CPUX – A Serious (and Usable?) European Attempt at Certifying UX Professionals

Rolf Molich, DialogDesign

- Education: MSc in Software Engineering, 1974
- Invented the heuristic evaluation method in 1990 with Jakob Nielsen
- Comparative Usability Evaluation (CUE) studies 1998 - ...
- UXPA-I Lifetime Achievement Award 2014 for the CUE-studies
- Passionate about UX certification: www.uxqb.org
  Vice-President of UXQB
If the users can't use it, it doesn't work

-- Susan Dray
Usability professionals must set a good example by making usable stuff

CPUX Certification Overview

Three levels are currently available:
- CPUX-F Foundation level
- CPUX-UR User Requirements Engineering
- CPUX-UT Usability Testing and Evaluation

For each level:
- Curriculum and Glossary
- Public test questions
- Certification procedure
CPUX Certification Overview

► More than 3,000 people certified – mostly in Germany, England, Switzerland, Austria, Denmark and Norway.
► Thirty-two Recognized Training Providers, who pay a yearly fee for being RTPs

Advanced Level Certifications

• The CPUX-F certificate qualifies you for taking any advanced level certification like CPUX-UT and CPUX-UR.

  CPUX-F
  Foundation level
  
  CPUX-UT
  Usability Testing
  
  CPUX-UR
  User Requirements Engineering
  
  CPUX-IIP
  Interaction specification, IA and Prototyping

• The CPUX-F certificate qualifies you to train CPUX-F students. Certification requires a Recognized Training Provider (RTP) license, which costs 1.500€ per year.
Fame
Wealth
Honor

Why certification?

NONSENSE

Why certification?

Become a
UX Expert
(in 3 * 3 days)
Why certification?

Proof of eventually having had something to do with the topic

Why certification?

Am I doing it right?
An important step towards a common language

Why certification?

Give people who care a chance to filter out UX-vooodooists

Why certification?
Why Certification?

Because training without test is no proof that you actually learned something.

CPUX Certification

- Based on international ISO standards – not on personal opinions
- Training:
  - Intensive courses by independent providers – no monopoly;
  - Self-study – no training required.
- Certification by independent party – not by training provider
- Transparent: Curricula and sample test questions freely available
- Internationally Recognized
  - German UPA;
  - UXPA-UK;
  - UX Danmark;
  - UXPA Switzerland;
  - UX Pro Austria.
CPUX-F Foundation Level - Key Topics

- The human-centred design process
- Definitions, concepts and guidelines
- Understanding and specifying the context of use
- Specifying the user requirements
- Producing design solutions
- Usability tests
- Usability inspections and user surveys

Agile development; usability maturity
Usability; user experience; accessibility
Interview; persona; scenario; user journey map
User need; user requirement
Use scenario; storyboard; prototype; heuristic
Usability test structure; usability test report
Heuristic evaluation; questionnaires

Which one of the following best describes the primary purpose of personas?

A. Personas are used to gather contextual information relating to user needs without interfering with users' work
B. Personas are used to recruit usability test participants
C. Personas are not real people; they are realistic representations of users, constructed from empirically determined data, for example from observations or interviews
D. Personas are required to generate as-is scenarios, user needs and use scenarios
E. Personas are an efficient way of communicating important information about users gathered during observation and interviews to interested stakeholders
F. A persona is a description of a fictitious but realistic user and what they intend to do when using an interactive system
## CPUX-UR Advanced Level - Key Topics

- **Introduction to context of use analysis**
- **Plan context of use analyses**
- **Gather and document context of use information**
- **Identify user needs in context of use information**
- **Derive and structure user requirements from user needs**
- **Consolidate user requirements**
- **Cooperation between user requirements engineers and other roles / disciplines**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements vs. solutions; types of req's</th>
<th>Rationale, goals, approach for COU analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contextual interview; observation; task model</td>
<td>User need; user want; informational need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qual and quant requirements; task model</td>
<td>Kano scheme; prioritization; product roadmap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role model</td>
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</tbody>
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## CPUX-UT Advanced Level - Key Topics

- **Overview of usability evaluation**
- **Prepare usability test**
- **Conduct usability test sessions**
- **Communicate findings**
- **Quantitative usability test**
- **Variants of usability test**
- **Ethical rules for usability test**
- **Inspection**
- **User survey**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Usability maturity; evaluation quality; agile evaluation</th>
<th>Test plan; test script; recruiting test participants; pilot test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Test tasks; briefing; pre- &amp; post-session interview; moderation</td>
<td>Analysis of findings; selling findings; test report; KJ-method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qual &amp; quant differences; confidence intervals; # participants</td>
<td>A/B testing; remote &amp; unmoderated testing; RITE; eye tracking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The need for ethical rules; important ethical rules</td>
<td>The steps of an inspection; heuristic evaluation; heuristics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The human-centred survey process; questionnaires; SUS</td>
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</table>
### Common Language - Body of Knowledge

**Example: Usability Test Taxonomy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prepare for the Usability Test</th>
<th>Conduct the Usability Test Sessions</th>
<th>Report the Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write a usability test plan</td>
<td>Briefing: &quot;We are not testing you!&quot; Pre-session interview Solve usability test tasks Post-session interview</td>
<td>Write the usability test report Communicate the usability findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write the usability test script &gt; Include usability test tasks Recruit test participants</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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**UXPA Boston 2018: A Serious European Attempt at Certifying UX Professionals**

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UXQB – User eXperience Qualification Board

Sole purpose:

- Certification of UX Professionals
- Development and maintenance of the UXQB Curricula
UXQB - User eXperience Qualification Board

- Does not sell consultancy
- Does not sell training
- Does not certify people

- Creates, maintains and publishes curricula
- Develops test questions
- Recognizes training providers
- Checks the quality of trainings

How Does the UXQB Work?

