

Content design and user research meetup

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Services
Week
2021

3 March



What one thing do you wish content designers knew about user research, or vice-versa?

2A59957

That users are better at letting you know how they search/navigate/read than our guesses do...!

I wish all content designers and UX researchers knew how best to work together - where do roles converge and diverge?

I wish content designers didn't think "more is better". Most people don't read, they skim for keywords. Jonathan Rath - UX R&D Manager

2A5997

How to work together better and share skills

Understanding the range of user needs and behaviours- not a one size fits all sometimes one word can make a big difference

How better to work together to improve content

I wish content designers knew that user research is something that should happen regularly - not just once and never again.

What one thing do you wish content designers knew about user research, or vice-versa?

I'm a content designer. I wish UR would not ask leading questions

I wish I knew more about "content at point of need" earlier - makes it much easier to explain to stakeholders / push back on requests when needed - UR

I'm a UR. I'd like ideas of how to share research in the most practical way for CDs

Where the boundaries are when working together - how not to tread on each other's toes!

Good content design usually needs time to revise, writing "live" doesn't always produce the best answer.

(Mgmt info analyst) What do both parties want to measure?

That when working together and having a good relationship it makes a great team and the work produced meets the users needs

I wish user researchers knew how important it is for content designers to know what language users actually use in real life when they're talking about the topic in question. (I'm a content designer)

importance of collaboration and sharing ideas- design team to get involved with the research element

What one thing do you wish content designers knew about user research, or vice-versa?

What we test on the research sessions isn't always about what the words are - but please pick up on typos

I wish user researchers knew we want to use their info, but the structures that allow us to keep in contact don't really exist

Understand that the journey is end-to-end, not just the bit we're testing.

URs need to know what content designers need from the research - content designers need to communicate this better

Understanding of the wider outcomes and the potential impact of poorly designed content and regression activity - Digital and ICT Auditor

Sometimes the best thing to do is not do primary research (UR)

I wish they knew to involve content designers from the start to understand why they're asking those questions and why they want to know the answers. Not just involve a content designer at the end, not just to tidy up text after.

Timeliness needs to be respected - it takes time for us to plan sessions, be patient. Don't throw in last minute extras - we need to plan sessions and not overwhelm our users with too much in one session.

I'm a user researcher - I wish that content designers knew that it's important to test with the right people - our real target audience and users!

What one thing do you wish content designers knew about user research, or vice-versa?

Where insight is required/wanted, and where it's overload/stepping on toes

We UR's work best collaboratively - meaning with you from planning to delivery :)

What do Content Designers need from User Researchers to make it easy for them to follow evidence and data?

That the effectiveness of copy on a prototype is difficult to accurately test in usability sessions

User centred content and identify usability

When best to ask each other for help and when we should be working together more closely and when it makes sense to work separately (but still feed in to each other).

I wish content designers knew that they need to first think about what their audiences actually want

How valuable user research can be when we (content designers) are pushing back with stakeholders

Content designers (CoDes), User researchers (UR), and Interaction designers (IxD) need to be tied at the hip (Ix D with UR responsibilities)

What one thing do you wish content designers knew about user research, or vice-versa?

Content designer

other

Hello, lovely people 

What do you do?



Housekeeping

- Please stay on mute
- Put questions in the Teams chat or in Menti
- Services Week code of conduct: bit.ly/SW21conduct



How it started

User research and content design meetup –
Birmingham, 1 March 2019

👉 Organised by the amazing Lisa Jeffery

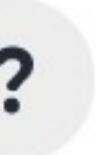


Today's speakers, clockwise from top-left: Imran Akhtar, Laura Yarrow, Damien Middleditch, Peter Smith, Lucy Sutton



Lightning talks

- 5–7 minute lightning talk
- Put your thoughts and ideas into Mentimeter
- 5 minute discussion





Imran Akhtar: content design is making my work better

Imran's talk: your thoughts and ideas

It's great to hear practitioners speak of the value of adjacent fields - I love this approach!

Yes! PDFs are definitely problematic

love seeing inclusive user research upfront - not as an after thought!

Benefits of using plain English in all aspects of project - this would be really useful in the product and business analysis areas too, especially when writing user stories!

CD and UR working together to get quality insights from good data :)

"I prevent harm to users" – so much this!

