

The Design Untangled Podcast

Episode: DU002 – User-Centered Human Service Design thinking

Hosts: Chris Mears and Carla Lindarte

July 8, 2019

[Intro Music]

[00:17] **Chris:** Hello everyone and welcome to Episode 2 of Design Untangled with myself, Chris Mears and my colleague Carla Lindarte.

[00:24] **Carla:** Hello everyone. I hope you enjoy the wonderful music that Chris has used without my permission to the introduction of this podcast.

[00:35] **Chris:** Well, I think we all know that's bullshit because I have got a Google doc sitting in front of me with your stamp of approval on that. So don't jump on the bandwagon.

[00:46] **Carla:** Oh, people complained about the music because it's not very nice. It's very aggressive. It's like [inaudible], but then you don't want to change it, do you?

[00:57] **Chris:** No, well I paid \$9 for it, so it's staying now.

[01:01] **Carla:** Okay, well, sorry everyone, I had nothing to do with it. He basically manipulated me to agree to that terrible, terrible music. So thank you everyone who gave us feedback over Twitter and the slack group like UX Review has for people who started in the UX kind of world. So thank you very much for everyone who provided feedback. It was interesting that people thought you are American. I wonder if you just have an American personality online.

[01:34] **Chris:** I think just an American hair style maybe. It wasn't clear if they thought that you were British as well though.

01:41] **Carla:** No. Yeah, it was really funny because you have very strong British accent and people didn't realize you were British. Look at that!!

[01:49] **Chris:** Okay. It's not much I can do about that, unfortunately.

[01:53] **Carla:** Maybe you are just too confident online. You sound very American. American people are very confident. It's a good thing.

[01:58] **Chris:** So I'm good at marketing basically is what you're saying.

[02:01] **Carla:** Yes, it's basically what I'm saying.

[02:01] **Chris:** Yeah, so thanks everyone for the feedback you left. We had actually better and more positive comments than I was expecting. I thought we were going to get destroyed, but people were fairly nice, I thought. They thought we were a bit rambly at points in the last episode. Just probably fair, but it was covering essentially nothing. So hopefully these future episodes will be a bit more focused, but i don't think rambly is such a bad thing anyway. It's like a kind of scenic drive. You get to the kind of end point eventually, but you get to see some nice service stations on the way. Some road kill. It's a nice way to spend the day.

[02:43] **Carla:** Well, I hope we actually get to the end point. That's the whole purpose of this podcast, isn't it? To at least give people something a little bit useful. So yeah, talking about useful information today...da-da-da-dah.... we are going to talk about all these different terminology that people use these days to refer to very, very, very similar things. So I've got a description of all these different terminology. So there you go. So first one, human-centered design. Second one, user-centered design. Oh, that sounds very similar. And then we have another one, system thinking and experience design and then design thinking. That sounds very similar, doesn't it?

[03:33] **Chris:** That's so much thinking in one sentence

[03:35] **Carla:** And so much design, and then the last one, service design. So let's just play a little game, Chris. I'm going to start reading some definitions that actually make some sense, and then you tell me what you think about the actual definitions. So these are definitions that I found on various sources, obviously including the Internet.

[03:56] **Chris:** What's this source you speak of?

[04:01] **Carla:** Mainly Google. Have you heard about Google? But anyway, so I'm going to start with human-centered design versus user-centered design. So HCD and UCD are the overarching framework of processes that integrate a broad set of practices around understanding the needs, wants and limitations of end users. What do you think?

[04:29] **Chris:** So what's the difference between a human and a user?

[04:35] **Carla:** I think it's the same thing. Oh, that's what I'm saying. People use HCD and UCD as different things, but I think there's just the same thing. It's just basically understanding the needs of a user. This user could be your customer. It could be your internal users, and within internal users you have multiple types of internal users depending on their organization, but it's basically the same thing, don't you think?

[05:02] **Chris:** Sounds pretty similar to me.

[05:04] **If:** Yeah, exactly. So if people talk about HCD and UCD, it is pretty much the same thing. It's just a framework and methodologies basically to understand user needs. Right! You ready for the next one?

[05:20] **Chris:** Yeah! Hit me!

[05:20] **Carla:** Systems thinking. A lot of people are using that now, actually. I've been in meetings in the past couple of weeks and a few people just drop it. Oh, we need to have some systems thinking. So what is it? So systems thinking is an approach that proceeds digital and focuses on their inter.... Oh my God... I can't even read... interrelationships of all connected parts to understand the underlying structure. I don't know what that actually meant, but the last sentence was a bit clear. Design problems cannot be solved in isolation but as a part of one big system. I think that makes sense.

[05:58] **Chris:** Yeah. And they are using system to mean organization here or service, do we think?

