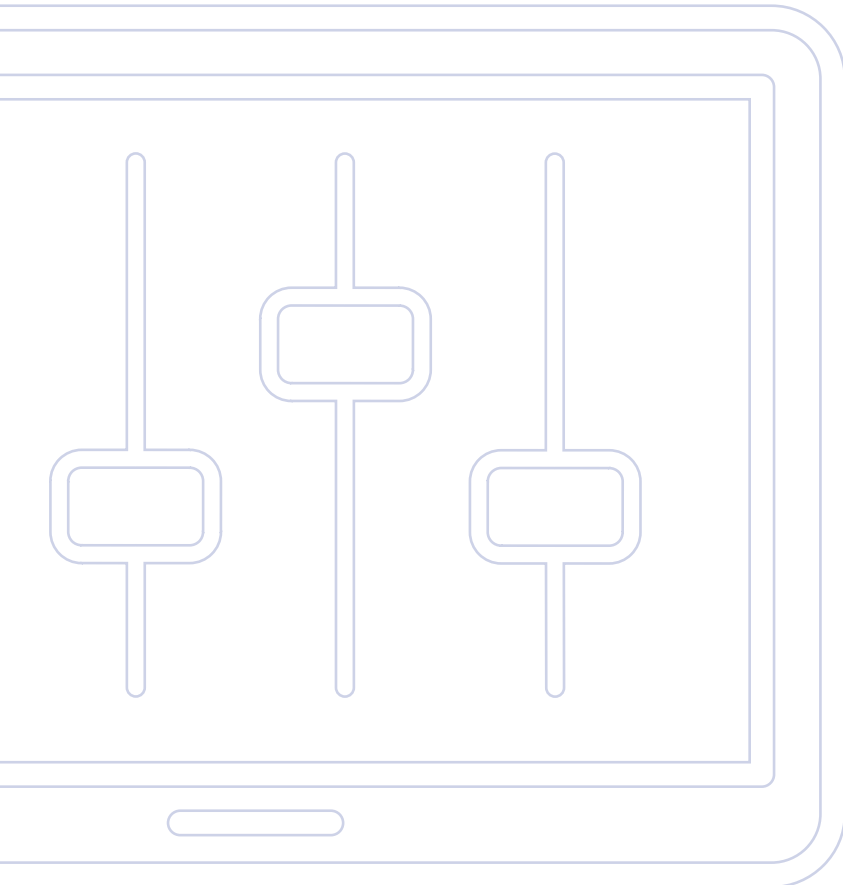
