

DESIGN LED INNOVATION

THE CREATIVE PROCESS AT D-LABS

DATUM

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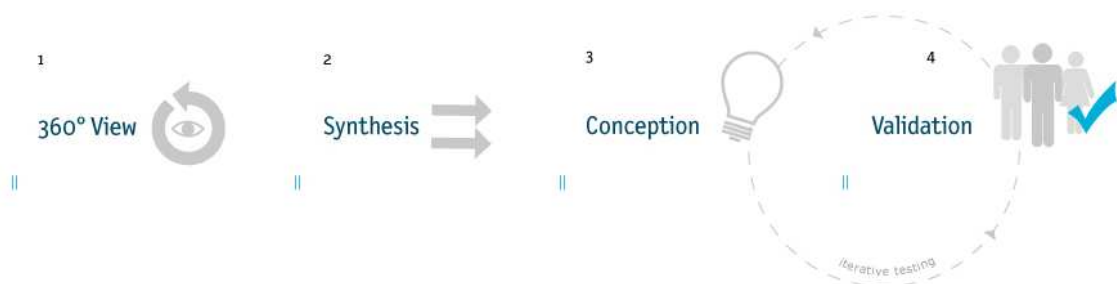
1. INTERDISZIPLINARITY

The first principle of the Design Led Innovation process at D-LABS lies within its interdisciplinary approach. We make sure that people with diverse backgrounds put all their knowledge, skills and empathy together to find solutions that are explicitly multi-centric.

Depending on the actual project-phase one of the three main departments of D-LABS takes the lead: User Researchers, Interaction Designers or Prototype Developers.

To ensure consistency of information throughout the project at least one member of each group is always present in each phase of the project. Like this we keep information flowing throughout the departments and get input from all perspectives at any time

2. THE FOUR STEPS



2.1 360° VIEW

Get to know the user of your product and gain a competitive advantage. In the first phase of the project focus is set on the end user. In qualitative interviews we try to observe actual and find out latent user needs. Important factors in this phase are time and space. Don't rely on quickly answered questionnaires and don't displace people from the environment in which they use the product. Complementary to this we investigate the true business needs of our customers, analyse the competitors and best practise on the market and take a close look on technical requirements and constraints.

2.2 SYTHESIS

Let user needs create your guideline for meaningful priorities! In intensive storytelling sessions we distil the user's needs, expectations and constraints from the interviews. Combined with the market analysis and technical research we come then to precise requirements for the product. Additionally applied innovation techniques like analogy studies or mind-

maps feed the ideation process and help to find fresh and exciting solutions.

2.3 CONCEPTION

In the third phase our designers truly take over the lead. With the innovative fuel collected and refined in the previous steps we make our ways from first sketches through wireframes and scenarios to a final interaction concept. Still keeping the user and his needs in focus we apply appropriate interface patterns or invent new modes of man computer communication where need be. Hand in hand with the developing of the work- and information-flow we figure out the aesthetic concept for the later look and feel. Coming from early scribbles and moodboards we end up with fully pixel perfect screen designs in the end. During the whole process the interdisciplinary team still works together to get the best of all departments combined into one product.

In the conception phase we strongly believe in rapid prototyping and early failures. Going back to the user, testing our solutions, redefining and altering is truly the essence of work in this part of the process.

2.4 VALIDATION

Test early, test often – assures success. As much as we believe that we have to go out to the user who really gets his hand on the product to get initial requirements, we believe that the user should evaluate our work. As mentioned above we consider testing as necessary throughout the whole phase of conception and design.

That is why we constantly iterate between step three and four until we end up with solutions that really serve the users.

3. USER CENTERED INNOVATION

We are very anxious to combine the power of fresh and exiting ideas with a user center design approach. The focus in the DLI-Process is set on iterative finding of ideas leading to one or more prototypes that afterwards can be evaluated, whereas in an UCD-process the emphasis is drawn on one particular prototype that is tested and improved. We always try to get the broadest picture possible and generate ideas as much as we can. That is why the interdisciplinary team-structure is so essential for our process.

With the DLI approach we try to combine user centric design and innovative ideation. The goal is to overcome standards that are here just for the standards sake without loosing the focus for the one we work for: the user.