 with Carnegie Mellon University for the operation of the Software Engineering Institute, a federally funded research and development center.

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DM-0001769



# Unstated Needs are **Elusive** but **Important**

*“It's really hard to design products by focus groups. A lot of times, people don't know what they want until you show it to them.”*  
(Steve Jobs)

*“If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses.”* (Apocryphal, attributed to Henry Ford)

When needs go unrecognized, critical features get overlooked, including:

- Non-functional requirements that drive architecture
- Innovative product and service features that sustain customer loyalty

And if left undiscovered, can result in:

- Stakeholder/user disruption and frustration
- Requirements volatility, expensive rework, delays



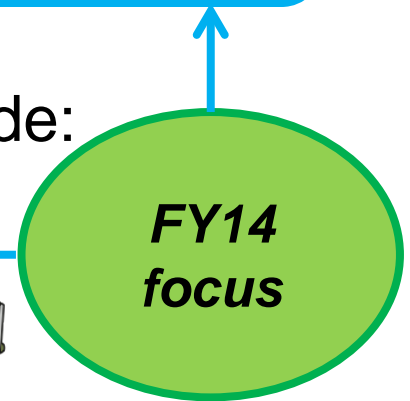
# Existing Requirements Elicitation Methods

Limitations in what requirements specifications convey:

- Needs that are more likely to be salient to the stakeholder/user
  - Don't know what they don't know
- Motivation for requirements is often lost or missing

Other limitations with existing methods include:

- Timeboxed, workshop-style meetings that can't be held virtually
- Missing stakeholders
- Won't work at scale



*EURS aims to develop and validate a scalable method for determining the unstated needs of stakeholders, which result in a more innovative set of requirements as the basis for subsequent system design, implementation, deployment, sustainment, and modernization.*



# Overview of SEI KJ+ Approach



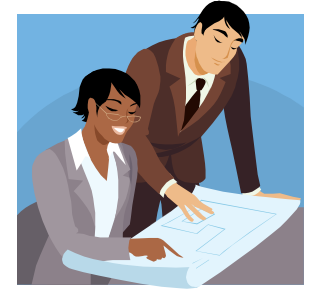
Start with **known requirements** (obtained by existing elicitation method)



**Step 1:** Design open-ended, **probing** questions to interview users on **extreme** positive and negative **experiences**



**Step 2:** Conduct interviews **focusing on context** not solutions (asking "how" and "why")



**Step 3:** Mine interview output and **characterize experiences** in terms of action, motivation, context



**Innovative Requirements**



**Step 6:** Triage need-solution pairs into:

- **Delighters**
- Satisfiers
- Must-be's (Kano analysis)



