



Working agilely: Doing UX on the quick and cheap -- the evolving role of the UX Professional

*Thyra Rauch, Ph.D.
Customer Research Architect*

We as UX professionals need to optimize what we do and how we do it

- **We should not be merely usability testers, reacting at the end of the development cycle**
- **We should be influencers of what goes into the product,**
- **We can be effective if we choose our activities carefully**

Just because applications or services or device types change, basic principles and methods used for UX should not change

- **Good UCD and good user research and good user testing/evaluation/validation is still needed.**
- **Two things really matter when looking at which activities to perform and when:**
 - The cost of those activities
 - The expected improvements or the risk of not doing them.
- **In general, there is never enough time or money or resources to do everything desired**
- **Picking carefully, no matter what kind of project you are on, makes good business sense.**

Discount methods have been around for over 20 years now

- **Championed by such folks as Jakob Nielsen and Jared Spool**
- **Saying, for example, that “the best results come from testing no more than 5 users”**
- **Running as many small tests as you can afford.**
- **This actually works well with the Agile methods as you can test with a small number of users once or more per iteration, and, with many iterations**
- **<Note: see the talk tomorrow by Nikolay Markov on UX and Agile for more specifics>**

Qualitative studies are generally less expensive to run than quantitative studies

- **Deliver faster, cheaper return on investment (ROI)**
- **When several people are stumped by the same design element, it isn't necessary to know how much the users are being delayed.**
- **Example: during one of my tests this past year, I observed 2 users fail with the same task.**

Using heavy-weight methods, even if you can, may not be the best approach

- **What matters more and more to the business is not just doing something right, but doing the right thing.**
- **It is entirely possible to produce a product that is very usable, but is not one that your users want to use because it doesn't do what they want to do.**
- **Being able to actually influence *what* is built in addition to *how* it is built is where we can have the most impact.**

We need to be talking to our users. Early. Often.
Continuously

- **Three methods that are the most useful in discount usability are:**
 - Rapid usability testing using qualitative methods
 - Quick-and-dirty prototypes to get things in front of users rapidly
 - paper is very good here
 - Heuristic evaluation by your own team – you can catch a lot of things yourself

Without talking to your users it's a matter of doing good things for the wrong reason.

- **User research has traditionally taken a lot of up-front time**
- **It does not fit in well with rapid iterations.**
- **What if methods could be combined ?**

Finding out what is critical to the user in product design

- **Ask yourself how accurate the data from usability testing is for everyday use of a product**
- **Will things that come up during normal use come up during your lab test using your scenario?**
- **Consider some site visits with your current users**
- **Engage users in a bit of participatory design as well as a bit of evaluation of what you are proposing**
- **Having user try to use designs in their own environment can yield surprising results**

Our Agile team has forced combining different activities

- **When we do a usability test in our lab, for example, we might do a number of things with each user while they are there**
- **We might get their input on some design alternatives for features for the next iteration**
- **We might get their input on some of the features for the current iteration**
- **We might have some questions about implementation details.**
- **We might have the user test some coded tasks from the previous iteration to evaluate if it meets their needs and our goals.**

Agile development mixes analysis, design, development, and delivery throughout the process

- **Agile software development processes vary, but value customer input**
- **UCD/UX designers, favor customer input on an ongoing basis**
- **With agile development and reordering priorities and planning for each iteration, it is much easier to get important items considered and included**
- **Lowers our risk of delivering a bad user interface**

Using Stories

- **Stories influence user scenarios and use cases**
- **Stories can fit nicely into our development processes, even Agile**
- **Stories have power with the development teams**

Combining methods can provide positive, cost-effective UX experience

- **Combining several methods yields improved results for the user**
- **Design work benefits from the combined methods by providing a better product at lower cost**
- **UX professionals are able to have a greater influence over the product, thus demonstrating increased value**
- **With less and less time for our various UX activities, and with a limited amount of resource, adapting to new methods like Agile will enable the UX professional to still be effective**

Спасибо

Spasibo