Wish we had better access to CD and they were in our team

Brilliant lightning talk, thanks Imran

Best CD and URs are those embedded with the objectives of your service

Imran's talk: your thoughts and ideas

Lovely to hear about how content design supports your role.
Do you see yet (I know it's a new role) how research
management and ops could support content design?

What did you find worked to make crits feel like a "safe
space" to collaborate?

Love the importance on inclusivity and accessibility to avoid
exclusion of cohorts.

Helpful talk. Very clear. Thanks, Imran :-)

Love the enthusiasm and appreciation for content design! I
couldn't do my job without my amazing user researchers :)

We are our own user researchers ...

Loved that talk. Really liked when Imran said 'influences
them to use the language of the user'.



Peter Smith: top task management during COVID

Peter's talk: your thoughts and ideas

Love Gerry!

Top tasks sounds like a great way to operationalise user needs

Can we have another talk on the in-page feedback tool? I'll be your first sign-up!

Is top tasks a mainstream framework in Canada? It's kind of avant-garde in the UK

This feels a lot like Research Operations which is exciting! I love seeing agile used in this way - release something to add value, but acknowledge it's not perfect and ask how to improve it.

Fantastic talk. Great to see data driven updates.

COVID has shown us that a more agile, continuous improvement approach to content design is essential - but how can we scale this approach in government? Any ideas on what you think the way forward is?

I used when I was working at Avon and Somerset Police for their intranet.

A really good insight about how continuous improvement can be a victim of overwhelm. Liked that last slide.

Peter's talk: your thoughts and ideas

Odd to hear "top tasks" described as "avant-garde" - we were really driven by it when revamping the Bristol City Council website back in 2014 or so!

Are there difficulties with rapid research if the team are less established - therefore unfamiliar with each others skillsets?





Laura Yarrow: team anthropology

Laura's talk: your thoughts and ideas

"Like a true anthropologist – immersion is key"

Researching your team – not micro-managing them

Is there a particular interview question you asked stakeholders that tended to yield significant insights into their needs, and how best to support them?

"Find the signal in the noise"

That sounds like a reaaaallly busy first couple of months!

Understanding the internal user need is so good to hear (with stakeholders) - so important for the end to end journey map

I'm in the first week of a new role and your phrase "Find a signal in the noise and not to add to that noise" really spoke to me! Sounds like you're approaching this really methodically and I'll be nicking these really great people-focussed actions.

Ecosystem mapping sounds so much better than doing an org chart!

'This is service design doing' by Marc Stickdorn – this is the book Laura mentioned



Laura's talk: your thoughts and ideas

Will you be sharing your slides? Some really good advice in here and not sure I can write notes fast enough!

Love the "Team Anthropology" concept and applying the UCD process to improving the team and not just the content or 'products'.

Could you talk about bit more about servant leadership, and how you've defined the service you offer your team? What do those services look like?

Great talk Laura! Can you repeat the name of the book that spoke about stakeholder management?

Really like the idea of a seeing your career as a user journey and 'designing' it :)

Understanding the past is so important to build empathy with users and the business - great to hear

A brilliant way to lead a team

Really insightful talk, Laura. Great practical takeaways

What were challenges to doing this remotely rather than a chat in the coffee shop etc?



Laura's talk: your thoughts and ideas

Love that Laura - 'What should I not change?'

Love this! Inclusive design at the team level 😊





Damien Middleditch: doing content crits

Damien's talk: your thoughts and ideas

it would be cool to see a longer form of this talk :)

When framing the problem, would you set a scope for what people should feedback on? For example, focus on content only, not design elements.

How do resolve conflict if it appears in a crit?

Love the idea of a standardised presentation. Some crits can often feel too polished and imposter syndrome starts to seep in..

Is there any sort of work or problem that isn't well suited to a crit?

How did crits get 'established' as a practice? i.e. thinking how you might introduce a crit practice to user research, we often ask for feedback but I like the focussed time for crit and also hearing the thinking behind feedback

Had there been any instances whereby an issue takes more than 60 seconds to explain? Is there a risk that we or they could miss things or does this hint that the issue needs breaking down further?

In the "getting feedback" section, one of the points was "do deflect questions" - why is this?



Lucy Sutton: let's crit a consent form

Let's crit a consent form

1. Problem
2. Context
3. Who are the users?
4. Challenges
5. What feedback to give
6. Scenario
7. Show the thing and give feedback



Read and
add
comments

Consent form on Miro

Link in the Teams chat.

