From engagement to involvement

with staff at the University of Surrey

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#universityofsurrey
The situation

External forces
» move to new VLE user interface
» need to consolidate online staff support and guidance

Opportunity to
» reflect on what we are using our VLE for
» review and improve staff and student experience
» develop our co-design method
The task

Our objectives

» redesign our VLE to coincide with the move to a new user interface

» create central web site for staff support and guidance

» use co-design as the means to achieve both
What is co-design?

“a method for working closely with end users and stakeholders to explore new ideas and develop solutions that meet their needs”

JISC (2017)

In co-design, users are

» central not peripheral to the process
» seen as experts
» partners in the design process
» Involved not just engaged
The benefits and challenges of co-design

Potential benefits …
» increased buy-in and ownership
» greater user involvement can lead to
  • a faster development process
  • better end products
  • more meaningful and productive long-term relationships

Potential challenges …
» risk of increased
  • dependencies
  • complexity
» managing
  • relations
  • expectations
Our co-design process

- discovery activities
- design activities
- present designs for feedback & discussion

Workshop

- Create wireframes
- Wireframes used as basis for evaluation activities in workshop 2

- Revise wireframes
- Wireframes used as basis for developing new home pages

- Develop home pages

- Workshop

Staff and students
- give feedback on final designs
- Involved in user testing

- Staff and students
Design workshop stages

Design workshops have three stages...

Stage 1: discovery
» Activities to help participants access and express their experience

Stage 2: prioritise
» Prioritisation activities – preparing participants to design

Stage 3: design
» Design activities – which produce a tangible output

Throughout …
» involve everyone
» facilitate not direct
Example co-design activities

‘List your top features’

**brief**

» list features for the website and categorise them as must-have or would-like-to have

**aims**

» prioritisation / focus on key elements. Prepare the ground for subsequent design challenge ...

‘Design your ideal website’

**brief**

» design a home page & sub page, drawing on features listed from previous activity

**aims**

» create representation that can act as design brief for TEL development team
Results and reflections

» overall positive feedback from co-designers
» group work, discussions and perspectives of others valued by participants
» has produced tangible and authentic results
» has strengthened relationships between TEL and staff
» participants felt rushed at times
» difficult to remain dispassionate facilitators
Recommendations

» set clear expectations
  • level of involvement
  • time and effort involved
  • what is possible

» allow for time but be strict with time

» be results focussed

» Wherever possible involve participants from conception

» Focus on the user experience, not the user interface
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