End-users in Practice

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Why work with end-users?

End-users are not designers, but…

- Domain & process expertise
- Inform design
- Validate design ideas
- Reveal problems & omissions

Postal workers

- 30,000 POS installations (US)
- Well-trained, knowledgeable
- Customer-focused, but…
- Rules-oriented
- Repetitive, rote, shortcuts
- Constrained, led, directed
- Ask for advice, defer problems

Neurosurgeons

- Very few
- Trained, educated, skilled
- Particularly task-focused
- Procedure- and role-oriented
- Assisted by specialists
- Master, leader, director
- Give orders, solve problems

Shippers

- Corporate consumers of Fed Ex
- Range of novice to expert users
- Range of responsibility
- Range of repetitive use
- Task focused
- Motivated by deadlines, scheduling
Access to end-users?

To:        Denied because:

- Build requirements
- Validate decisions
- Evaluate usability
- Shop culture
- Schedule (costs)
- Perception
- Inconvenience

Access to neurosurgeons

Strong case:          Solution:

- High cost of errors
- Zero tolerance
- Participants? No.
- Interviews? No.
- Observation? Yes.
- Observation in OR
- Technologists as design participants
- Beta test site

Access to postal workers

Strong case:          Solution:

- High cost of errors
- Magnified by volume (1 min = 32,500 hrs)
- Many available users
- Subject-matter expert
- Video tape (existing)
- Scheduled reviews

Access to shippers

- Conduct usability test with end-users
- Address Book: well-defined, small area
- Post-design (hi-fi prototype)
- 16 end-users over 4 days
- Satisfactory results?

Access to financial reps

- Intranet trading application
- Assumption: branch reps are end-users
- Design-by-committee: stakeholders
- Minimal access to end-users
- Shop culture is a barrier to end-user access
- Fallout?

Lessons learned

- Dismantle shop culture barriers:
  - Be flexible and innovative
  - Demonstrate value
  - More end-users more often
More lessons

- End-user input is valuable
- There are few “textbook” cases
- Test early and often
- Get a broad perspective
- Solve the right problem
- Use a variety of means
- Be task-focused