Password is: u53rr353arch



Suggestions for the crit

8 questions
3 upvotes

Retro

- What you liked
- What you think could be better
- What you might take away

Retro – what's your feedback?

LOVED the lightning talks - so many great ideas to follow up on, lots of food for thought.

Really enjoyed the different speakers and as a UR seeing a live crit was really interesting and helpful!

Need to lockdown images on Miro!

Really loved the Mentimeter format. Easy to follow along and participate. Great lightning talks too!

Loved the use of menti - works really well!

Really effective and well planned use of Mentimeter. What a great tool this is.

Great signalling to additional resources and contacts to keep sharing the Content/UR love

Really enjoyed the demo of the crit - great to see this approach in action and feel how it works.

Great short, punchy talks. How do we hear more from each of the speakers? Fantastic afternoon. Thanks all for organising!

Retro – what's your feedback?

I think the lightning thoughts are super interesting - maybe more of them?

Really enjoyed the Crit! Also such a useful document to look over - relevant to UR and content designers.

first time ever experiencing a content crit - I really like this approach!

Let's do more of this! So worthwhile to collaborate and learn from each other and together :)

Really liked the range of speakers of the LTs

Do a quick on boarding for those unfamiliar with Miro if you're going to use it.

Loved the very practical crit overview and demo!

Great topics and lovely atmosphere. Be great if there was a way to get some contact details of the some of the other attendees (like you can in the real world :)

Liked the interaction opportunities and seeing what others do outside our org's bubble. Great talks!

Retro – what's your feedback?

Really great session! Laura's talk was brilliant and really inspiring. I'm new to a role and her very immersive and empathetic approach to understanding her team has given me lots to think about and actually adopt. Also definitely nicking Mentimeter!

A very interactive and productive session. Brilliant. Loving the apps.

You are all stars - thanks for a wonderful event. Really useful speakers and interactive format!

lightening talks from others, different perspectives, loved the crit enjoyed the interactive section- sharing ideas

The use of plain and simple language in all parts of a project - including internally within a team. Really important!

Fantastic lightning talks. Particularly enjoyed 'TEAM Anthropology'

Thank you for all the talks and for chairing this. Especially enjoyed the live crit - great opportunity to read insights and tips from people across gov!

Fantastic session! Loved the lightning talks and found the crit really insightful

Liked that we covered so much - short and sharpCrit provided real practical insights and learningMore than once a year event

Retro – what's your feedback?

Use comments rather than stickies in Miro

Great session. I enjoyed the different takes. And the crit was very interesting. Best practice and accessibility guidelines make content better for all.

Would love to hear more about how and where user researcher's and content designers have worked together on projects, what worked and what didn't

Lovely to attend a meetup with practitioners from different jurisdictions.

Short talks are fab - no chance for death by powerpoint

Really enjoyed but would like a comfort break halfway through so I don't have to miss anything!

Really liked the lightning talks as a quick intro to different ideas/topics! Content crit with Lucy was fab too - always learn something new.

Are we keeping this community going?

yes, do this again!

Retro – what's your feedback?

Maybe criting a few docs - spending 10-15 minutes to provide a flavour?

Great to hear from UR and Content Design. Would be interesting also to see how Interaction Design could merge in with this since they work closely a lot too

What a well-oiled machine! The crit in action was really valuable.

Like doing cross-gov crits - would be good to do more.

A break between each hour if only to stretch the old legs. Otherwise loved it!

Would gladly attend again!

4 is a really good amount!

Brilliant session, really well pulled together everyone. The range of subjects in the lightning talks was spot on.

Good number of Lightning Talks. Went well with the practical part.

Retro – what's your feedback?

More talks from different roles who work with content design and research?

Would be great to make it a regular (every 3 months?) event.

Mentimeter was great and really good facilitating!

