

Preliminary research plan

Motivation

I developed an interest towards e-service development as more technology-enabled services started to arise. I'm curious by nature and started looking into the activities involved in creating these new services from ground up. I started looking into the companies (IT Houses) designing and developing these services. Coincidentally, I ended up in conversations with employees of these IT Houses and discovered an issue: often enough designers and coders aren't on the same page, feeling that they are not understood by the other. I started to think how this might affect the final service product delivered to a client. If internal, cross-functional collaboration, especially between designers and coders, isn't in shape, can it affect the quality of the developed e-service?

Research problem

The optimal type and amount of cross-functional communication during a project in an IT House isn't defined. These IT Houses sometimes conduct design and development in two separate silos, UI design is done upfront and developers use agile methods to do the actual development of the e-service. There seems to be a problem with insufficient communication in these IT Houses and at worst, this might affect the service offered to clients. There lacks an understanding of the fundamental reasons and consequences behind these communication discrepancies.

"How is sufficient cross-functional communication arranged during a project?"

Earlier research

There is numerous studies on User Interface Design, Service Design and Design Thinking etc., which focus on the creative aspects of e-service development. Also, a vast amount of research on software development or web development using agile methods.

The literature combining the two and focusing on the internal matters rather than external is very limited. There is however some research on combining UI Design and Agile.

Aims of the study

The aim is to find out how cross-functional communication/collaboration is arranged in Finnish IT Houses. I am especially interested in finding out if the design and development is still done in silos and how that might impact the quality of the created service.

Research methodology

A comprehensive literature review will define the key themes discussed in the thesis and go through earlier and relevant research on the topic.

Data for the research will be gathered through in-depth, semi-structured interviews with designers and coders from 3-5 Finnish IT Houses.

Structure of the thesis

Introduction, Literature review (E-services, Design, Development, Design+Development), Methodology, Data and Results, Conclusions