

Minutes 2013-12-05

Draft Minutes: ITANA call of 05-Dec-2013

Attending

Jim Phelps, University of Wisconsin - Madison (chair)
Mojgan Amini, UC San Diego
Glenn Donaldson, The Ohio State University
Chris Eagle, U. Michigan
Scott Fullerton, University of Wisconsin - Madison
Michael Janke, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities
Karen Hansen, University of Wisconsin - Madison
Paul Hobson, University of British Columbia
Piet Niederhausen
Brenda Reeb, University of Rochester
Brian Savage, Boston College
Rich Stevenson, University of Maryland University College
Jon Terrones, University of Wisconsin - Madison

Links:

ITANA Website: <http://itana.org/>

ITANA Wiki: <https://spaces.at.internet2.edu/display/itana/Home>

Update: SOA and API Management Working Group

Jon reported that working group has decided to meet monthly by phone to hear from institutions using WSO2 and their support models. Six institutions are participating. Upcoming meetings will be planned soon. Mojgan offered to relay questions to WSO2 consultants working at UCSD.

Update: Learning Working Group

The group welcomes comments on its draft [Teaching and Learning Capability Map](#).

DISCUSSION

The following article circulated by Jim was discussed:

<http://www.fastcodesign.com/3016247/10-lessons-for-design-driven-success>

The article discusses the importance of design thinking in today's businesses, and Jim connected this to an increase in design thinking in architecture. For example, the advising initiative at UW-Madison will include a two hour design session with users and stakeholders working on design prototypes.

As an example of a guide to design thinking, see the Stanford University Institute of Design's [Bootcamp Bootleg](#).

We discussed the sections of the article. The group had the following observations about each section:

1. Design Starts at the Top

The observations here about designers apply to architects as well. Organizations benefit from a close working rapport between business leaders and architects. We can observe a shift from a numbers-driven approach to leadership to a design-driven approach in many innovative organizations. An analytics-driven approach doesn't work when innovating in a new space for which little relevant data exists. An architecture practice can be design-driven, thinking beyond the available data to find a solution that is innovative rather than incremental. Particularly in higher education, with tight budgets and various pressures, architects are called upon to be innovators and not just analysts.

2. The Apple Myth is Powerful – and Incomplete

Like the designers discussed in the article, a role of the architect is to integrate diverse efforts in the university into a whole change. Integrating disparate efforts as Apple did is very difficult, but architects can help integrate disparate efforts up front.

3. Today's Disaster is Tomorrow's Triumph

We don't always learn as much as we should from initiatives that don't go well. Institutional knowledge about what went wrong isn't captured well. In many cases institutions don't have good measures in place to evaluate success, which would be a prerequisite for gathering lessons learned. Pilots could be better defined with a clear goal of learning from the pilot, which includes allowing people to make and learn from mistakes without retribution. It can be difficult to transfer lessons from an innovative "edge" process to the whole enterprise. Innovation is made easier in organizations where design (or architecture) has clear ownership.

5. Yes, Virginia, Penny-Wise is Pound-Foolish

Higher education tends to be uncomfortable with putting money at risk, but there are examples like MOOCs of innovations with no immediate revenue – at institutions that have a financial buffer. Even institutions that spend a great deal may do so in a risk-averse way that misses opportunities for innovation.

6. Design Hunger is Real

There is real customer demand for good design; our goal should be solutions that provide not just functionality but also ease or enjoyment. A better-designed solution isn't just superficially prettier; it provides real value for users beyond bare functionality. It isn't enough to say that "the users will learn the UI", especially with the pressure of cloud services with better user interfaces.

7. There's Something New Under the Sun

Coming to problems with a neutral perspective allows designers (or architects) to find new solutions, as in the Coca-Cola example. For example, in business process redesign, major improvements can come from the actors being willing to approach each other openly and see new opportunities.

8. A Well-Designed Product Does Not Equal a Well-Design Business

As in design, better architected individual solutions, not tied together, don't necessarily do much for the institution.

9. The Big Picture is a Mass of Details

Like the designers in the article, architects balance long term vision with getting into the details for excellent execution.

10. It is Still Day One

Demands on our solutions continue to increase, with combined demands for efficiency, cost savings, as well as compelling user experience. The more we accept that the solutions we have today are temporary, the better able we might be to create a comprehensive vision for future solutions.

Wrap-Up: Jim asked how we reflect design thinking into our own architecture practices. Rich suggested activities (such as those described in the [Stanford design thinking class](#)) that help incorporate design thinking and build a practice of design. Another aspect is to find people on campus with design skills and know when to introduce them into a project, to participate in workshops or retreats and seed conversation. Architects have a set of known models and methodologies, but should look beyond those to introduce new kinds of design thinking into enterprise projects.

For more ideas see:

- [The Bootcamp Bootleg](#)
- [IDEO's](#) videos on design thinking

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Jim Phelps is making a transition to the University of Washington in December and January. Jim will continue as chair but Rich will lead ITANA meetings during Jim's transition.

Next ITANA call: Thursday, December 19, at 2pm-3pm Eastern Standard Time