[06:05] **Carla:** I think it's all kind of parties and pops that actually play a part in the thinking, so it's basically similar to when we talk about customer experience or service design, right? It's just looking at how that particular problem or design problem that you are looking at relates to different parts of the big system. So if you translate this into a website redesign, so if you redesign the website of a bank and then you know that the majority of call to actions are going to be taking people to the call center, so you need to think about what the impact of that particular call to action has into the overall system. That's how I understand it. Then in the context of people using it is when they thinking about, okay, we need to have some system thinking about this is when we're trying to, for example, avoid silos. So when you're looking at a web team versus an app team versus a call center team and people not talking to each other, so it's more like, let's just apply some system thinking about this.

[07:17] **Chris:** So does that mean just setting up a meeting, basically? Is that what systems thinking is?

[07:24] **Carla:** They could mean that, actually. That's a very good point. All right. I hope that makes sense. The next one that I actually have in my title - Experience Design. So what do you think Experience Design is before I read the description, Chris?

[07:43] **Chris:** I think you are in the business of selling experiences in terms of how you deliver them on multiple channels, I'm going to say. So not just digitally, but it could be on any channel and you're designing the whole experience for the user.

[07:59] **Carla:** Wow. That's very good. Spot on. So this is what the definition says. A method focused on the quality of user touchpoints interactions rather than the wider service. Although often use interchangeably, unlike Pew UX, it can be expanded to cover all customer touchpoints. So as you said, that's true, so if we call ourselves an Experience Designer is basically looking at not just one particular touchpoint or channel as you call it, it's looking at the whole thing. So it's very similar to systems thinking in principle, isn't it?

[08:38] **Chris:** Sounds pretty much like exactly the same thing to me.

[08:42] **Carla:** Exactly. I realize that people create a new theory. They write initially a blog and then they write a book and then they make lots of money, so then it becomes a thing and people start talking about it, but if you go deeper into the meaning of it, it is very similar to what you've been doing for the past 10 years, isn't it?

[09:04] **Chris:** Yeah, definitely. So we're just rebranding the same ideas. Take him on the conference circuit, becoming a UX guru.

[09:10] **Carla:** Yeah. Yeah. UX-er like you.

[09:14] **Chris:** Exactly!

[09:14] **Carla:** Got to go to the next one that I know has been used quite a lot, so design thinking. Design thinking is a methodology of discover, design, prototype, test and repeat that sounds like iteration, a highly collaborative human-centered and iterative approach to problem seeking and problem solving. It focuses on empathy, [unclear; 9:37] and experimentation to meet peoples' needs and achieve a solution that is technologically feasible and is strategically viable. So it basically describes the whole of what agencies will call their design approach or their approach to designing new services or products or whatever. So it starts from the understanding, discovery what are the key user needs, how we translate that into some principles, how we then translate that into actual design, and let's just prototype our ideas, let's test them and let's keep refining. People use that quite a lot in agile methodologies when they talk about it. It's just let's test and learn and keep repeating, and learning from what you've been doing, so very similar, isn't it, to what we are used to. So you called yourself a service designer?

[10:43] **Chris:** I have called myself that in the past

[10:45] **Carla:** So tell me, what's your definition of service design?

[10:49] **Chris:** I think it is getting involved in designing how the organization needs to work in order to deliver an experience that you're designing. So it's not just thinking

about, I guess in the current marketplace, UX might be kind of defined as looking at digital channels only. This would be kind of multiple touchpoints, good old touchpoints, so in store, online, app, whatever it is, but also thinking about how you deliver that in terms of sort of fulfilment and operations, marketing, all that sort of stuff.

[11:24] **Carla:** Exactly right. So the definition I've got here is a set of principles or methods used to create services that meet the needs of people. In short, it is basically a [unclear;] believer methodology is a combinatorial method that brings together strategy, research, business, consulting technology and creative to create a new service value. This has obviously been written by an agency that provides that service, but as you said, it's kind of the front and the back end of every digital or non-digital service. Obviously, these days every business should be a digital business in the sense of should have some kind of digital presence. So that's why digital is very important. But this has been also done by consultancies in the past. You know, if you're going to change this particular product and proposition, how your organization should be restructured? What skills do you need? As you said, how are you going to fulfil that? How operationally that's going to improve the way you work? So, that's basically what service design in a nutshell is.

[12:37] **Chris:** Yeah. It's worth mentioning as well that this isn't just a kind of private sector thing. So service design comes into play quite a lot in the public sector as well. So thinking about government services and there you do have a lot of kind of roots in and different points at which the citizen in this case would interact with you, so you've got call centers. You've got maybe stuff like job centers. Could be citizens' advice bureau. You've got leaflets. You still got marketing, all kinds of stuff and you really can't design in isolation from that. So a lot of the work that's gone on from GDS and a lot of the government departments here in the UK is thinking about that service proposition as a whole. So although a lot of the work is kind of digitizing existing paper forms, you need to understand how the organization is going to work to deliver that streamlined experience as well.

