Rich experience knowledge of end-users

The development of a research method that enables Philips to obtain and leverage rich insights on the experience of its end-users in the early value creating stages of the product development process.

At the moment knowledge about the end-users experience in this stage is obtained by means of interviews and observations. Next to explicit and observable knowledge that is obtained through these methods, the experience of an end-user is also determined by less tangible aspects such as aspirations, values, fears, memories, dreams, wishes and feelings. This type of knowledge can be obtained by means of generative research techniques. This graduation research has investigated existing generative methods that could serve as input for developing the method for Philips. This study has indicated that the method that is most appropriately to support Philips’ current development process is contextmapping.

THE ADJUSTED CONTEXTMAPPING METHOD

The main request within Philips was to make the contextmapping method more time efficient, meanwhile maintaining the qualities of the method. For the adjusted method, the first three (obtainment) steps have remained almost equal to the conventional method. The first step supports the preparations for a proper contextmapping study. The second steps aims to sensitise participating end-users that attend the consequential generative session of step three. The main adjustments in comparison to the conventional method are made in the last (leveraging) steps. Especially the fourth step, when the data of the sessions is supposed to be analysed differs from the conventional analysis. In the adjusted method the members of the project team will execute the analysis of the data themselves, in oppose to (end-) user researchers. This enables the method to become more time efficient as the consequent sharing step of the conventional contextmapping method has become redundant. An online tool has been developed, during this graduation project, to support the members of the project team in this (see images on the right). Next to that the tool enables them to present and discuss the rich experience knowledge (obtained individually) with each other and translate this shared knowledge into concepts during a group meeting. To streamline the method extensively with the process of Philips, this last conceptualisation step has been merged with a step that currently already exists in the process of Philips, called the Insight Generation Workshop.

Also a CookBook has been developed during this graduation project, serving as a manual for Philips. This CookBook provides guidelines per step of the method to support a proper and time-efficient execution of the adjusted contextmapping method. The adjusted contextmapping method and supporting CookBook and online tool have been evaluated by means of a case study, interviews and feedback questionnaires.

MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The main finding of the case study was that the application of the adjusted contextmapping method, in the early value creating stages of product development processes within Philips, leads to more various and consumer centred platforms, when compared to the conventional Insight Generation Workshop. Full involvement of the project team during the analysis enhances the engagement towards the project and the empathy towards end-users.

When improved, the supporting online tool contributes to a proper and efficient execution of the adjusted contextmapping method within Philips. The website enhances the empathy towards the end-users and engagement towards the project of the project team members in comparison to a research method. The website also enhances the alignment of knowledge amongst the members of the project team, as it supports them to remember the story behind the visuals and quotes (because selections of artefacts and quotes of participants from the session are better captured with this tool). However as a result of analysing the data by using the website, the members of the project team were less capable to switch over to ideation as they experienced difficulties to detach from the analysis and immersion.

Philips should further develop the online tool to provide guidance during the analyses of the obtained data. Once improved, a pilot test with this new website (were sufficient incubation time is provided) should investigate whether the inspiration for ideation of the members can be enhanced.

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