Emiliano López Maldonado: Emiliano´s journal.

Usability vs UX

The beginning of the course meant, for me, the discovery of a sea of new knowledge, concepts, techniques, approaches, work philosophies, etc. A "new world" opened up before me, and with it, new possibilities, of course. Of all the terms we reviewed, there were three that turned out to be the foundation of everything – or almost everything – these were: HCI (human-computer interaction), UX (user experience), and Usability. I remember that, upon hearing about these three, I could glimpse a sort of connection/relationship between them - in the literature I reviewed, they included each other and vice versa. In order to find the "common ground" among them, I had to be clear about what each one meant, so I concluded that:

HCI: Human-computer interaction (HCI) is a field of study focusing on the design of computer technology and, particularly, the interaction between humans (the users) and computers." (Interaction Design Foundation, 2016).

Usability: "Usability is a measure of how well a specific user in a specific context can use a product/design to achieve a defined goal effectively, efficiently, and satisfactorily." (Interaction Design Foundation, 2016).

UX: UX refers to how a interacts/experiences a product (software artifact).

The relationship between these three concepts became much more obvious to me when I gained a solid understanding of them. In my view, things work as follows: as software engineers, we want the user to enjoy a high-level experience, and a characteristic of this UX would be, precisely, usability. The tool that helps us meet this requirement/ideal is precisely HCI – as it provides us with a theoretical framework, set of techniques, approaches, etc. - which, in turn, encompasses the aspect of usability as the objective of the study of user interaction with the system.

During the development of the above reasoning, a question arose that particularly caught my attention, namely, ==what is the difference between usability and UX. The answer, in a few words: if we think of usability as a measurement taken from ease of use, that is, how usable our/the product is; UX – which measures the sentiment it generates in users – includes, not only usability, but also value, appearance, pleasure, etc.== To understand it better, I found it helpful to translate this idea to the teamwork I have with my colleagues. In our case, we are working on an APP that helps people with their finances. Thinking about usability, we would like that, ==when entering cards, to prevent errors, we provide the user with a drop-down list on the screen, listing which banks and which cards the application works with==; now, regarding the UX part, we feel that a feature like this would make the user feel more comfortable and confident.

When considering that feature, as a team, we couldn't help but think about what other features could be useful to us. ==One of the characteristics that resulted from this brainstorming was to add the rewards that banks offer to their users==. We believe that a function like this could add value to the application and, not only that, but also make customers feel like they are enjoying a complete application.

References

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