[13:39] **Carla:** So service design - people use it quite a lot. I also think is a new way of UXers before we call ourselves UXers then, oh, we want to be a bit more strategic or get paid a little bit more. So let's just go ourselves Experience designers, and now actually everything is the service. They're not products anymore. So we are service designers, but at the end of the day, in the core, it's just basically understanding user needs from users from outside and inside the organization, and understanding the end-to-end experience and just being able to improve it or make it better. That's it. So there is a lot of jargon out there and we kind of have to know what it means so we sound very intelligent in meetings. You always want to sound intelligent, but also so you keep yourself up to date with what's going on, but don't get too stressed about calling yourself one thing or the other. Actually believe it or not, one person I'd met once who is apparently one of the service design gurus in this country, he's said to me, never hire anyone who calls themselves a service designer.

[14:54] **Chris:** Wow. That's me out of a job then!

[14:55] **Carla:** Exactly, because apparently a service designer doesn't exist as a role. You are just a service design facilitator, which basically means let's just get everyone together, multidisciplinary teams working together to solve real life business and user problems, and that's what service design should be. I also understand that in service design, there's a lot of things to use like service design blueprints and all these different types of deliverables. I actually recently got one of the creative directors for the company I worked for to recommend this very good website called leanservicecreation.com. I can put it in the podcast notes so you can have a look at it. It's got a handbook that describes a lot of quick tools and things that you can apply to for example, do some concept testing or ideation or insight gathering, so there's quite like very quick and dirty templates that you can download and use if you are new to service design or want to do something in that area. So I'm going to share with you guys in the podcast notes and also paste it on our Twitter feed, if that's good.

[16:17] **Chris:** Yeah. Sounds great. So just touching on service blueprints and stuff like that thing, I think there's differing views on how much value they actually add to the

process. I think they can be okay as a thing to have on the wall and talk around, just so the team is kind of focused on what you're discussing, against in a similar way to kind of pure UX as you might understand it. There are a bunch of deliverables which you might expect to a service designer to produce. That's not to say that they're the only way you can do what you need to do, or even that they're the right thing to do, just because some service designer on a blog says do a service blueprint.

[17:01] **Carla:** Yeah. I also think that the value of these deliverables, any deliverable, is not necessarily the output. I think it's the process, especially for service design blueprints, because it's the process that you go through to engage people from different parts of the organization to build it together, rather than I've seen companies and projects where we go away and do lots of work, do service blueprints and then we kind of presented back to the client and they weren't even part of it and that is a total mistake, and the whole thing has to be collaborative efforts cause that's the whole point of service design. So it's not about the deliverable as Chris says, it is about the process and what you're trying to get out of it.

[17:49] **Chris:** What's interesting about service design is I think maybe it's a kind of facet of UX becoming more mature in organizations as well. So people recognize maybe the value that it added on the digital channels where it might originally have been focused. I think the UXers in those organizations have maybe moved up the ranks a little bit and had more exposure to the other areas of the business and they've been able to apply their design thinking to solve different challenges in those different areas.

[18:22] **Carla:** That is true. Basically we are getting older and we're getting more mature and we need to start talking business. That means more data driven decisions, more operational efficiencies, and more all that kind of business consulting stuff that we didn't like before. Now we have to start really talking about that a bit more when we go into the conversation. So yes, exciting times for UX designers or well, whatever you want to call them. You can call it anything - Design thinking designer, system thinking designer.

[19:02] **Chris:** As long as it's got thinking and design and maybe it's human or user, any order will do, it doesn't really matter.

[19:10] **Carla:** Well, so I think that's it for me for today. Do you have anything else to add, Chris? Do you think that was actually helpful?

[19:20] **Chris:** Well, I guess we'll find out if people would tweet us feedback on our Twitter, which is @designuntangled. So we welcome your thoughts. As before, we're a new podcast so if you can leave any reviews, good or bad on iTunes, that helps us out, or Apple podcasts as it's now known.

[19:39] **Carla:** Yeah. So as Chris said, any feedback is good feedback and even if it's again related to the horrible music or Chris's accent or maybe my accent. No one's even said anything about my accent, which is very strong. So please, please send in lots of feedback. We always there to also listen to your questions. If you have anything, any suggestion of topic or anything you want to hear from us, please let us know. That's the only way we can get better.

[20:09] **Chris:** It is. Okay. All right. So see you next episode.

[20:14] **Carla:** Okay. See you, everyone. Adios.