



The editor as the user experience designer

A look at editing through the lens of software
development

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microsoft.com/mmmpc



OK let's talk about the elephant in the conference room

I work for Microsoft! Please don't yell at me...anymore

I can't fix your computer

I work for the US branch, even though I'm Australian

So I have to use US spelling. I know, I KNOW: it should be 'centre' and 'colour' and various other things (Nick Hudson don't be mad at me) but I might get into trouble if I change things now

If you see errors...

Don't tell me about them, I'm delicate

This is what I do

www.microsoft.com/mmpc

Editing

Writing

Web/ HTML design

SEO

JavaScript

Graphic design/ motion graphics

Social media

User research/ feedback analysis

Antivirus and antimalware software

Microsoft Security Essentials

Windows Defender



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Download Microsoft security software



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Explore Microsoft support options

Tech support phone scams

Know when to hang up the phone



Highlights



Download the latest Microsoft Security Intelligence Report (SIRv17)



Read more about how ransomware can lock your computer



Download the latest security updates from the Microsoft

Blogs

[Cleaning up misleading advertisements](#)
Tuesday, April 28, 2015 5:00 PM

[Social engineering tricks open the door to macro-malware attacks - how can we close it?](#)
Tuesday, April 28, 2015 8:00 AM

[MSRT April: Unskat, Saluchtra, Dexter and leEnablerCby](#)
Tuesday, April 14, 2015 9:00 AM

[View the blogs](#) →

Community issues

[WPKG virus](#)
Scanning, Detecting, and Removing Threats

[Potential Malware Blue screen with dialog box on top cannot remove either Help would be nice](#)
Scanning, Detecting, and Removing Threats

[Windows Defender will not update](#)
Updating Virus and Spyware Definitions

[View the forums](#) →

What is this thing
called UXD

What I'm going to talk about

The basics of user experience design

How UXD and software development are similar to editing

Some tactics and techniques you can use from the UXD discipline in the editing discipline

Some examples of bad and good UXD, and bad and good editing

UXD 101

It's not always related to software development/design

It's bigger than that – UXD is involved in everything from light switches and coffee pots to space shuttles and clothes

It focuses on the user – they're the *most important* factor in the entire process

The process is the entire cycle involved in making something – from idea, to art design, functional design, prototyping, manufacturing

Key point: UXD obsesses about the user, about making their life *easier*

The user is the end-person – the final customer, the person who will use and see the product

Why you should care

Unobtrusive, intuitive, clean, good

It focuses on the user; it's all about them...

But they shouldn't *know* it's all about them

The hallmark of good UXD (like good editing) is that the user (or reader) *never realises it happened*

Elegance, concision, clarity, intuitive, unobtrusive, clean, clear – all mean the same thing in this context

People notice when things go wrong

They tend not to notice (or make as big a stink) when things go right

Great UX fails of history



Obtrusive: The designer told the user what to do, rather than finding out what the user wants to do



Confusing: There's a disconnect between what is said/shown and what is actually meant

Where UXD == UXE

Jargon = Jargon

UX term	Editing term
End user/user	Reader
Experience	Reading text
Interface	Words, sentences, paragraphs, structural layout, grammar
Iterating/iteration	Revising/revision
Wireframe/mockups/designs	Drafts
User experience design	User experience editing (yes, I just made that up)

UXD or UXE?

When you design for a user experience, you look at:

How the user uses the product

What they are wanting to achieve

What impedes them

How the interface affects what they are trying to do

How easy it is for them to do what they want to do

How intuitive is the product

When you edit for user experience, you look at:

How the reader uses the document

What information they are wanting to get

What impedes them

How the layout/structure of the document affects how they can get the information

How easy it is for them to get the information they want (also think indexing, ToCs, glossaries...)

How intuitive it is to find the information (again, indexing, deep linking/cross-referencing, etc.)