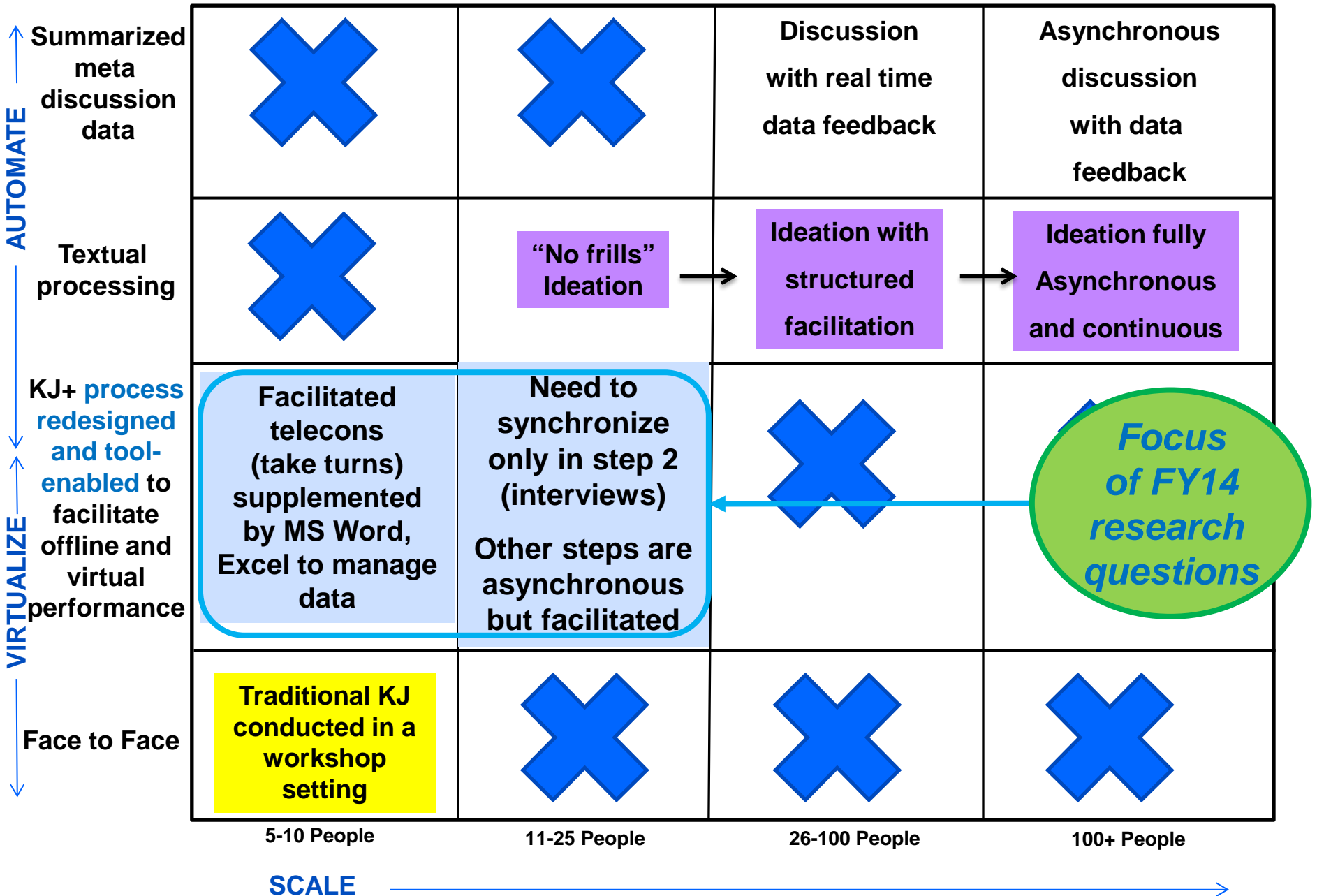
**Step 5:** Derive **unstated needs** and brainstorm candidate **innovative solutions**



**Step 4:** Look across characterizations to identify **themes of experience** (KJ+ Affinitization)



# EURS Research Focus



# FY14 Task structure

1. Redesign the KJ method for virtual, asynchronous use to the maximum extent possible with minimal technology, creating KJ+
2. Develop pilot training, process scripts, briefing templates, and tooling to support pilot of KJ+
3. Select pilot candidate and train team
4. Conduct a small-to-moderate scale A-B comparison experiment
  - a) Project requirements are developed without KJ+
  - b) KJ+ is then applied
  - c) New requirements are identified and effort is recorded
5. Analyze results

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# FY14 Accomplishments

## Key SEI Activities/Contributions

- Adapted existing workshop-based method for distributed use
- Conducted A-B Comparison: pilot was successful
- Pilot collaborator intends to adopt the KJ+ method and has funded our continued engagement
- Will pursue publication in Requirements Engineering Journal

## Revisiting our Research Questions: Can KJ be adapted for:

- Virtual, small-to-moderate scale use?
- Identifying innovative requirements that anticipate unstated needs?
- Increasing end-user satisfaction?
- Mitigating requirements volatility?
- Reducing sustainment and modernization costs?



# Next Steps

Ultra-scale experiment allowing much more participation in developing requirements:

- Increase # of participants by introducing ideation
- Affinitize visually as well as virtually
- Automate identification of relevant ideas to keep others informed of what might interest them
  - through machine learning and probabilistic topic modeling

Contact us if you would like to collaborate.



# Contact Information

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