Challenges in Promoting Software Usability and Applying Principles of Usage-Centred Design in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract : A study was conducted in which 212 software developers in higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia were surveyed to gather an indication of their understanding of the concept of usability, their acceptance of its importance, and to see how well its principles are applied. Interviews were then held with 20 of these developers, and a demonstration of Usage-Centred Design was attempted, a highly usability focused software development methodology, at one select institution for its redesign of an e-learning exam system interface during the requirements gathering phase. The study confirms the need to raise awareness of usability and its importance, and for Usage-Centred Design to be applied in its entirety, also need to encourage greater consultation with potential end-users of software and collaborative practices. The demonstration of Usage-Centred Design confirmed its ability to capture usability requirements more completely and precisely than would otherwise be the case, and hence its usefulness for developers concerned with improving software usability. The concluding discussion delves on the challenges for promoting usability and Usage-Centred Design in light of the research results and findings and recommendations are made for the same.