UxB: User Experience Synergies Across Borders

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Abstract

UPDATED—27 April 2017. Over time software design has been supported by different approaches. These approaches have evolved and become enriched both in their tasks and in the variety of possible techniques with which they can be applied. User Experience (UX) design is an approach dedicated to making projects highly satisfying for people and to increasing the profitability of a company. We propose the implementation of User Experience Synergies Across Borders (UxB), an open crowdsourcing platform to support the complete UX design process of a software project. UxB will offer a method to dynamically generate a set of products and services useful in different stages of UX design. UxB will provide access to products and services such as tools for prototyping and for creating storyboards, toolkits for usability and UX evaluation, products that can act as incentives for participants in usability studies, and experts in specific areas such as usability, UX, designers, doctors, psychologists, educators and students.

Author Keywords

HCI network; crowdsourcing; User Experience; collaboration; recommendation system.

ACM Classification Keywords

H.5.m. Information interfaces and presentation (e.g., HCI): Miscellaneous.

Introduction

User Experience (UX) design is a Human Computer Interaction (HCI) philosophy, which is responsible for creating products that meet the specific needs of its end users. UX aims to achieve the greatest satisfaction and the best possible user experience of a product. UX design may involve the participation of graphic designers, software developers, experts in specific areas and the target users of a product. UX design involves performing tasks such as designing information architecture [4], representing ideas through prototyping tools [1], performing heuristic evaluations [3], and applying focus group techniques and usability testing [2].

Usability testing is an HCI technique to evaluate a product by testing it on target users. This can be seen as a practice to verify the ability of a product to fulfill a specific purpose. Likewise this practice can determine if a product is easy to use and intuitive.

Recruiting representative subjects is part of the tasks of a usability evaluation. These subjects should be the end users of the application or have a profile very similar to the end users. For example, if the application will be used by a set of teachers, then the ideal would be to test the application with teachers. If the application will be available for use by doctors, then it would be ideal to test the application with doctors.

Platforms like UserTesting[1] and Optimal Workshop[2] offer tools to do these types of studies with users. Sometimes finding resources that support the UX design process becomes tedious. This is due to the lack of knowledge of available tools and the lack of a collaborative network of experts who like to participate in the development of technological projects.

Although much progress has been made in the HCI field, much remains to be done to promote projects for the development of UX. Meanwhile, efforts have been made to build UX laboratories in Latin America [5], but support and leadership are still required to make these laboratories a reality. Concrete proposals are needed to support the development of these UX laboratories.

We propose User Experience Synergies Across Borders (UxB), a platform that will manage the products and services necessary to support the complete UX design process of a project. UxB is also a job search engine or platform to provide income opportunities for those who seek them. UxB is a way to track specific projects of Open User Experience Lab (OUX) proposed in [5].

OuX Format

UxB offers services mainly for two types of users that we will call *entrepreneurs* and *suppliers.* With *entrepreneurs* we mean individuals and companies that need to improve the UX of their projects (commercial software applications or business ideas). With *suppliers* we refer to individuals and companies interested in

offering professional products and / or services to design the UX of *entrepreneurs'* projects.

The set of *entrepreneurs* is made up of individuals or companies that are at some stage in the development of a software project and wish to design or improve the UX of that project. Examples of software projects are those for education, medical use, entertainment, research, business and publishing such as spreadsheets, investments, point of sale systems, e-commerce, transportation, hosting, image editors, and word processors, among others.

The set of *suppliers* is made up of individuals who offer useful products or services for any of the stages of the UX design process of a project. With products we refer to applications for UX design. Examples of these products include prototyping tools, survey applications, journey map tools, group messaging and video conferencing applications, and physical or digital gift stores to compensate users during usability studies (music cards, books, electronic money, etc.). With services we refer to work hours offered by individuals such as usability experts, graphic designers, software developers, web developers, interface designers, prototype developers, people with a specific profile who want to participate by answering online surveys, participating in the usability studies or providing knowledge in a specific area. For example, specialists from different areas can participate during the UX design of a health project. These specialists may be physicians, psychologists, nutritionists, graphic designers, UX experts, writers, sociologists, and people with a similar profile to the end users of that health project.

Designing the UX of a Project

UxB will generate a network of collaboration with different *suppliers* both in person or online. Unlike employment websites like Ux jobs board[3] or UXswitch[4]; UxB can be used to hire a specific service (a designer, a psychologist, or a target user) or a product (a platform for prototyping, a survey software, or a gift shop to compensate users).

Using UxB, *suppliers* and *entrepreneurs* can view published information through data filters. For example, UxB will offer the *entrepreneur* a series of recommendations from *suppliers* that offer a product or service useful for the *entrepreneur's* project. These recommendations can be visualized according to a series of filters such as profile, type of product or service offered, costs of products and / or services offered, physical location, and rating assigned to *suppliers* by other *entrepreneurs*.

Open Invitation

UxB is a collaborative network to support the complete UX design process across borders. Further details of the UxB initiative will be presented at CHI 2017. Any feedback that might strengthen the UxB project is welcome.

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