

About the Importance of UX in Open Source Projects

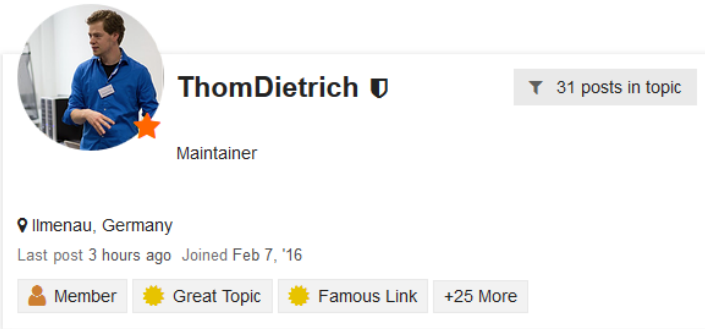
On the example of the openHAB software development project


Thomas Dietrich


Thomas Dietrich

Professional Life




- Research fellow at TU Ilmenau (Germany), PhD student
- HW/SW systems co-design, evaluation and optimization



ThomDietrich  31 posts in topic

 Maintainer

Ilmenau, Germany
Last post 3 hours ago · Joined Feb 7, '16

 Member  Great Topic  Famous Link +25 More



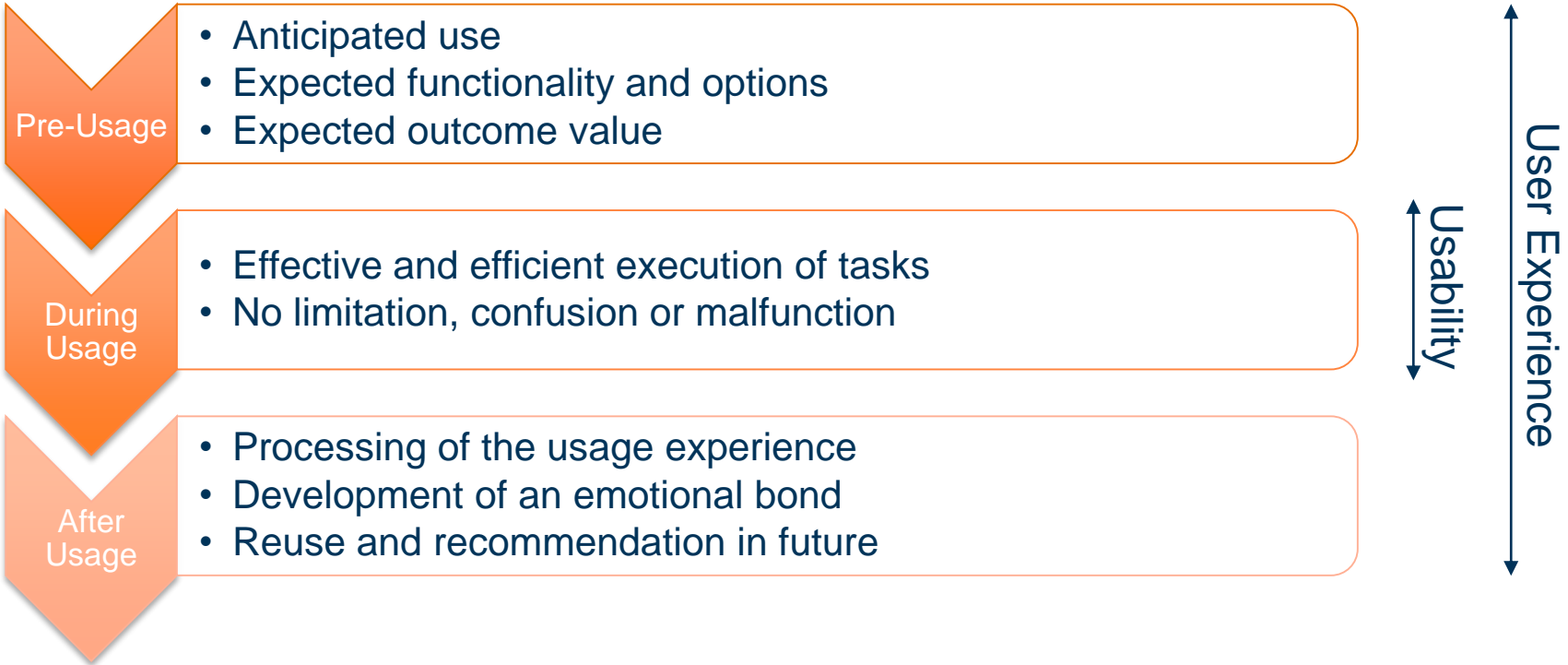
 Thomas Dietrich
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Joined on 23 Nov 2012

