Interactive Iterative Storyboarding

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Abstract
Storyboarding is a common technique in any multimedia application development, demonstrating system interfaces and contexts of use. Despite its recognized benefits, novice designers still encounter challenges in the creation of storyboards.

Storyboards and prototypes can be powerful tools to explore alternative design ideas as well as having early feedback on the usability of the application. Furthermore, problems and features that are confusing or complex in the design will often show up early, even with simple paper-based sketch prototypes. When brought face-to-face between designer and client it can help create a collaborative design magic. This poster summarizes the observations of using a storyboard approach in the workplace.

Introduction
Storyboards used in combination with prototypes are interactive mediums that sequentially display the functions an application system will perform. They are used to document, replica, and confirm the user requirements. The storyboard prototype simulates the interaction sequences in a system to allow users to test the system before very much code has been developed, (Borysowich, 2009).

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Furthermore, by using the storyboard prototype concept to develop an application, it will help end-users to understand and approve the system design earlier in the project (Borysowich, 2009). Additionally, storyboarding is useful when testing interfaces and presenting interface ideas. It helps to visualise the application concepts, exploring other alternatives and resolving any attribute details and developing interaction scenarios (Curtis & Vertelney, 1990).

This poster presents observations on the implementation of the storyboarding process as part of a student's industry based capstone project in the final semester of the BICT degree at CPIT in 2009.

Observations of Workplace Practice

1. When to storyboard?

When designing the interface of the system application.
When testing the interfaces, test the scalability, usability and complexity of the application.
When presenting interface or design ideas to the marketing team, development team, other designers or the client.

2. Tools and techniques for storyboard

Start minimalist with blanks to be filled in by the content-writer. These screens can be printed out to allow the content writer to pen in their contributions. It is much more interesting and productive when the content-writer is confident enough to write directly to the storyboard in its interactive form.
Use drawings to describe in graphic form the visible features of the interface.
Use screen shots for representations of the user interface.
Use paper based technique for a quick interactive storyboard-prototype technique.
Use interactive software that the designers are familiar with to create storyboard or any design ideas.
Use flow chart and navigational chart to help designer and the client visualise the user and system interactivity.

3. Details to be put in the storyboard

Start minimalist, allowing interaction in the whole process with other designers and the client, then take into account how many objects and actors might be present in a particular page. Additionally, include the design of user interactions with the interface. Furthermore, include basic information that will be beneficial for the developer such as, the font styles and sizes for each heading, sub-heading and body text are specified. Also, include flow and navigational charts specifying the navigation of the links, and alternative possibilities of user and system interaction.

Conclusions

Be interactive and iterative. Let the designers brainstorm their ideas individually in quick sketches using simple tools like pencil and paper. Have the designers meet as a group to discuss their ideas in front of a shared visual work surface. When the design team has agreement, meet with the client or the development team to consider any changes and suggestions. After several iterations, the design will be ready for sign off and implementation.

References and Citations

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