

PDP | Start of M1.2

Jeroen Rood

Current Development

The assessment verdict of my M11 semester was a PC. The condition for passing that semester was that I needed to work on two things. For of all, I need to work on my presentation skills. I was advised to attend a presentation or communication workshop. The criticism I gained was that I was seemed slow in communicating.

Next to that, I need to broaden my understanding with the field of expertise that I aim for in my vision. This is a combination of interaction design, user experience, service design and web/interface design.

This field of expertise is focused on various competency areas. The most prominent focus is on User Focus and Perspective and Socio-cultural Awareness. But other competencies like Design and Research Processes, Ideas and Concepts, Form and Senses, Teamwork and Communication support my work, as a basic skill set.

Choice of learning activities

Choosing “Pics or It Didn’t Happen”

Because my main fields of interest are service design and interaction design. This project allows for designing with multimedia, which is in line with my preference for visual interaction design. As I previously did a module about peripheral interaction design, and I have some fresh knowledge gained from a module of current semester about persuasive technology, I’d like to combine both into developing a tool that enables more freedom in capturing memories, which prevents experiencing the moment “through the scope of the capturing device”. The user must be able to be part of the moment, instead of only capturing it (the photographer looks at everything through the lens of the camera, instead of looking around with his/her own eyes).

Choosing “Location-based Tools for Neighborhood Transformation”

This module comprises designing a tool for probing in a local context: a neighborhood. There are various perspectives involved in this module: the inhabitants’, the government’s and designers’. This multi-stakeholder setting is a good opportunity to get more familiar with multi-stakeholder design processes. In addition, I did not perform cultural probing before, with which I can get familiar by attending this module.

Choosing “Persuasive Technology” [by the time of the last update, this module was already attended]

The module Persuasive Technology sparked my interest as I would like to not only design for cognition and convenience (usability and experience), but also for stimulation and persuasion. This module is more theoretical, and it serves as an introduction to the subject Persuasive Technology. I think this module can extend my ability to design for specific purposes by adding design for persuasion.

Choosing “Designing for the User Experience”

This module is about learning more on the theory and methodology of user experience. Through this module, I can deepen my understanding of designing for the user experience.

Goals

1. Improve stakeholder involvement in my projects

Last semester proved to be not very rich in client involvement. It showed me that I need to take more initiative in involving stakeholders (clients, users, third parties). Only this way I get more experienced in leading a design process that involves multiple stakeholders. At this moment, it is not my strongest point, since I do not open up the process or involve stakeholders very actively.

I can relate to this, why it is not my strongest point. With my web design projects, I work on freelance basis. Delivering products to my clients with feedback and proposals being the only communication. This does not involve stakeholders as I described above. I can try to involve my clients more, getting them to think about ways how they want to communicate with their customers/audiences. In addition, I can help them in using multiple channels to reach their customers.

Currently, I identify two steps to take:

- Within my web design business, I should involve my clients some more into the design process. Currently, they are involved by asking input throughout the process, but I could also involve them into the idea generation by getting to know their plans better. This way, I can make the website fit their strategy better. I can even propose them new strategies. The focus would still lie on the web design, but it would become a more integrated part of my clients' identity and strategy. This way, I can extend my skillset, in order to become a more competent interaction designer.
- I chose the module "Location-based solution for neighborhood transformation" to work with multiple stakeholders on a small project of one week. I need to reflect on this what I learned from this.

Furthermore, I should try to find out how I can improve stakeholder involvement through design process methods. What I can think of so far is **co-creation**, **co-reflection**, **simply engaging discussion**, and **communicating plans and ideas**, possibly with delegating work. This is where the competencies **Ideas and Concepts**, **Teamwork**, **Design and Research Processes** and **Communication** are important.

2. Get a broader understanding within the field of expertise from my vision

So far, I did not have any delay in studying. Throughout my Bachelor, I was struggling to come up with a vision that reflected both my personal ambitions, and my understanding of the field I am aiming for. To become a more seasoned interaction designer, I need to have a stronger vision by the time I finish my Master. I think this will make me more secure about my skills and knowledge as a designer. But I also need to have more elaborate knowledge related to interaction design and service design, as I want to become skillful interaction/service designer. That is why I need to broaden my understanding within the field of expertise that I aim for in my vision. What I think of, is the following:

- Reflect on my understanding with my coach
- Keep a journal to emphasize what inspires me, and to reflect on how it changes or strengthens my vision. I made a Facebook page for that:
<https://www.facebook.com/JeroenRoodDesign>
- Watch TED-talks of relevant subjects, to keep up-to-date with my knowledge
- If possible, visit conferences, lectures or events.

Given the PC verdict from this semester, working on my vision was a condition. I have to fulfill this condition within this semester, which is a limited time span. I found events like FITC Amsterdam and UX Camp NL, but this requires me to discard university modules that I chose. In addition, some interesting events I found are not even taking place in the time span of this semester. So I have to keep up-to-date through TED talks. Reflecting with my coach helps in steering my vision into the right direction. I need to keep an eye out for events I can attend. It is another way of sharing and obtaining knowledge from the right field.

3. Improve my presentation skills

I want to improve my presentation skills. This is what I want to improve:

1. I want to get to know how to engage the audience with my story.
2. I want to have a stronger grip on coming across convincingly and confident. Right now, it happens coincidentally.
3. I want to improve my understanding of presenting concisely: what should be communicated in which format? What format is appropriate for which occasion/subject?
4. I want to improve my preparation for a presentation. Right now, I am not consistent in preparing my presentations (some are badly prepared, others well prepared)

These steps should be taken to improve my presentation skills:

- Attending a workshop on communication skills
- Practice pitching, taking all the opportunities to pitch
- Recording my own pitches, and analyze them to find out what I can improve.
- Analyze good TED talks in how these presentations/pitches/lectures are so good. I should “extract” the elements of the presentation that make it so good. This way, I learn how to construct a presentation properly to engage my audience, and to convey the story effectively. This should be the main focus of this analysis.

Throughout the semester, my coach got a negative impression on my presentation skills. It was caused by several factors:

- Bad preparation
- Somewhat lacking presentation skills
- Negative feeling / insecure feeling about the project

These factors enforced one another, leading to bad presentations, including the presentation through Skype with my assessor (she was in China back then). This led to a negative impression on my presentation skills, and that's why I think I should improve my presentation skills. But good presentation skills also weigh in when being the connecting factor between various disciplines in a big technology company, which relates to my skills in **Communication**. So it definitely would pay off if I invest on these skills.