What might go wrong for people?

We are going to apply a systematic method to identify the negative consequences of using technology in the form of a workshop discussion. Technological interventions can lead to harms to people which might be failures to fully complete the intended activity (achieve the goal), or manifested as additional burdens, concerns, annoyances, distractions, time and financial costs, instability, and mental or physical harm, directly or indirectly.

How does it work?

A group of people who have different knowledge and experience come together for a structured discussion. A *facilitator* shares a scenario describing the use of a proposed digital intervention, gives a breakdown of the tasks and guides the group through these one task at a time to look for potential downsides. The method uses a set of pre-defined **guide words** to prompt for **deviations** that might occur. A **deviation** is a negative change to the design intent. The discussion also identifies the **causes** and **consequences** of each deviation. For this workshop we are focusing on the impacts on people - individuals, groups and communities in a socio-technical system. Someone else, who is not contributing to the discussion, the **recorder**, listens and captures the results for later analysis.

Can you provide an example?

Imagine the scenario is about someone called Anne who has previously ordered and paid for two gig tickets using a booking website, but wants two more tickets for her friends who are now able to go.

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Consider each task in turn

    Use the ticketing website to purchase two additional tickets for the same event

    Consider each guide word in turn

        Guide word: NO/NOT (i.e. no part of the design intent is achieved, and nothing else)

            Deviation: Ticketing website not accessed
                Possible causes: Anne changes her mind about inviting anyone else, Forgets to do it
            Deviation: No internet
                Possible causes: No data credit, Network fault, Exceeded usage cap
            Deviation: No tickets available
                Possible causes: Preferred/all tickets sold out

        Guide word: OTHER THAN (i.e. complete substitution of intent)

            Deviation: Buy tickets for a different event/date
                Possible causes: Clicked wrong link, Changed plan, Malware on computer changed link
            etc...

        Guide word: REVERSE (i.e. complete opposite of intent)

            Deviation: Cancels/deletes previous ticket purchase instead of buying two more
                Possible causes: Clicked wrong thing, Website doesn't support order changes
            etc...

        Guide word: AS WELL AS (i.e. in addition to achieving designed intent)

            Deviation: Friends start receiving more unsolicited emails
                Possible causes: Marketing spam, Unauthorised access/use of personal data
            etc...
    etc...
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The consequences (harms) include "Cannot buy desired tickets for the event", "Cannot buy any tickets for the event", "Buy tickets for different event", "Bank details stolen", "Receive increased unwanted emails", "Partner finds out about plans which were meant to be a surprise", etc.