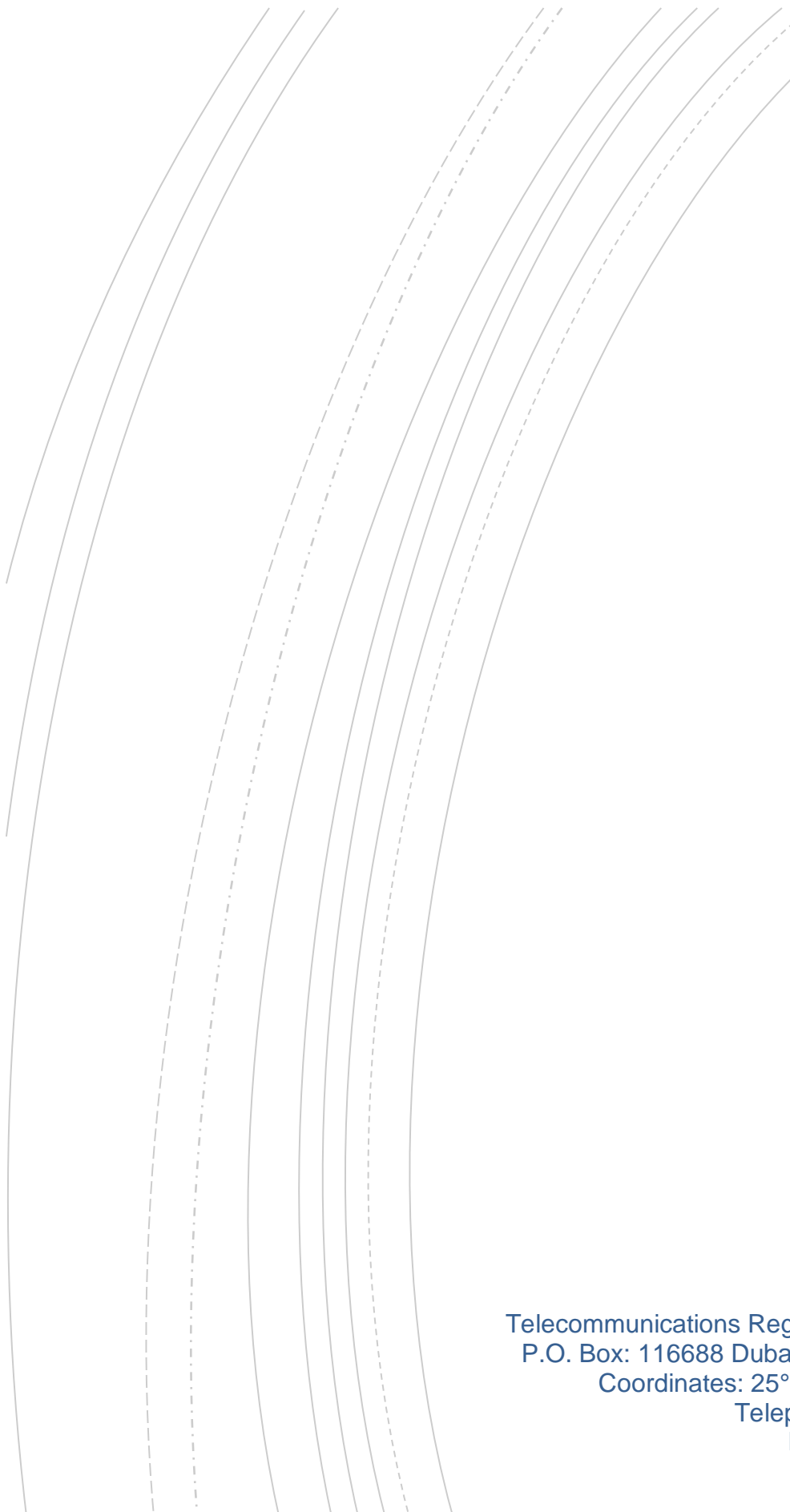