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Spare-time Endeavors

- Home automation and tinkering enthusiast
- openHAB community moderator
openHABian maintainer
openHAB documentation lead

User Experience (UX)

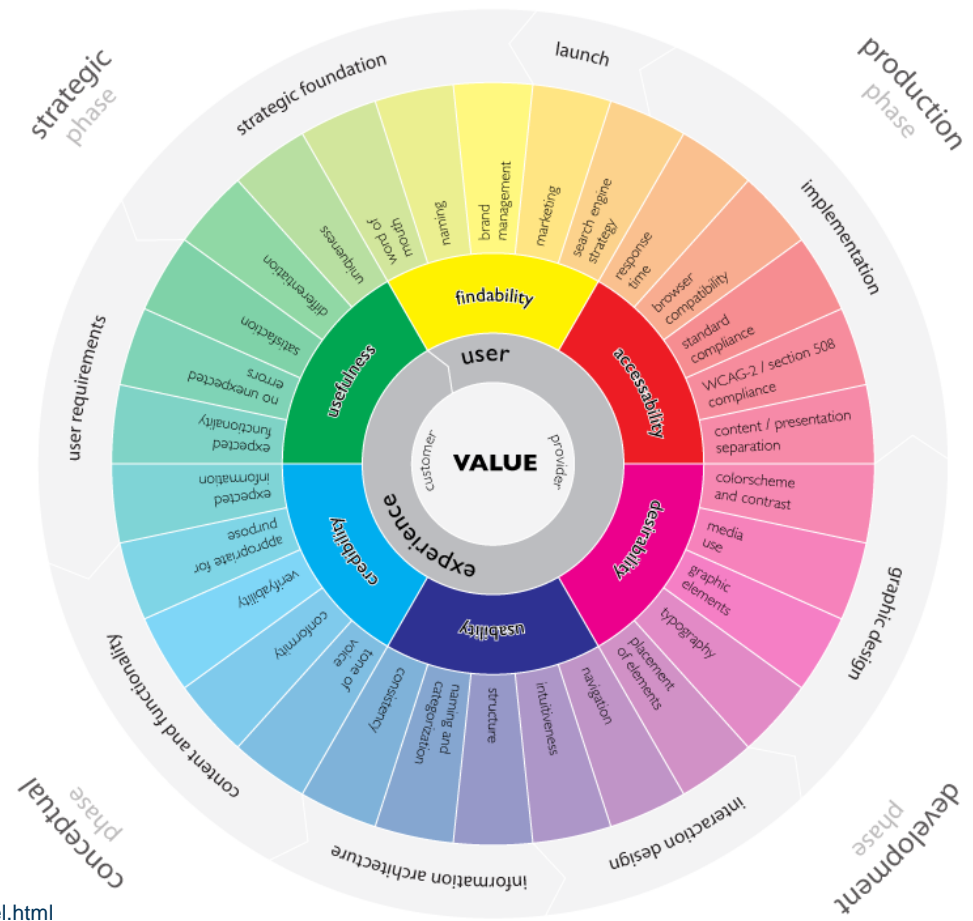


User Experience

- Value is the goal for developers and users alike
- Value is accomplished through positive user experience
- User experience depends on many soft factors

Quick UX evaluation:

- Can I use it? (Usability)
- Should I use it? (Usefulness)
- Do I want to use it? (Desirability)



Source: <https://userexperienceproject.blogspot.de/2007/04/user-experience-wheel.html>

Open Source Projects

Compare OSI “The Open Source Definition”:

- Free Access and Redistribution
- Open and peaceful collaboration

Developer Expectation

- Access to source code
- Issue reporting and code contribution
- Opportunity to engage, influence and learn from collaboration

Importance of UX

- “*The age of the consumer*” – products seen as servant, rather than tool
- The influence of Mobile: Intuitive slick apps and services for everyone
- User expectation is constantly rising
- User experience is key to success in all product sizes

Importance of UX in Open Source Projects

Is open source software free from that shift?