UXD methodologies

Waterfall

Each stage is completed before the next

You can't start making or prototyping the product until the design/mockup is 100% done

Idea



Teams work in 'silo'

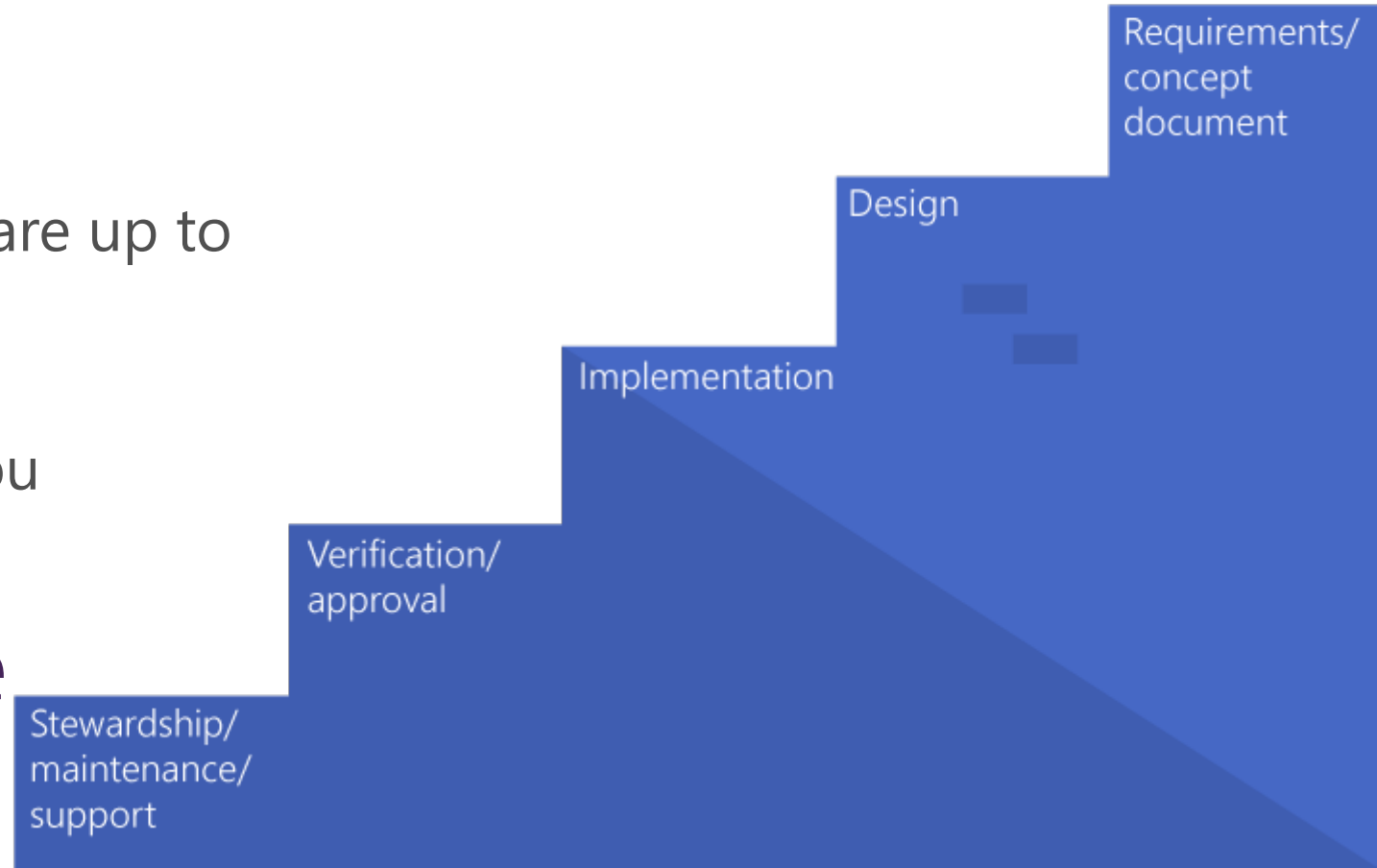
They don't know what other teams are up to

Changes are linear

Change A has to be made before you can make change B

Once it's done, it's done

You can't go back and change it



Agile

Everyone has a finger in every pie

Every team knows at least a little about what the other teams are doing

Everything is done in parallel

Ideally, this means prototyping, design, writing, research are all done at the same time

Changes are iterative

You tweak the product as you go, you constantly build new prototypes, testing everything right then and there

Feedback from the user is vital

You constantly gather feedback from your users, and use that to change things on the fly

What is UXE then?

User experience editing obsesses about the reader

Not your client, not your company, your customer, your DTP, or your manager

The reader is the most important person

Everything you do, the grammar you choose, the structure you create, the words you use, they all impact directly upon the reader

An editor must consider the reader

How is the reader likely to use the document? Or the information contained therein?

The reader is your Judge Dredd (judge, jury, and executioner)

Are you seeing a theme here?