THE UX LAB GUARANTEES USER FRIENDLY WEBSITES AND APPS



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Context and Background

In 2013, His Highness Shaikh Mohammad bin Rashid, UAE vice president, prime minister, and ruler of Dubai launched the mGovernment Initiative. The primary aim of this initiative is to ensure the happiness of all UAE citizens. Shaikh Mohammad describes mGovernment as one that never sleeps (working 24 hours, 365 days a year), is as welcoming as a hotel, provides fast delivery and strong procedures, is innovative and adaptive, serves the citizens at any time and everywhere inside and outside the country, improves lives and responds to expectations.

Believing in their exceptional impact in the light of government performance, The UAE Government gives great importance to the eServices and mServices. What the UAE seeks to achieve is to reach government services to the level of leadership and excellence so that these services become a factor of happiness and sustainable development. It believes that this can be achieved through collective action, best practices and user experience, not only from the professionals' point of view.

Need

To provide the people of the UAE easy access to government services, data, knowledge and content through any device. The government should cater to the needs of the people and not vice versa.

Idea

Since that time, the UAE government is working to achieve a complete eTransformation of the government services. Several projects and initiatives were launched to implement the mGovernment initiative and achieve the goals set within. These projects are designed to mobilize the UAE government entities to provide services through mobile phones and smart devices by engaging intelligent service-delivery methods such as mobile applications that are based on predictive analytics. Some of the important projects and initiatives are:

Projects

mGovernment enablers aim to measure and improve the level of customers' experience in using electronic/mobile services in the UAE. They monitor and measure the development of government entities electronic/mobile services according to seven indices/enablers, which are carefully studied to

achieve the mGovernment national goals. These indices are:

- Level of electronic/mobile transformation index
- Level of usage of electronic/ mobile services
- Level of satisfaction with electronic/ mobile services
- Level of public awareness about electronic/ mobile services
- Government websites' quality index
- Electronic/mobile service quality index
- Mobile services integration index.

Federal Network (FedNet)

The Federal Network (FedNet) connects the information systems of federal entities in the UAE. It provides secure, efficient, and high-speed internet services. It hosts all the government electronic data and facilitates secure and reliable exchange of data. It raises levels of efficiency, security, and continuity of government services provided through electronic channels.

Centre of Digital Innovation (CoDI)

The Centre of Digital Innovation (CoDI) seeks to provide government entities with services that contribute to mobile application development. It seeks to apply cutting-edge technologies to develop and test applications. Hence, it signed cooperation agreements with major companies such as Apple, Blackberry, Android, and Microsoft to provide cutting-edge technologies to the government entities.

UAE Government Apps

The UAE Government Apps is an app that contains all the UAE government applications. The App Store provides unique features and services based on the user's location. The UAE Government Apps is a practical realization of the Mobile Government Initiative. The UAE is the first government in the world to launch an app store of government apps.

One App

One App is an application under development. Through the application, users can access more than 4000 federal and local government services. The app will work on an intuitive basis and provide services and notifications based on user needs. After launch, it will be made available on various platforms.

The National CRM

The National Customer Relations Management (CRM) is a unified call center for all customers to follow up the government services they requested or ask for information. It provides services to citizens, residents, and visitors. The National CRM is an additional channel of communication with the UAE Government.

SmartPass

SmartPass is a system through which one can access all government services through one username and password. Each individual would be assigned a unique identification number to facilitate easy access to all electronic transactions with the federal and local government entities in a secure electronic environment. SmartPass can be used through special kiosks located at public places.

The challenge

Despite all such initiatives, which facilitate the delivery of the services, still, there was a challenge that government entities have to meet. The challenge was how to verify and guarantee that websites and mobile applications are simple, accessible, and user-friendly.

Users are extremely demanding when it comes to website design and functionality. With many new remarkable web design and development trends emerging, landing on a bad quality website is just a disappointing thing. If the website makes it difficult for users to find what they are looking for, takes too long to load, or is filled with broken links, it will be a bad experience for the user.

To keep users on a government website and encourage them to return, it is no longer optional to invest in a user-friendly design – it is a requirement. For this purpose, the Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (TRA) launched the mGovernment Enablers initiative to accelerate the mTransformation/eTransformation in government entities.

The mGovernment Enablers measure website and mobile application usability through the government websites' quality index. Website quality index defines the users' needs and expectations, then validate the website to check if it meets those needs and expectations. The index applies a list of standards to measure and evaluate the website compatibility with user experience. However, the website quality index is measured annually, which is a long time to evaluate user experience about a website or a mobile application, whether it is launched or under process.

The point is that evaluation based on mGovernment enablers is done annually, which is not much practical for testing new website or a mobile application of a government entity. Government entities need a tool or platform to reflect real feedback of the users. Hence, the TRA, being responsible for eTransformation in the UAE government sector, launched an innovative project to test government websites and communicate real users' feedback. That innovative project is the User experience lab (UX Lab).

Developing the UAE's UX Lab Journey

The UAE Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (TRA) launched the user experience-testing lab (UX Lab) in March 2018. The UX Lab applies advanced methods to develop websites and mobile applications on basis of users' reactions and preferences, taking into account the usability and accessibility. The UX testing lab is the focal point of user-centric design philosophy, which aims to gain direct feedback from the user and collect actionable data.



