

MANAGEMENT OF **THE BODY OF KNOW-** **LEDGE OF UX DESIGN** **IN THE PORTUGUESE** **UNIVERSITY SYSTEM:** **A THEORETICAL STUDY**



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It is common knowledge that the participation of digital media has been growing continuously in contemporary life, which makes the development of digital artifacts (software, websites, etc.), content for digital media and digitally mediated services, take on a great economic importance. Cooper (et al., 2007) clarifies that the development of products and services in digital media, in contemporary models, require specialized professionals in three macro areas of knowledge: (1) *Management*—stipulates the commercial purpose of the artifact, marketing strategy, financial investment required for production and profit generation; (2) *Technology*—determines the functionalities that can be integrated into a digital artifact as well as its performance in developing specific tasks; (3) *Design*—ensures that the artifact's use is friendly, desirable and stimulating, achieving the stipulated commercial and technological objectives. The third area is commonly known in the technology market as "User Experience Design" and arises from the holistic point of view of designing the artifact to provide a certain "experience" (rather than the classic Human-Computer Interaction perspective of task accomplishment), aiming to orchestrate, through a design process, not only the objective factors of feasibility of use and fulfillment of tasks, but also hedonic, affective, cultural, and social factors (Hassenzahl and Tractinsky 2006).

In the academic scope, the term User Experience Design while receiving fast adoption, is also criticized for being vague and imprecise. Some authors prefer to use terms such as "User Experience Centered Human-Computer Interaction", "Digital Design for User Experience", "Design for Experience with Digital Media", etc. Despite the impasse, the term UX Design remains the most widely used.

In the last 20 years, UX Design is continually growing as an area of research, and one can see the multiplication of international congresses, scientific journals and the widespread research groups. Despite the interest as a research topic, UX Design as a body of knowledge is difficult to delimit because it is inter and multi-

disciplinary, similarly to the discipline of Human-Computer Interaction itself. In addition to having Design as a nuclear discipline, other disciplines integrate a body of knowledge in UX Design, such as Human-Computer Interaction, Cognitive Psychology, Behavioral Psychology, Cognitive Ergonomics, Management, Marketing, Technology, Linguistics, Sociology, Cultural Studies, etc.

Currently there is a market need for education in the UX Design area since there is a great demand from professionals with this type of knowledge. This fact leads companies to value less the academic education, by its lack of capacity on keeping updated. That provides the growth of a market of training programs that take place inside companies, non-academic UX Design training schools, as well as self-learning. Fact that gradually distances the Academia away from the technology market.

Although the Academia functions through the departmentalization of the different disciplines, which makes teaching in inter and multidisciplinary bodies of knowledge difficult, it is believed the Academia has the potential, among other activities, to provide education that fully enables the student to enter the market focusing on innovation, and also provided with critical thinking for an ethical-moral, social, anthropological and philosophical reflection on the UX Design activity, which would extrapolate the practice. From this perspective, we find the following research question: *How can Portuguese universities manage the inter and multidisciplinary body of knowledge of User Experience Design with the purpose of researching and teaching?*

The present thesis aims to indicate the best way a body of knowledge of UX Design can be managed within the Portuguese universities, transversal to the disciplinary departmentalization, resorting the necessary knowledge from the Humanities, Social Sciences, Applied Sciences and Arts.

The methodological development of the thesis will be separated into five macro steps: (1) Literature review / state of the art—where will be verified the delimitation of a UX Design body of knowledge as well as the norms of the Portuguese university system for the verification on the management of inter and multidisciplinary academic disciplines; (2) Analysis of cases of management of a inter and multidisciplinary body of knowledge of UX Design in other universities, through semi-structured interviews with researchers and teachers; (3) Selection and comparative analysis of curricula of highlighted UX Design programs / disciplines; (4) Interviews with recognized UX Design specialists in order to understand the knowledge and skills required in the market; (5) Data analysis of partial results of former steps and generation of proposal for the integration of UX Design in academic education.

Through this thesis, we hope to encourage the creation of possible UX Design research groups, to find ways for the education of professionals that can drive innovation in UX Design, as well as seeking the approximation of interests between the Academia and the technology and digital media market in Portugal.

REFERENCES

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