

Towards a UX Manifesto

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ABSTRACT

In this workshop we invite researchers, educators and practitioners to contribute to the construction of a coherent Manifesto for the field of User Experience (UX). Such a UX manifesto should express statements about issues like: Fundamental assumptions underlying UX (principles), positioning of UX relative to other domains (policy) and action plans for improving the design and evaluation of UX (plans). The UX manifesto can become a reference model for future work on UX.

1. BACKGROUND & MOTIVATION

Is the research and practice on User Experience (UX) maturing since it has popularized the HCI community and the industry more than a decade ago? Is there a unified view about **principles** of UX? Are there any well-defined **policies** where to position UX in a map of the Information Technology (IT) landscape, which is populated by usability, human factors, interaction design, software engineering, marketing, and other domains? Are there any sound **plans** how to refine methodologies on designing for, evaluating and teaching UX? In fact, such set of Principles, Policies and Plans constitute what we coin «**UX Manifesto**», which is deemed important for the maturation of this emerging domain by providing the foundation, objectives, and action plans for the future work of UX. Principles inform the formation of policies, which in turn feed into plans as courses of action.

1.1 Principles

The term “Principles” denotes fundamental assumptions underlying UX. It addresses questions of what an experience is (in the context of interactive products and software), how it can be described or - from a designer' perspective - how it can be fabricated?

Two seemingly exclusive positions emerged from discussing these questions: one phenomenological/pragmatist and one inspired by experimental psychology. The former is exemplified by McCarthy and Wright's notion of 'felt experience' [4]. It is based on Dewey's pragmatist view of experience. They argue against abstract models of experience and place emphasis on the situatedness and uniqueness of experience. In contrast, approaches inspired by experimental

psychology tend to deconstruct experience into single components (e.g. motivation, trust, aversion, hedonics, fun, etc). The collection of components is further supplemented by processes, which address, for example, the temporal aspect of experience or the dynamicity of psychological states, and modulate experience. The concomitant questions are: Is there a core set of UX components (if yes, what are they)? Are these components orthogonal, hierarchical or causally linked? How does the relevance of each UX component vary with the particularities of a context? What are boundary conditions for a component-based UX model and what are the alternatives?

Although proponents of both approaches tend to overemphasize differences in the approaches, both are important and far from mutually exclusive. The pragmatist perspective advocates the detailed analysis of experience, offering rich insights into specific interactions, which can surely be used by designers. However, some in the field of HCI feel uncomfortable with relying solely on very small - but detailed - samples of experiences on which the design or evaluation of an interactive product is based. They rather look for more general principles and mechanisms – a few categories of “average” experiences. The strength of an approach based on aggregated knowledge is the potential simplicity of the resulting models. However, at the same time this – per definition – implies a reduction. This reduction has costs. First, the average model may not be predictive for any real user and his/her experience. Second, averaged data and accordingly abstract principles are not vivid; they may appear shallow and may thus not be very inspiring for designers.

Obviously, to be fruitful in the field of HCI UX, it is a must to have both: ways to describe experiences in detail and all their complexity – especially as an inspiration for designers - and ways to average experiences, to build models to reduce complexity and to guide the detailed enquiries. In other words, integrating the advantages of both approaches rather than treating them as mutually exclusive is the challenge of future UX theorizing.

1.2 Policy

The term ‘Policy’ primarily addresses the positioning of UX relative to other closely related but distinct domains. For instance, distinctions between usability and UX have been drawn [2]. Usability is a necessary but insufficient condition to make a user smile, but UX, when desirable, can do so. Positioned in this way, usability is subsumed by UX. But some argue that UX is just an extension of usability to accommodate fuzzy quality attributes such as emotion and fun. The link between UX and software engineering lies in the definition of quality models that address a mesh of functional and non-functional quality factors (e.g. reliability, security, accessibility) determining user acceptance. There is also a link to the domain of industrial (electronic) product design which traditionally focuses on integrating sub-outcomes of

attributes and consequences into the overall value of a product. As noted by Cockton [1], UX can be considered at least as one of these sub-outcomes. While usability standards (e.g. ISO 9241) have some visible impacts on the research and practice of usability, questions concerning the necessity and utility of such standards are recurrent. Hence, whether specific standards for UX should be developed is debatable. Besides, as UX has added a new dimension to HCI and interactive product design, it should be explored how UX can effectively be taught as well.