The UX Lab develops government services and websites in a quick and accurate manner, to enhance the services provided. The testing process covers all technical and technological aspects, such as overall design, dashboard, menus, colours and fonts used. The Lab examines the reactions of a sample of users selected according to the requirements of the entity's requirements to develop its digital platforms.

The relevant entity identifies the specifications of this sample, such as gender, nationality, language, social and educational backgrounds. The UX Lab monitors the reactions of the group using the latest technologies, such as the eye tracking system while browsing the screen. The lab applies a globally proven scientific scheme to identify the users' behavior when attempting to search for information or obtain digital services.

The UX lab offers its service to the federal government to test their services by real users. It is a place where usability testing is performed, and users are studied while they are interacting with the system for the sake of system evaluation. The lab has tools to do remote user testing. The UX lab is now an icon for building the UX culture within the federal government.

Objectives and benefits

The main objective of the UX lab is to enhance the government services experience based on actual user's testing and feedback. The results of the online surveys have shown an increase in customer satisfaction in the last several years. Furthermore, the UX lab aims to:

- Enhance usability and performance of the product;
- Understand the capabilities and limitations of humans generally and the entity's target audience more specifically;
- Understand the cultural and behavioral modes of your audience so that your designs fit existing behaviors or maps against existing behaviors so that changes in culture and behavior feel more natural;
- Increase customer satisfaction and loyalty;
- Improve self-service and customer journey for eServices, mServices, channels, and apps.

It has the following benefits:

- Gets feedback directly from the users and remove biases from the designers or stakeholders;
- Helps save development time by avoiding extensive re-work late in the development stage;
- Matches business decision to real-world use, and;
- Analyses the performance to see if it meets your usability objectives.

Tested features

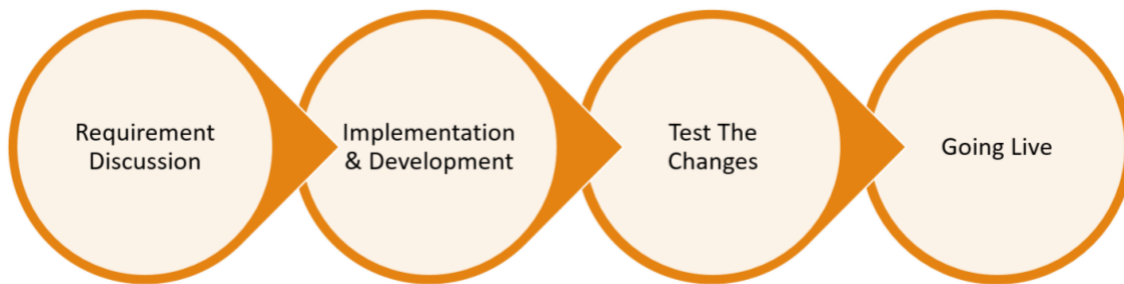
UX testing lab can evaluate any dimension of a user interface design. Depending on the phase of the interface design development, usability testing can evaluate:

- Navigation, including site/app organization, menu organization, and labelling;
- Presentation, including layout, fonts, and use of colors;
- Content, including page layout and task functionality;
- Interaction, including visual affordance, widgets, task flow, and feedback;

After testing is done, the entity is provided with a detailed report regarding the recommended improvements in the website/app, so the entity work to fix them. Furthermore, it suggests to the entities innovative approaches in providing services.

Testing mechanism

Real users are invited to visit the tested website or application. They start navigating the website/app and use the services it provides. The UX lab monitors users' reaction and face feelings and measures time they spend to get their required service. Moreover, the UX lab uses eye-tracking devices to measure difficulty of finding the required service.



Testing criteria depends mainly on the owner entity's requirements. In general, criteria include age, interests, community segment, gender, and location.

Impact

In less than a year, starting from July 2018. UX Lab have tested 7 government applications and 25 websites for 17 government entities. Each testing session has 6 – 8 users.

