User Involvement and Feedback

When creating an application, the user interface should be on the one hand as user friendly as possible; on the other hand, the product should be tailored to the users' needs. We recommend you to follow the requirements mentioned below:

Involve key users in the specification, design and acceptance of the application.

To start the creation process of your application, make sure you involve your key users as **from the beginning in the product development process**.

Define who your key users are, and consult them in the specification phase of your product. Observe how they use similar applications. In case of new services: observe how they interact with related non-digital products (paper, professional caregiver, medical instruments, artefacts, etc.), what kind of problems/ expectations/ needs they have.

It is important to observe your key user in his/her context. Often, this leads to different and even more enriched insights than just asking what your user needs/wants.

Next, try to involve your end user as much as possible **during the product development process**. This means also consulting them in the design and acceptance phase (see below: evaluation of your product). When doing so, the user will be in the middle of your product development lifecycle. When working in a user-centred design way, your product will be more tailored to your real users' needs and expectations, which will lead to more effective and efficient products with more satisfied users.

To keep your user on top of mind in the user-centred design process, it can be helpful to create a persona. A persona(s) is a fictive but concrete presentation of your key user(s). Personas are not stereotypes; they are based on real user characteristics, user behaviours and goals, habits, etc. coming from user observations in a real context.

Focus on the primary user task(s) of your target audience.

A multidisciplinary product development team can have lots of nice ideas. When having all those ideas translated into features in the user interface, it might be too much for your user. By the overload of features in the user interface, your product might become less usable, less satisfying for you user because he/she doesn't know where to start when using the application.

Therefore, make sure that the application design is focused on the primary user task(s) of your target audience. Focus on the primary feature(s) and create a great, intuitive interface for those (few) features. Keep in mind: less is more.

Secondary information or features can be designed, but probably they shouldn't be available in a prominent way in the user interface. It is no problem to hide options and features that are less used by the user and make them accessible via an additional click, swipe, etc.

Evaluate early versions of the application with a sample of real users of your target audience.

In the first guideline, it is stated to involve your end user as much as possible in the product development lifecycle. This means not only in the specification phase, but also during the design and acceptance phase.

When designing your application, make sure you start very early with (paper) prototypes to sketch your ideas. When visualising how the user interface will behave, it will become more transparent for the whole team what the end result should be, expectations can be set better, communication within the team is easier, etc. because everyone is using the same visualisation when discussing next steps (e.g. development).

It is important to not only use these prototypes for internal use, but to use them also to evaluate your design ideas in an early stage of the design process with real end-users.

Evaluating your user interface with real end-users is something that should be done in an iterative way. No large-scale studies are necessary. By involving **5 real (!) end-users** of your target audience (5 users in normal circumstances, depending on your target audience), and when giving them real user tasks to explore the interface of your application will result in a lot of useful user feedback (up to 85% of the usability problems can be observed).

This can be done in an early stage of your design phase: on paper prototypes, static screens or simulated interactivity prototypes. Next, user tests can be organised when the application becomes more mature or within the ready to go-to-market phase. The iterative part of user tests is an important element to consider. Three iterations of user testing sessions with each times 5 users is preferred upon one iteration of user testing sessions with 15 users at once.

Use the collected user feedback to improve your application.

Analyse in-depth the collected user feedback, obtained via user testing sessions or other user-centred design techniques and use this feedback to improve your application.

Use this user feedback to brainstorm with your team on how to create a more intuitive, usable interface that really meets the user needs and expectations. These improvements can be re-evaluated in a next iteration of user testing sessions. By doing so, your user interface will become more user-friendly, ease to start with and intuitive; which means satisfied users.