1.3 Plans

Theoretically UX is incoherent; methodologically UX is not yet mature either. Questions like “How to design for UX?” and “How to evaluate UX?” are easy to ask but difficult to answer. Answers may be sought in terms of devices that may improve the UX (see the articles by Timco et al., Følstad, and Hole in [3]) and of techniques (see Geven’s article in [3]) and tools (e.g. TUMCAT [see Vermeeren & Kort’s in [3]) for analyzing, designing, engineering and evaluating UX. In brief, developing theoretically sound methodologies should be high in the UX research agenda. Besides, there are critics that UX is only used as a marketing slogan. It is intriguing to gather real case studies to illustrate how UX is actually handled in the professional world of interactive product design in terms of requirements analysis, design, engineering and evaluation.

2. THE MAIN GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The overarching goal of the workshop is to invite inputs for the construction of a coherent **UX Manifesto** constituted by the three pillars: Principles, Policy and Plans. This goal is divided into a number of objectives:

- To work on a unified view on UX by integrating different theoretical perspectives (Principles)
- To develop a generic UX model comprising the structure (i.e. core components; static) and process (i.e. situational factors; dynamic) of UX (Principles)
- To identify boundary conditions under which a generic, component-based UX model is applicable and identify alternatives otherwise (Principles)
- To identify the transversal relationships between UX and the related fields by fleshing out their communalities and distinctions (Policy)
- To understand the role of UX in the means-end chains between product attributes, usage consequences and product values (Policy)
- To explore the necessity and potential utility of developing UX standards (Policy)
- To identify effective teaching strategies for UX (Policy)
- To develop theoretically sound methodologies for analyzing, designing, engineering and evaluating UX (Plan)
- To understand UX in practice through case studies, thereby identifying factors that may facilitate or hinder the incorporation of UX into interactive products (Plan).

3. PARTICIPANTS

Maximum: 25. Generally, contributions from researchers, educators and practitioners working on UX and related areas are invited. Specifically, the participants of earlier UX workshops (DAC’05, CHI’06 and NordiCHI’06) and members of the MAUSE SIG-UX (<http://www.cost294.org>) are strongly encouraged to partake in the Workshop to substantiate the ideas explored. UX experts will be invited to be panelists.

4. WORKSHOP PROCEDURE

All submissions will be peer reviewed by members of the program committee. For each submission, authors are required to include a “Reflection Section” to derive from their analytic or empirical work their own version of Principles, Policy and Plans as constituents of a UX Manifesto. Participants may understand the three terms differently, and our challenge is to negotiate and consolidate the divergences to draw a consensus. Prior to the workshop, a Green Paper will be drafted based on ideas to be extracted from the submissions of this workshop and those from the earlier UX workshops. It will then be distributed to the workshop participants for comments and further inputs. In the workshop, the following activities will be conducted:

- (i) Presentation of the Green Paper
- (ii) Presentation of ‘personal’ UX Manifesto by the main author of each accepted submission
- (iii) Group Discussions: The audience will be divided into groups of four or five to consolidate a group-based UX Manifesto and discuss other topics of interest (to be listed in the Green Paper).
- (iv) Plenary Reporting: Each group presents their UX Manifesto
- (v) Panel Discussion: Invited UX experts will hold a panel to discuss the group Manifestoes and address the future development of UX

5. PROGRAM COMMITTEE

- Mark Blythe, University of York, UK
- Gilbert Cockton, University of Sunderland, UK
- Asbjørn Følstad, SINTEF, NO
- Marc Hassenzahl, University of Landau, DE
- Paul Hekkert, Delft University of Technology, NL
- Effie Lai-Chong Law, University of Leicester, UK
- Gitte Lindgaard, Carlton University, CA
- Virpi Roto, Nokia, FL
- Arnold Vermeeren, Delft University of Technology, NL
- Peter C. Wright, Sheffield Hallam University, UK

6. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Accepted papers will be published in the workshop proceedings, both online and printed versions.
- Selected papers will be invited to submit an extended version to a special issue of a prestigious HCI journal
- Interested participants are invited to join the MAUSE SIG-UX to sustain the collaborative efforts of the workshop.
- To publish a draft UX Manifesto on a designated website, inviting further comments and input.

REFERENCES

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- [2] Hassenzahl, M., & Tractinsky, N. (2006). User experience – a research agenda. *Behaviour & Information Technology*, 25, 91-97.
- [3] Law, E., Hvannberg, E. & Hassenzahl, M. (2006). *Proc. of the workshop “User Experience – Towards a unified view”* in conjunction with NordiCHI’ 06, 14-18. October, Oslo. Online at: <http://www.cost294.org/>
- [4] Wright, P. C., McCarthy, J., & Meekison, L. (2003). Making sense of experience. In M. Blythe, C. Overbeeke, A. F. Monk, & P. C. Wright (Eds.), *Funology: From Usability to Enjoyment* (pp. 43-53). Dordrecht: Kluwer.