- For developer-facing software the answer *may* be yes
- For user-facing software?

Developer Expectation

- Access to source code
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Non-Tech-Savvy User Expectation

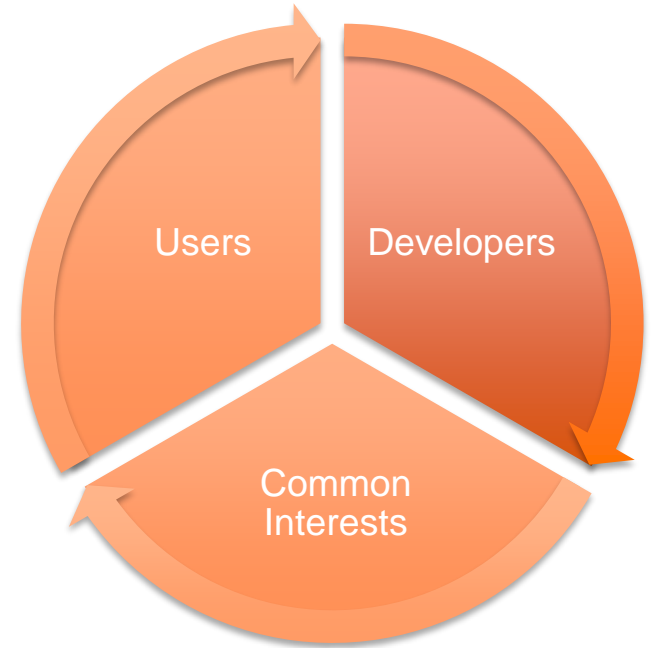
- ...
- Free of charge

No. Open source software is/should not be seen differently by non-tech-savvy users.

Importance of UX in Open Source Projects

Should we care?

- Developers profit from feedback by users
- Users profit from improvements by developers
- Satisfied users attract new users
- Open source projects profit from active contributors
- Cooperate interests are often user-oriented



Software development with UX in mind



Source: <https://guycookson.com/2015/06/26/design-vs-user-experience>

Source: unknown

“The Cathedral and the Bazaar” - Eric Raymond, 1997

- Open source project is a babbling bazaar of differing agendas and approaches

Software development with UX in mind

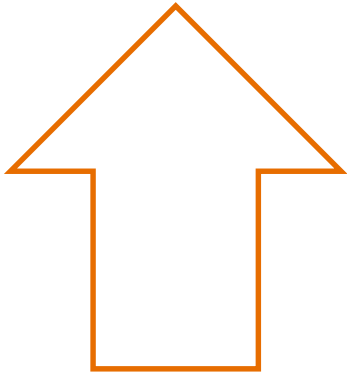
“The product should target people whom [you] consider to be clueless newbies” – Peter Trudelle, 2002

Artifacts of UX for open source software



openHAB UX evaluation

Until Q3 2017



- Stable and reliable core operation – Kudos @developers
- Constant increase in device support – Kudos @devs & @martinvw
- VS Code editor opportunity – Kudos @kubawolanin
- Installation simplified and improved
- Documentation maturing
- Community reaches professional default
 - Tutorials & Examples section popular
- External perception increasing – Kudos to many

- Documentation versioning missing
- Partly confusing graphical UIs
- Inconsistent graphical UIs
- Inconsistent logging (resp. feedback/monitoring)
- Gap between textual and graphical configuration



Agile Manifesto: “Working software
over comprehensive documentation”

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Thanks for having me!

Thomas Dietrich