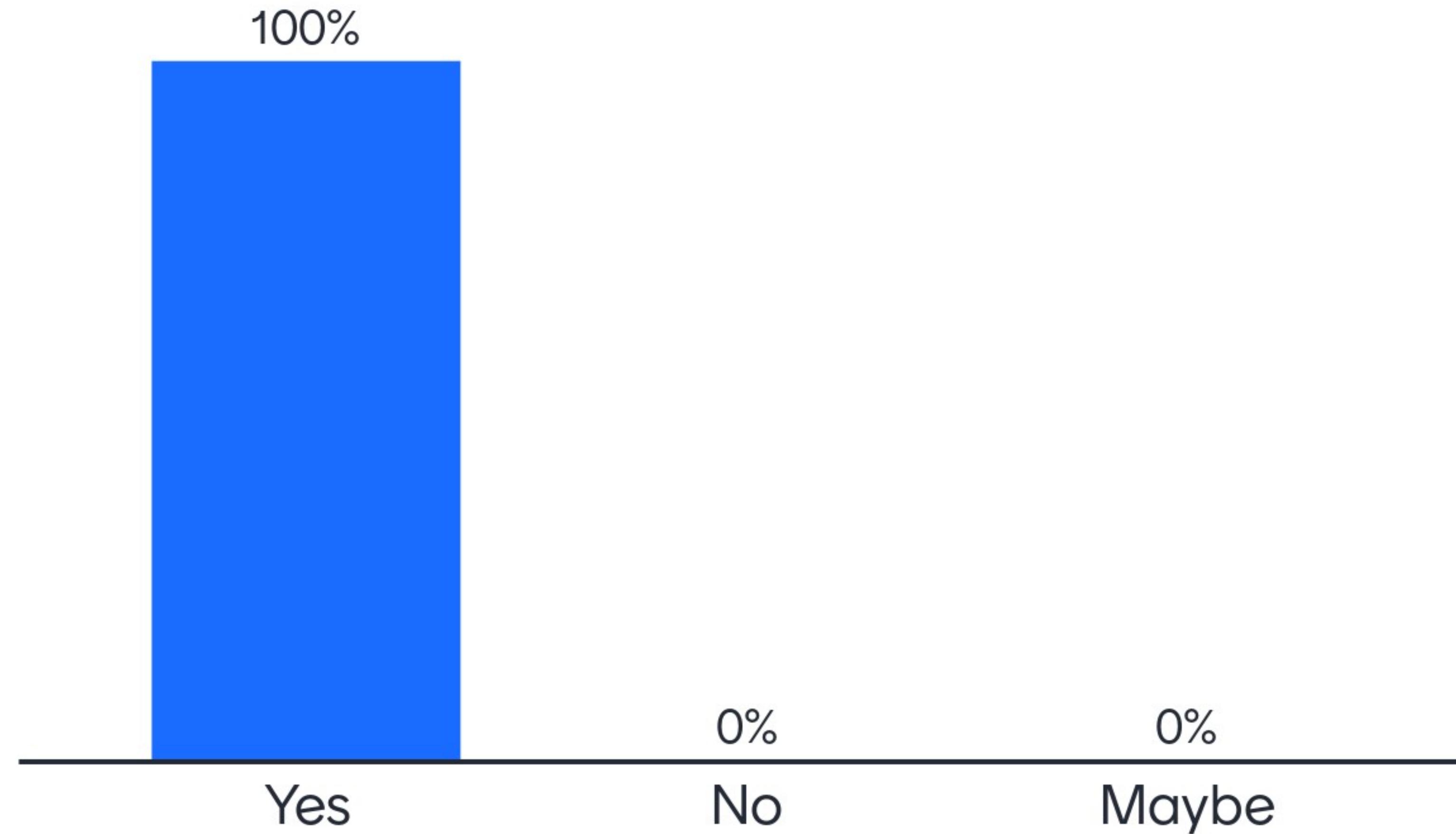
yes

Fantastic session. Liked the mix of talks, content crit. Love that the feedback / commenting was digital, it's nice and inclusive for those who are anxious about feeding back verbally.

Really enjoyed the session - thank you!



Shall we make this a regular thing?



Thank you 🙏

To our speakers: Imran Akhtar, Peter Smith, Laura Yarrow, Damien Middleditch, Lucy Sutton

To Dom Billington for saving the day

To everyone who helped: Tom Adams at DfE,
Matt Hall at Leeds City Council, Lisa Jeffery and
the Services Week crew at GDS, Simon Bramble
at DWP

To all of you lovely lot for coming!

Resources

We'll email you a link to a GitHub repository
after the session (probably tomorrow)

Bye  or stay for a chat

Thank you all so much for participating