
User Experience Evaluation – Do You Know Which Method to Use?

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Abstract

High quality user experience (UX) has become a central competitive factor of product development in mature consumer markets. Although the term UX is widely used, the methods and tools for evaluating UX are still inadequate. This SIG session collects information and experiences about UX evaluation methods used in both academia and industry, discusses the pros and cons of each method, and ideates on how to improve the methods.

ACM Categories and Subject Descriptors

H5.2 User interfaces: *Evaluation/methodology*, H1.2. User/Machine Systems: *Software psychology*.

General Terms

Human Factors, Measurement

Keywords

User experience, Evaluation methods

Introduction

As particular industry sectors mature, usability and technical reliability of products is taken for granted and users start to look for products that provide engaging user experience (UX). Although the term user experience originated from industry and is a widely used term also

in academia, the tools for managing UX in product development are still inadequate. UX evaluation methods play a key role here.

Before we can develop UX evaluation methods, the term user experience needs to be clarified. There have been activities on understanding the different viewpoints to UX [5], and now an ISO standard is proposing a definition for UX [3]. It seems that we are getting closer to a state where the field of UX has solid enough ground for serious evaluation metrics and methods.

There have been several workshops in CHI and other scientific venues on designing for UX [9],[11] on UX in different domain areas [1],[2],[8], or on the metrics or methods for UX [4],[7],[10]. The UXEM workshop at CHI'08 [10] was a good start for collecting UX evaluation methods. However, as the participation in the workshop was limited, the set of UX evaluation methods remained incomplete. A SIG session provides the CHI community an excellent forum for collecting UX evaluation methods from a larger audience of academics and practitioners.

Need for UX Evaluation Methods

Many toolkits exist for doing traditional usability evaluations, but user experience evaluation differs from usability evaluation dramatically. User experience cannot be evaluated with stopwatches or logging, because UX is subjective [3][5]. The objective measures such as task execution time and the number of clicks or errors are not reliable measures for UX, but we need to know how the user feels about the system. User's motivation and expectations affect the experience more than in traditional usability [6]. User experience is also very context dependent [5], so the experience with the same design in different circumstances is often very different.

This means that UX evaluation cannot be conducted just by observing user's task completion in a laboratory test.

We are after evaluation methods that provide information about *how users feel about using a designed system*. This is a common requirement for all UX evaluation methods, but there may be various kinds of methods designed for different cases. A UX evaluation method may have been designed for lab tests, field studies, or evaluating UX of real customers that have been using a system in real life. The different methods may have been designed for evaluating early concept ideas, prototypes, or commercial products. They may also produce data on different levels of detail, from the feedback of a key click to overall relationship between the user and the product. The methods may be designed for a certain kind of system, e.g., business software, game, or gas station service. Some methods target at quantitative, some others qualitative data. We are interested in all these methods, so we will address these different perspectives when classifying the different methods in the SIG.

The SIG introduction part as well as in the interactive session will address the following topics:

- Exploring used and known methods, tools and techniques for evaluating UX in the early and later design and development phase.
- Looking at the UX evaluation methods used on different platforms and devices for demonstrating their advantages and limitations.
- Involving the experiences of different participants in applying UX evaluation methods and highlighting their suggestions for improvement.

- Producing an overall picture on “What are recently used and known UX evaluation methods” in industry and academia.

SIG Audience

One of the goals of this SIG is to identify and gather people interested in UX evaluation in different application areas and contexts. We foresee the following types of participants:

- Practitioners working in the design, development and evaluation of interactive systems/products trying to address UX in the different phases of product development.
- Academics working or interested in state of the art and research activities in UX evaluation methods trying to explore the right method set for different evaluation cases.

The audience would be approximately 50-100 participants from both industry and academia interested in the usage, collection and improvement of UX evaluation methods in different HCI application areas.

SIG Organization

The activity plan for the SIG is as follows:

- Introduction of the SIG background and goals of the SIG (5 minutes).
- Lively presentation by the organizers of issues in the various fields related to the topic of the SIG, in particular the usage of methods for user experience evaluation based on practical case examples (e.g. for mobile phones, social networking web platforms,

IPTV - Internet Protocol Television application) (15 minutes).

- Interactive session with active involvement of the audience. The organizers will prepare creative brainstorming materials including questions on the topic of the SIG in order to stimulate discussions in groups. First of all, the groups of participants collect UX evaluation methods, which they are using personally or which they know of; then in groups, the participants formulate advantages and disadvantages for selected methods based on pre-defined templates prepared by the organizers. As a final step, the participants will formulate suggestions for how to improve selected UX evaluation methods, e.g. by methodological variations related to a certain application domain/context. The organizers will prepare an interactive wall (posters with pre-defined grids) for (1) UX evaluation method collection (what it is good for, pros and cons); (2) description of UX evaluation methods (How suitable are methods for lab/field evaluations; early, mid or late development phases; momentary, use case or long-term experience evaluations; quantitative/qualitative data collection; different domain areas) and (3) list of improvements for UX evaluation methods (40 minutes).
- The results from each group will be put on the interactive wall and should lead the final discussion in the plenary. This will provide an excellent context for discussing specific challenges for future UX evaluation methods (20 minutes).
- Wrap up of the discussion and creation of future plans, in particular on joint actions on this topic among those who are interested. Distribution of a attendance list for creating a mailing list for further

discussion and distribution of the results from the interactive session (10 minutes).

The organizers have extensive experience in organizing interactive workshops and discussions, such as workshops and SIGs at CHI 2007, CHI 2008, EuroITV2008 as well as in master and PhD level courses on advanced methods in HCI.

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