Reciprocal Research: Providing Value in Design Research from the Outset in the Rural United States

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Provocation

- Design projects should be reoriented towards benefiting participants from the start
- Start by solving the problem under investigation right away at a small scale, then focus on larger scale

Research Benefits

- Helps to get buy in from participants and community leaders
- Validates and fleshes out the problem
- Enables iteration over problem formulation and solutions

Our Experience

- Building systems and tools to help rural individuals learn computer skills to improve their access to the local job market
- Started by teaching classes at the local library
- Some initial assumptions proved to be incorrect (e.g. skill level was lower than expected)
- There is value in trying to solve the problem that you are designing for without designing anything at first