Participatory Design

Personas

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Users again

- Before, we looked at understanding user requirements through naturalistic observation and ethnographical techniques
- Now, we want to move into design, but having users as co-designers
  - As opposed to co-discoverers
- Bit of a mind-shift for most technologists/engineers
Late Introductions

➢ My computer is...

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Why Involve Users?

➤ Expectation management
  – Realistic expectations
  – No surprises, no disappointments
  – Timely training
  – Communication, but no hype

➤ Ownership
  – Make the users active stakeholders
  – More likely to forgive or accept problems
  – Can make a big difference to acceptance and success of product
Microsoft Model

- Users are involved throughout development
- ‘activity-based planning’: studying what users do to achieve a certain activity (task)
- Usability tests e.g. Office 4.0 over 8000 hours of usability testing.
- Internal use by Microsoft staff
- Customer support lines
General UCD

- User-centered approach is based on:
  - Early focus on users and tasks: directly studying cognitive, behavioral, anthropomorphic & attitudinal characteristics
  - Empirical measurement: users’ reactions and performance to scenarios, manuals, simulations & prototypes are observed, recorded and analysed
  - Iterative design: when problems are found in user testing, fix them and carry out more tests
Participatory Design

- Rather than being observed, users are treated as equal partners
- Scandinavian history
- Emphasises social and organisational aspects
- Based on study, model-building and analysis of new and potential future systems

Attended by
- >2 users
- >1 business rep
- >1 developer
- >1 facilitator
Basic PD model

➢ Phase 1: Task flows
   – Scenarios by another name, recorded as noun/verb

➢ Phase 2: Task object design
   – Nouns are defined and built into hierarchy

➢ Phase 3: GUI definition
   – Tasks converted into screens, lists, dialogs etc.
PD in Practice - PICTIVE

- Plastic Interface for Collaborative Technology Initiatives through Video Exploration
- Intended to empower users to act as full participants in design (reaction to iterative design/XP)
- Michael Muller (nice chap)
PICTIVE

- Materials used are:
  - Low-fidelity office items such as pens, paper, sticky notes
  - Collection of (plastic) design objects for screen and window layouts

- Equipment required:
  - Shared design surface, e.g. table
  - Video recording equipment
PICTIVE Session

Before a PICTIVE session:
- Users generate scenarios of use
- Developers produce design elements for the design session

A PICTIVE session has four parts:
- Stakeholders all introduce themselves
- Brief tutorials about areas represented in the session (optional)
- Brainstorming of ideas for the design
- Walkthrough of the design and summary of decisions made
LARPing for design

- Jorn Messeter has been working on a contextual version of PD, where users role-play solutions
My experience

- Can be very positive
- Greatest weakness is the facilitator
  - Crucial to the success of the session
- End up doing weird stuff we call ‘activation sessions’
  - Like I say, facilitation is crucial
After the users are gone

- A big problem is keeping the design team focused on the needs of the target users after the users have left.
- Creeping featurism sets in and the design loses coherency
- This is where personas come in
Traditional Model

- Expert
- Experienced
- Novice
In reality

Novice  Experienced  Expert
Personas

The idea is to create a virtual user

- Name (or even nickname)
- Who: age, gender, education
- Context: when, where, technology access
- What: purpose, expectation
- Motivation: urgency, desires
- Robustness: timid/aggressive, cautious/bold

Called ‘types’ or ‘market maps’ in marketing

Stops “All things to all people” effect
Persona in practice

- Behaviour patterns, not job descriptions
- Small persona set
- Marketing target ≠ persona target
- Add life, but remember these are design tools
- Goals: experience, life, end goals
- Put them on the wall
  - Or on tee-shirts etc.
Example persona
What just happened?

- Participatory design is a great way to involve users and give them equal rights
- When users leave the process, it is important to keep them in mind
- Personas are a great way to keep the design team focused.