

RCE Saskatchewan Website Project Experience Report

BY

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Introduction

Our hands-on experience on the RCE Saskatchewan website design has really broadened our horizon on the People Centred Design (PCD) course- through the exposure to real issues confronting the users of the website. There is no gainsaying that our knowledge acquired in PCD class gave us a soft landing tackling the issues of the website, and we were able to hit the ground running without any struggle.

Any design must start with a good understanding of the people and the need that the design is intended to meet [1]. Based on this philosophy of [1], we studied the website to understand first and foremost the people concerned. There are seven major users of the website listed as follows:

- Local Sustainability Leaders
- RCE Saskatchewan Working Group/Flagship (SWG)
- Education and Research Community (ERC)
- RCE Partner Organizations
- General Public & Politicians
- Other RCEs
- RCE Admin

We observed that the data are not well organized in the home page and causes confusion for users surfing for information on the website. This is because the data are not classified or categorized in a way that makes the environment user-friendly. This clearly negate the beauty of PCD!

Our Focus Group

We focussed on RCE SWG, and ERC. As good students of PCD, we identified the gulf of execution and gulf of evaluation for these two major users to bridge the two gulfs. We addressed the gulf of the home page first since it is the gateway to all users of the website. Gulf of Execution is where we tried to figure out how the website operates[1]. In other word, it is the gap between a user's goal for action and the means to execute that action[2]. The primary goal which is one of our seven action plans is to remove these roadblocks that cause extra thinking. Gulf of Evaluation on the other hand is where we tried to figure out what happened[1]. In the definition of [3], "Gulf of Evaluation is the degree of interaction possibilities of an artifact, a computer system or likewise correspond to the intentions of the person and what the person perceives is possible to do with the artifact/application/etc".



Fig.1b Source: Nielsen Norman Group-nngroup.com

Some of the missing requirements in the home page are log-in details, the Sustainable Development Goals(SDG), RCE overview, create account, password recovery, communication channel , and lot more which we have provided in our High-Fidelity design. The SWG lacks events documentation- No knowledge of past and present activities or data documented on the website. It is also difficult for users to know the dates and time of upcoming events. The ERC has no data from publications. Of course, publication is the hallmark of any research community, it is the brand name that markets research work to the outside world. All the missing requirements are provided in the low fidelity mapping before we translated it into High-Fidelity. Before we dive into the Low-Fidelity and High-Fidelity mapping, a quick understanding of the empathy mapping would provide a good foundation of a good design.

Empathy Mapping

An empathy map is a collaborative visualization used to articulate what we know about a user. It externalizes knowledge about users and gives the designer a clue to create a shared understanding of user needs and helps in decision making[4]. Having identified some of the gaps in the website, the first step is to carry out our empathy mapping. The empathy mapping for our focus group are also been added to the git-hub link.

LOW-FIDELITY MAPPING(LFM)

These are prototypes that are constructed to depict concepts, design alternatives, and screen layouts... These prototypes are created to communicate, educate, and inform. The fidelity of the prototypes is a definition of how closely it matches the look-and-feel of the final system, and can vary in different areas such as visuals, interactivity, contents and commands [4] They are often paper-based and do not allow user interactions. It ranges from hand-drawn mock-ups to printouts. The prototype is a summary of the content or a stand-in for product images [4]. Our low fidelity mapping is also been uploaded to our git-hub.

High-Fidelity Mapping (HFM)

Unlike the LFM, the HFM prototype include all the content that would appear in the final design e.g. (text and images, full articles, contact information). With the HFM, we can test workflow, graphical elements such as affordance, page hierarchy etcetera and be sure of how realistic the design would

be. This is because HFM often look like a live software to the user. Our HFM are presented in the GitHub link. Please, kindly refer to our GitHub page for our HFM.

What went well?

- By doing this project, we learned new methods regarding prototype design process of website. We also realized the importance of People-Centered Design and how it helps in designing real-life solutions.
- The choice of our 2 specific users that we were mainly focused on was pretty good. Which helps us to divide the un-organised data into more organised way.
- Separate pages for events and publication, turned out to be a great idea.
- All unique functionalities on events and publication page, such as event notifications and separate page for toolkits and guides were mainly appreciated by the customers.
- This course guides us through the process of designing the website, completely by thinking from users perspective.
- It made us understand how minor things plays a vital role in the overall design of the website. There are lots of course topics that we can co-relate not only to this current website that we have designed, but also to our future studies.
- It teaches us the new way of group learning, without meeting in personal but interacting in todays internet-based platform to work in a group.
- All course topics, User story Map, low fidelity model and high-fidelity model, helps us a lot towards the design of a website.
- We also get our hands familiar with USM and Adobe XD in this course. Which are totally new for us.
- The way of teaching and short time frame of the course makes us utilize our time in much more efficient way. So, time management is also the thing that we get our selves better on.

What could have been better?

The thing that we personally thing could have been better is

- The short span of this course makes it a little difficult for us to learn Adobe XD thoroughly. It would have been much easier if we would have got a little more time to learn this absolutely amazing new tool for prototyping a website.

Future work

- Adobe XD is a kind of software with lots of functionalities. It is kind of ocean, from which we have learned a little, so we would like to get our hands much more deeper into adobe XD and to master it.
- Other thing that we can work on is to make the website much more attractive and much more user-friendly by using all fascinating features available in adobe XD.
- As personally me and my teammate are so excited to work with RCE Sask, so that will be a great opportunity for us to use our current knowledge that we have gained into the betterment of such an amazing organization.
- As adobe xd is providing layouts for all types of electronic gadgets, so that will be a great task to design prototype for all other devices.

References:

- 1 Norman, D., The Design of Everyday Things, 2013, PP. 8-38
- 2 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gulf_of_evaluation, retrieved on the 16th June 2020
- 3 Soegaard, M., and Dam, F.R., The Glossary of Human Computer Interaction.
- 4 Gibbons, S., Empathy Mapping: The First step in Design Thinking