Your user experience editing toolkit

UXD toolkit

Here's some important ones:

Feedback

A/B tests

Hallway polls

Qualitative and quantitative data (using it, understanding it, playing with it)

Mockups, designs, doodle sketches

Iterations/constant revisions and reworks

Scrums (ha!)

Feedback

Not a tool, but the point of the tools

Most tools seek to get feedback

Feedback drives your work

It tells you what's working and what isn't

It's objective – to you

You can't determine if X will help your reader – only your reader (or someone like them) can tell you that

Three guesses why it's important...

It comes from the reader, which means it's about the reader, which means you're doing it for the reader

A/B tests

Give options

Which do you prefer: this (A) or that (B)?

I'm not sure if I've interpreted this correctly, is it A or B?

I've done a couple of ways this table could look – which makes sense, A or B?

Don't be complex

Different options should only change one or two things, not everything at once

Don't overdo it

It's called 'A/B' for a reason – give two, maybe three options at most

Use it sparingly, don't do it for every question you have

Yes

Title goes here

First option with purple



Title goes here

Second option with blue



No

A - Title like this

First option with purple, serifed font,
smiling lady, transparent box, indented
text, different titles



B – The Title Can Also Look Like This

- Second option with blue, different title, different font, different image, bullet text, solid box, different margins

Hallway polls

Yo Anne, what do you think about this?

Ask someone else

All the rules about finding the right users can be ignored

But only for this tool – because you just want a quick answer right then and there

You can't be trusted

Remember, you want to get objective (to you) viewpoints

Qualitative and quantitative data

Quantitative wants to know 'how much'

Quantitative tells you *if* there is a problem

Qualitative wants to know 'why'

Qualitative tells you *what* the problem is

They are different

Understand – before you even begin collecting responses – whether you are gathering qualitative or quantitative data

Work out which one you want by asking yourself 'Do I need to know if this right? Or do I need to know how to fix it?'

Usually, quantitative comes first, and it prompts you to seek qualitative data

Mockups

Related to A/B tests

They give you the ability to make the test

They aren't only used in A/B tests

You can have way more than just two for a problem

But don't go overboard

Mockups show iterations, A/B tests show options

Mockups can be interactive, in the sense that you can sit down with the reader and make changes on the fly

Mockups are about getting a feel or idea for how something should look, A/B tests are about confirming hypotheses

Iterations

Iterate or perish

You're all already iterating, it's called revising

Show your iterations

For UXE, show your revisions as they happen...show a page to demonstrate how the rest of the chapter will look; show the style for three footnotes to demonstrate how all of them will work

Iterations are permeable and must change

An iteration is quick...you show a sample, you get the feedback, you make the change, you show the sample again

You have to be *agile* – you have to be quick and seek responses and, most importantly, you have to make those changes *immediately*

Scrums

Not really UXE but a good workflow practise

(remember, US spelling...)

Small, brief, frequent meetings

More like a chat than a formal meeting; 3 minutes max per person

Today I...tomorrow I'm going to...I need help with...

Be specific with what you did, what you're going to, and the problems you've encountered

Don't grandstand – it might feel like everyone wants to do that at first (we are humans after all), but stick to your guns – be honest and simple

But be agile

Any of these tools are just that – tools

They aren't rules

Think they won't work?

Try them, modify them, play around with them

There *are* two rules though...

Obsess about your reader, and *only* your reader

Seek feedback from your reader (or someone who might be like your reader)

A caveat

You might get resistance

Especially when trying to implement an agile process, or scrums

Keep at it, convince the others around you why it works...ask them to at least try things differently

And if all that fails

Obsess about your reader on the inside, where it matters the most

If you start with the view that the reason you are editing is to make a reader happy, then you will edit to make the reader happy, unconsciously or consciously

Resources

UX and agile

UX for lean startups – Laura Klein

Lean UX – Jeff Gothelf

The web

HCI – a little bit related to UX, but essentially looking at how design impacts upon how users use something, start with <http://people.ischool.berkeley.edu/~hearst/irbook/10/node3.html>

Facebook [Editor's Association of Earth](#) discussion group and [backroom](#) for those more embarrassing questions

Web search – it might be obvious but it can't be stressed enough – the internet is full of people with ideas and knowledge, use it (and them)!

Reddit

<http://www.reddit.com/r/writing/> and it's parent index which is VERY useful for determining what subreddits might be worth your time <http://www.reddit.com/r/writinghub/>

<http://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/> (be cautious)