UXQB UX Qualification Board

- Trains
- Recognizes

RTP Recognized Training Provider

- Pays
- Certifies
- Recognizes

RCB Recognized UXQB Certification Body

- Pays
- Accredits
- Pays

Big beautiful wall
Sample Certification Questions

Which two of the following tasks can you carry out in order to understand the context of use?

A. Usability test with users
B. Observe users
C. Interview users
D. Create prototype
E. Create storyboard
F. Present the new concept to the user
What is the Third Activity in the HCD-Process – that is, the Activity following Analysis?

A. Observe and interview users
B. Create the first prototype
C. Specify the user requirements
D. Create design solutions that match the context of use
E. Carry out the first usability test
F. Create personas and scenarios

What is the Fifth Activity in the HCD-Process – after Planning, Analysis, Requirements and Design?

A. Release the system
B. Ask users for their opinion about the system
C. Present the system to management for approval
D. Adapt the user requirements to the design
E. Create personas and scenarios
F. Evaluate the design against user requirements
The human-centred software development cycle

- **PLAN THE HUMAN-CENTERED DESIGN PROCESS**
- **ANALYSIS:** UNDERSTAND AND SPECIFY THE CONTEXT OF USE
  - **SPECIFY THE USER REQUIREMENTS**
  - **PRODUCE DESIGN SOLUTIONS TO MEET USER REQUIREMENTS**
  - **EVALUATE THE DESIGNS AGAINST USER REQUIREMENTS**
- **DESIGN SOLUTION MEETS USER REQUIREMENTS**

What is missing in this figure?
Which two of the following describe characteristics of a discount usability test?

A. No moderator
B. Moderator, note-taker, communicator and administrator roles are handled by one person
C. Limit the test to 5 test participants
D. Limit the test to 1 or 2 test participants
E. Use of a discount usability lab
F. No incentives
Summary and Conclusion

Challenges

► Finding volunteers who will invest considerable amounts of time in the effort
  ➢ Writing and editing or revising a curriculum easily takes 500+ hours
► Writing test questions is easy, but getting test questions right easily takes 6 or more intensive reviews
Benefits for YOU – usability professional or stakeholder

► Newbie in the UX area: Knowing how to do it right
► Professional:
  ➢ Remain current: Latest thinking, good practice;
  ➢ Show that you care about your professional knowledge;
  ➢ Objective measure of skill level;
  ➢ Common terminology, concepts and procedures based on international standards reviewed by independent specialists;
  ➢ Lots of good, free stuff: Curricula (terse), checklists, sample uTest report.
► Stakeholder:
  ➢ Knowing the basic terms and approaches;
  ➢ Being able to answer “Do you speak usability?” affirmatively

→ Support of Career Advancement and Increased Earnings

Benefits for Employers

► Common terminology, concepts and procedures based on international standards reviewed by independent specialists
► Bidding advantage
► Professional development opportunities for employees
► Increased competence level of employees
► Higher credibility with customers
► Improved risk management

→ ROI - Quality and Productivity Increase
Benefits for Training Providers

- Certification program recognized by professional organizations in the UK and in Europe
- Curriculum, glossary, sample test questions freely available

Other considerations:
- Trainers must have the certificate for which they train
- Training materials available (for a fee)
- Training providers pay a yearly license fee of 1,500€ irrespective of the number of people they train

Arguments Against Certification

- Costs time and money: For example, training course $1,300, certification $350
- A 2-3 day training course plus certification will not make you an expert
- “Only an evaluation of the portfolio of a candidate says something about their qualifications”
- “UX Certification may be useful for specific skills, such as interview, prototyping and usability test. It doesn’t work for creative skills”
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Shameless promotion

The UXQB is looking for people or organizations who are interested in promoting CPUX certification in the US
Another shameless promotion

Get CPUX-F certified tomorrow for $220 including a great lunch. Crash-Course in Boston, 9am to 3.30 pm
Eventbrite, search CPUX Boston

Summary

- **Transparent**: Curricula, test questions publicly available
- **Open** to any qualified training provider
- **Recognized** by major professional UX organizations: G-UPA, UXPA-UK, UXPA Switzerland, UX Danmark
- Certification carried out by **independent third parties**; our trainers don’t know the test questions

Three UX certifications are currently available:

- **CPUX-F**  Foundation level
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- **CPUX-UT**  Usability Testing and Evaluation
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Speaker: Rolf Molich, molich@dialogdesign.dk – Voting system: Shakespeak.com