The primary purpose of a UX testing, is to gather data needed to help enhance a platform, it's important to make sure that the platform is easy to navigate and ask are completed smoothly and easily, otherwise, the user will go to another website. It is important to pay attention to the users' behavior while interacting with the platform

Economic Impact

The project contributed to cost and time-saving in websites and apps development as it took the feedback of the customers from the beginning instead of rolling out several iterations of the app, which required additional time and cost. In addition, increased Emiratization in this unique field.

Social Impact & Happiness

This project increased customer happiness as it improved how the customer consumed the government services. Hence, the service was developed based on customer feedback. It reduced the gap between government understanding and customers' needs.

Environmental Impact

This project contributed to a reduction in CO2 emissions, as the customer make fewer trips by car to do the services physically. Instead, customers use the digital channels of the services.

Brand awareness and reputation

The UX Lab served all the government entities on both federal and local levels. This provided a strong branding for TRA as entities referred to TRAs lab instead of going with private companies.

90% of entities were happy with the service and would like to have more sessions in the future, while 88% thought the results were helpful and beneficial in developing the platform.

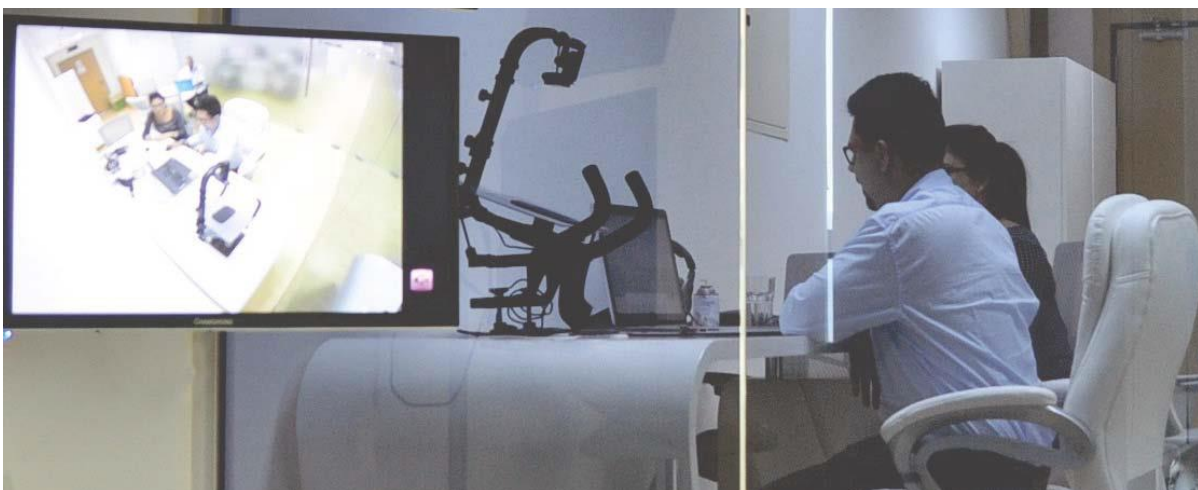
Intangible assets

As part of the project, The User Experience Guidelines for Government was launched. It provided instructions to developers in government entities about the best practices in terms of user experience.

UX lab achievements

The UX Lab conducted usability tests for 32 websites and applications owned by 17 government entities, with the intention of determining the struggles or pain points of participants while using websites/applications to submit service applications or get service information.

The tests were conducted in the usability lab (UX LAB) at TRA (Telecommunications Regulatory Authority) in Dubai with 5-9 participants. The sessions included a cognitive walk-through to support their comments and feedback.



The test sessions achieved the following targets:

- Testing user's ability and intention to create an account according to the fields provided;
- Understanding different user's behaviors and patterns when getting service online;
- Evaluating the look, feel and functionality of the dashboard/page;
- Ensuring users are able to complete their application, as well as evaluate pain points;
- Evaluating the profile icons and pages for each user and test the efficiency of their journeys.

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