

What makes something usable?

One of the things I struggle in the HCI subject is the introduction to new terms, one of these was the “Usability”. At the beginning of my career I found a bit useless some non-functional requirements (this because of my inexperience or because I was very dumb). “Usability requirements? Why? Isn't it as simple as make a not very complex user interface?”.

After a few sessions I decide to learn what I was totally ignoring, and that brought me to the Handbook of Usability testing. The chapter I read was the first, “What makes something Usable?”, and It gave to me the idea of what is the principle idea of UCD. I like how the book explain in very common words what usability means, and how we deal with It in our daily work. If I need to give my opinion of something i did not like is that I feel that the chapter could be deeper in the meaning and the relevance and try to be less focus in “how you could have usability?”.

The most powerful idea the chapter gave to me is that the usability is something that you actually know that exist only because it is not in the app/website/system you are using; you will never see a user say: “hey, this app is very easy to use.”, but you have actually heard how annoying and frustrating a bad design could be.

Rubin, J., & Chisnell, D. (2008). What Makes Something Usable?. In *Handbook of Usability Testing* (2.^a ed., pp. 3–20). Indianapolis: Wiley Publishing. Indianapolis: Wiley Publishing.