

Course C06

Usability and Product Development: An introductory usability course for management

3 units

Instructor: Jon Meads, Usability Architects, Inc.

Benefits:

Attendees will obtain a better understanding of why usability engineering is needed – why something that seems so simple is so difficult to achieve in practice.

They will obtain an understanding what the various usability engineering techniques and methods provide when they are appropriate, and how to integrate them into the development process (both standard and Agile).

Finally they will understand the strategic value of usability engineering, where to find the ROI for it, and how to include the usability engineering function in their organization.

Usability is deceptively simple as a concept but, as one can see by the lack of usability in so many Web sites and software systems, it is demonstrably hard to achieve in practice. Even major companies such as Microsoft, which employs numerous usability professionals, have problems getting usability right.

Usability is something that all managers agree is essential to the success of interactive products, systems, or web sites. Many managers, especially those with no formal training in usability, will tend to focus on testing when incorporating usability engineering efforts in their product development plans. While usability testing is essential, it is not fundamental in terms of product development and for improving product usability or the user experience. Achieving the full benefits that usability engineering provides requires that appropriate techniques and practices be integrated into the full product development process and into the corporate development culture.

To the surprise of some, proper integration of usability engineering into the development process can often shorten product development time and reduce development costs while producing a better product. Overall, the ROI for usability is estimated at 10 to 100 times investment. This seminar will explain what is needed to make that come true.

This is a course on product development – not one on user interface guidelines or on the “how to” of usability engineering methods and techniques. It is targeted towards mid-level managers and product/project managers with no formal usability training. This course will describe how to integrate usability engineering into both standard development processes and the Agile Development Process.

Origins:

This course has been presented at the STC 2005 Conference, the CHI 2006 Conference, and as summer course for the Oregon Graduate Institute and is being revised and improved on with each presentation.

Features:

- * Explains reason and needs for usability engineering;
- * Description of the usability engineering lifecycle and its relationship to the product development lifecycle;
- * Reviews the major usability engineering techniques, their value and use;
- * Explains how usability engineering can be justified by ROI and strategic advantage.

Intended Audience:

Managers and project leaders with responsibility for developing usable products who have little or no knowledge of usability engineering techniques and methods.

Presentation Style:

A lecture presentation interspersed with attendee discussion

Instructor's Background:

Jon Meads is a principal consultant with Usability Architects, Inc. and has over 40 years experience in developing interactive and usable systems.

For more information see : www.usability architects.com